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NATIONAL ANTI-SWEATING LEAGUE

REPORT

.. OF ..

Conference

.. ON ..

A Minimum

Wage. . .



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A MINIMUM WAGE,

HELD AT THE

GUILDHALL, LONDON,

. . ON . .

October 24th, 25th, & 26th, 1906.



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National Anti-Sweating League.

CONFERENCE

... ON ...

“ A MINIMUM WAGE.”

THE Exhibition of Sweated Industries which the *Daily News* organised in May, 1906, called attention in a vivid and forcible way to the question of Sweating. It was the common feeling of those who visited the Exhibition that the interest and indignation that it excited ought not to be allowed to pass away, but ought to be used as motive power for a constructive attack on Sweating. Consequently, it was resolved to form the Anti-Sweating League, and, taking inspiration from Australia and New Zealand, to work towards the setting up of machinery to deal with Sweating on lines of a Compulsory Minimum Wage in specified industries.

The circular given below explains how the League, desiring to get this policy confirmed and adopted by the Trade Unions and other interested bodies, called a National Conference at the Guildhall for the discussion of “Sweating and the Minimum Wage.” Originally intended to occupy two days, the announcement of the Conference secured such public attention as to decide the Committee of the League to extend the sittings to a third day, and thus to make possible a fuller discussion of the papers submitted to the Conference.

NATIONAL ANTI-SWEATING LEAGUE.

TO SECURE A MINIMUM WAGE.

DEAR SIR,

The above organisation has been formed as the outcome of the recent Exhibition of Sweated Industries organised by the *Daily News*. The League is non-party, and its object is to secure by legislation a minimum Wage in Sweated Industries.

With the object of formulating legislative proposals on a scientific basis, the Committee has decided to convene a Conference to be held at the Guildhall on October 24th and 25th, in order that the different aspects of the question may be thoroughly discussed and the various Colonial schemes, with the practicability of their application to this country, considered.

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It was decided that the following societies should be eligible for representation at the Conference:—

THE LABOUR PARTY.
 THE TRADE UNION CONGRESSES (English, Scottish and Irish).
 GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS.
 INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY.
 SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION.
 FABIAN SOCIETY.
 CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.
 TRADE UNIONS.
 TRADES COUNCILS.
 WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD.
 WOMEN'S INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL.
 SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF WOMEN'S TRADES.

The proceedings will be opened by the LORD MAYOR OF LONDON, and the Chair will be taken:—

on the first day by The Rt. Hon. SIR CHARLES DILKE, M.P.,
 on the second day by Mr. GEORGE N. BARNES, M.P.

The following Colonial Experts have promised to read papers expounding the several legislative enactments for the regulation of wages:—

New Zealand—The Hon. W. PEMBER REEVES (High Commissioner for New Zealand).

South Australia—Mr. BERNARD WISE (late Attorney-General of New South Wales).

It is hoped also that a representative from Victoria will deal with the Victorian system of Wages Boards.

Amongst those who have promised to read short papers on the various aspects of the Sweating Problem are:—

Mr. J. A. HOBSON,
 Mr. L. G. C. MONEY, M.P.,
 Miss GERTRUDE TUCKWELL,
 Mr. STEPHEN WALSH, M.P.,
 Mr. SIDNEY WEBB,

and working members of various sweated and other trades.

With the exception of invited speakers, only duly accredited delegates will be allowed to take part in the discussion. The basis of representation will be the same as for the Trade Union Congress, *i.e.*, one delegate for every 2,000 members or part thereof, but no delegates will be entitled to more than one vote.

In view of the great importance of the subject to Trade Unions, Co-operators, and Labour generally, the Committee earnestly hope that your Society will send a representative.

Will you kindly bring the matter before your Executive, and intimate its decision to us at the earliest possible moment?

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours fraternally,

GEORGE SHANN,

Hon. Secretary.

FIRST DAY.

MORNING SESSION.

A three days' Conference was opened at the Guildhall of the City of London, on Wednesday, October 24th, 1906, under the auspices of the National Anti-Sweating League, to discuss the question of a legal Minimum Wage.

At the opening of the Conference, the chair was occupied by the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor (Sir Walter Vaughan Morgan, Bart.), who was supported on the dais by the Right Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., Earl Beauchamp, Professor Stephen Bauer, Mr. Stephen Walsh, M.P., Mr. Askwith, K.C., Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, Miss Mary R. Macarthur, Miss Clementina Black, the Rev. John and Mrs. Hoatson, Mr. A. G. Gardiner (editor of the *Daily News*), Mr. W. Pember Reeves (High Commissioner for New Zealand), Mr. Herbert Burrows, Dr. Chapple, and Mr. J. J. Mallon (Secretary of the League).

The LORD MAYOR, in opening the Conference, remarked that the Guildhall had been used for a great many good works, and he hoped that before they separated they would see some means of smoothing over the difficulties they had met to consider in this part of the Labour question. He did not think it was a question on which he could throw any light, and he regretted that as he had shortly to be in another place he could not remain longer with them.

Sir CHARLES DILKE, moving a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor for opening the Conference, and for granting the delegates the use of the Guildhall, expressed the thanks of the delegates to his Lordship and to the City Corporation, of which he was the head, for allowing them to meet in the most convenient and central spot. They could not expect the Lord Mayor, with his heavy duties at that hour of the day, to remain with them, but they thanked him for giving the Conference the stamp of the approval of the authorities of the City.

Mr. A. G. GARDINER seconded, and on behalf of the Executive Committee, of which he was Chairman, expressed their deep thanks for the use of the Guildhall for a Conference which would, he believed, be an historic one.

The resolution, which was carried by acclamation, was briefly acknowledged by the Lord Mayor, who then left the Guildhall and proceeded to the discharge of duties elsewhere.

The chair was then taken by Sir Charles Dilke, who announced that credentials had been received from 341 delegates, representing the Labour Party, the Trade Union Congress, the General Federation of Trade Unions, the Social Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party, the Women's Co-operative Guild, and 106 Trade Unions and kindred organisations. The aggregate membership of the societies represented was 1,955,296. There was some duplication, but the membership of the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party was not included.

The Chairman suggested that the Conference should proceed to the election of a Standing Orders Committee. This was agreed to, and many nominations were made. Finally the following six persons were declared duly elected to act as Committee of Standing Orders: Mrs. Gasson (Women's Co-operative Guild), Mr. B. Tillet (Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union), Mr. Mallalieu (Felt Hatters), Mr. W. Mullin (Amalgamated Association of Card and Blowing Room Operatives), Mr. J. T. Brownlie (Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society), Mr. J. Stokes (London Trades Council).

Sir CHARLES DILKE then said: In January, 1885, there was held a Conference on Industrial Remuneration, interesting for many reasons,—interesting to us to-day, because it dealt in part with subjects now to be dealt with here, interesting, also historically, because it invented Mr. Balfour, Mr. Burns, and many other now well-known men. The President of the Local Government Board has told us how he was dismissed from his employment for attending as a delegate of the Social Democratic Federation the Conference of 1885. No one handled more effectively than he did on that occasion the case of poor families subsisting feebly on the low wage of several of their members, men, women and children, a feature of the case that we have to consider. The founder of a body that helps to convene this conference, and in the fortune of which I am much concerned, the Women's Trade Union League, Mrs. Emma Paterson, read at the Conference of 1885, at which I was chosen to preside, the best of all the papers better, perhaps, and I think Mr. Balfour would agree with me better even than the paper of Mr. Balfour. Mrs. Paterson gave statistics bearing on our situation of to-day, to the compilation of which she had devoted strenuous effort. The conditions of the labour of women—other than the comparatively few who work like men, and are protected by organisation, in the Post Office, Telegraphs, Schools, Hospitals, and in the Lancashire textile and some other favoured trades—were, Mrs. Paterson thought, at the bottom of the wage question. With the labour of the feebler and less skilled men and women, and of children in unorganised trades we are still concerned, whether it is to be dealt with by special or by more general remedies, as in New Zealand and New South Wales. Of the women alone Mrs. Paterson computed that in 1885, without counting domestic servants, they formed nearly one-third of the total industrial population. Up to 1885 she thought that there had

been no improvement in their wage or organisation, in the least comparable to the improvement among the population as a whole or among adult males engaged in labour. Coming to detail and dealing with the clothing trades and their side branches, such as the artificial flower trade, Mrs. Paterson described at length the curse of "sudden orders" from all of us, for "the public is a monster of unreasonable impatience." The labour of married women was, Mrs. Paterson stated, often attacked by the Trade Unions as done at low rate and without restriction of hours. This she said was true.

Some years later I was invited to attend, just before and just after the sitting of the Trades Congress at Glasgow, meetings at Port Glasgow and other small centres of industry, situate upon the left bank of the Clyde towards Greenock. I had long been used to labour meetings, but was then brought face to face with hopeless difficulties, heart breaking to the organiser, because of a rooted disbelief among the workers in the possibility of improvement. There is a stage in which there is hope; hope for the improvement of wages and of conditions, possibly to be won by combined effort. There is a stage, familiar in the East End of London, when there is no hope for anything, except perhaps a hired feather, and the off-chance of an outing. Yet even the roughest trades employing women and children in factories or large workshops, to be found in the East End, or in the outskirts of Glasgow, have in them the remote possibility of organisation. Home industries in many cases have not even that bare chance. There is in them a misery which depresses both the workers and those who would help them. The home life of the poorest class of factory workers is not much, but it means, nevertheless, a great deal to them. The home life of the home worker is often nothing. The home becomes the grinding shop. Factory slavery finds a refuge even in a hard home, "Home" slavery has none.

The case of the children is still more deplorable than is that of any adult, however feeble. "Parental control" may be a mockery. The absence of limitation of hours is most productive of evil in the child's case. The work of a child in a coal pit is being stopped by law and by public opinion. The age is raised by Act after Act, and owners and colliers agree, in the greater portion of the country, to further raise it by one year above the present legal limit. Few, and only in a few districts, work within a year of the time at which they may begin to work. Yet this case is weak as compared with the lot of the child-worker in many so-called home industries. The collier boy is proud to go down the pit "with father." He "feels a man" when he first does so, and has a home from which he starts and to which he returns. The other child has no such home-feeling, and has not, and cannot have, any such pride in work.

I have dealt at length with the conditions of this class of labour because it is in this class, utterly incapable of fixing a minimum wage for itself, that the evil of its absence stands revealed in its worst form.

Public opinion has lately been aroused by the efforts of the promoters of a recent exhibition. It is our duty to take advantage of the feeling and to shape practical proposals, proposals made possible by the attention which has brought them within the range of practical politics. It is our duty to discuss solutions offered by the experienced persons who will read papers and who will take part in our debates. The actual decision as to the legislative lines best to follow should be that of those directly concerned as authorised to represent Labour as a whole. The large representation of Labour as such which now exists in the Commons House of Parliament has placed before the people the collective view of Labour upon many points which touch us here. The Labour members have shown they desire further factory and workshop legislation, extension of much of such legislation to home-work and, administratively, closer inspection. In 1895 some of us—Mr. W. P. Byles and I—moved amendments and suggested other amendments on the Factory Bill, to introduce a licence system similar to that which exists in America in several States of the Union, but is there confined to the clothing and tobacco trades. Most of our friends opposed the renewal of such proposals in 1901, but I still support them, not, however, as sufficient.

In this Conference we have undoubtedly to travel further, in respect of proposals pointing to a minimum wage, or to improvement of wage, either in the feeble sweated trades or by broader remedies embracing all trades, like those of Mr. Wise in New South Wales, and of the High Commissioner of New Zealand. These latter, however, are only initiated by trade disputes. We concentrate our effort on this question because it is one of difficulty. As the introducer of the Wages Boards Bill, I admit that it is a measure which can be and ought to be improved by your deliberations.

The method chosen by the promoters of the Conference for placing before us various proposals is sound indeed. The titles of the papers and the names of the readers show the aspects of the question which are to be handled by those who have given special study to them, and to be tested in discussion by the practical experience of Trade Unionists.

Other countries are concerning themselves with the same problems. M. Fontaine, Director of the official Labour Department of France was coming over to attend our deliberations but was stopped at the last moment by the creation of the Ministry of Labour. In Germany there is investigation by a Commission. It began to sit in May. On the 19th March last the Reichstag had resolved: "That the Imperial Chancellor be requested to institute immediate inquiry into the condition of home-workers, in respect, especially, to their hours, wage, etc. . . . and to prepare and lay before Parliament a Bill, based on such inquiry, to remedy and prevent existing abuses." The first and real mover in the matter had been the German Empress. Dr. Bauer, with his wide knowledge of comparative labour legislation, tells us of proposals for both Cantorial and Federal treatment which have also been

made in Switzerland. Geneva had already imitated the New Zealand law. Valuable experimental legislation is now under consideration even in Argentina. Our South Sea Colonies have inaugurated legislation broader in scope than that in force elsewhere. We shall be told of the Wages Board system of Victoria, of the comprehensive law of New Zealand, by Mr. Reeves, of the remarkable experiment of Mr. Wise in New South Wales.* We shall have to deal, perhaps, with critics who will question the economic theory that lies at the base of any demand for legal minimum wage. Let us hope that there will be no difference as to fact. An argument has been constructed lately upon the foundation that sweated work is done wholly for wage earners and for the poor. Our own inquiries have profoundly convinced many of us of the opposite, namely, that sweated work is largely for the rich, though difficult for the rich to trace. (Hear, hear.) Papers read during the last few years before scientific bodies, such as the British Association, including some at York this autumn, have assumed supposed facts at variance with the actual facts carefully ascertained, though admittedly in a small community, by the Chief Inspector under the Wages Board system in Victoria.

In this country, however short the fair wage clause of contracts may fall of a high standard, it, nevertheless, concedes the principle of excluding from public contracts, national or local, sweated work.

Given the present preponderance of progressive opinion on such questions in the House of Commons and the press, well-considered, practical legislative proposals agreed to by you would, I think, stand a high chance of being carried in law. (Applause.)

The Chairman then called upon Mr. G. R. Askwith to read the first paper.

Notes on Experiences under the Conciliation Act, 1896.

Mr. ASKWITH said: It is necessary I should make one brief preliminary remark in commencing the interesting (but I fear scarcely amusing or humorous) discussion about to be opened.

It is that having acted for some years at the request of the Board of Trade as Arbitrator or Conciliator in averting or terminating trade disputes, disputes involving in the great majority of cases the question of wages, I am anxious to make clear that I do not wish to be regarded as prejudging any question—be it of principle or detail—that may be involved in controversies hereafter

* An extension, by a Federal Act passed in December, 1904, of Mr. Wise's plan, to the old Commonwealth, in the event of labour disputes extending to more than one State (*i.e.*, one of the six old "colonies" of Australia), is now the subject of appeal in the first case which has arisen under it. An attempt to enforce this law of the Commonwealth is resisted on the ground that it was beyond the Federal powers of the Constitution Act. The law will probably be declared unconstitutional.

made subject to my decision. My task will be limited to submit to you some of the problems which from practical experience in this country seem to arise upon the question in debate. I express no opinion upon their merits, but am like a beater finding the game, and it must be left for others to engage in the chase.

Now the object of this Conference appears to be to discuss how to secure to every worker within the State a sufficient means of livelihood. The subject of your deliberation is from whom and by what means and under what conditions is it practicable for the sufficiency, represented by the phrase "a minimum wage," to be obtained.

The question thus raised is not between the State and individuals, but between two factors—employers and employés. The State is merely the intermediary, which may or may not be called upon to interfere between these two factors, but it is not by the State that the burthen of the minimum wage is to be borne. The great bulk of trade—the industrial trade—is at the present time in the hands of private persons. They are the payers of wages and therefore the payers of the minimum wage.

This fact leads to an important consideration. You will recollect that when the Workmen's Compensation Bill was in progress through Parliament it was supported on the ground that the loss of the money paid in compensation should, and would, be borne by "the business." Such has been the case, and experience has shown that "the business" has not been materially injured by bearing the burthen imposed. Insurance has proved a safe protection.

But this experience cannot be applied to the liability of the individual employer to bear the constant burthen of paying wages for which he receives no sufficient return. To do so may be beyond his power. Can you compel him to submit to carry so onerous a load?

It will, I think, be agreed that it is not to the benefit of the operative that capital should be driven out of action. Yet the employer is a free agent. He may continue or discontinue his business as he may think fit. He may employ or discharge his workmen according to his will—and in this sense even legislation cannot compel him to continue a burthen from which by his voluntary action he can escape. In other words, must not the minimum wage be some load such as the payer is enabled by the results of his business to bear?

Yet, even if this be so, there might be the answer that there is a duty in him who pays the wage towards him who earns it, and that the duty to pay and the duty to earn are reciprocal, and one is not meant to exist without the other.

In that event I can only ask you to consider whether the term "minimum wage" is not another reading of the expression a "fair wage for work done," and whether this last term must not be regarded as meaning that below a certain line the payment is so low that it becomes unfair—an unfairness that in common language is represented by the word "sweating."

But if the words "minimum wage" do so mean "the lowest fair wage that should be paid," those words in themselves palpably denote an object that it is desirable to obtain, and lead to the consideration of the conditions under which such wage may, if possible, be arrived at.

Of course, it would from one point of view be satisfactory if some general solution of the question could be found.

For instance, if a minimum wage could be fixed by saying such wages mean in all cases and under all circumstances enough for a man, and may be his family, to live upon, an immense amount of difficulty would be overcome.

But is this solution possible? Would it satisfy anyone? Would not the employers say: "It is not fair to me that I should find the means of support for men who cannot give me sufficient work in return for my payments, or even though I be willing; how is it possible for me to do so in an industry which will not sustain the burthen and cannot be continued on a basis of charity? I cannot exist for the purpose of assisting lame dogs over a stile."

The workmen would say, "we cannot all be grouped in one class. We, the skilled workmen, are by virtue of the greater value of the work we produce, entitled to a higher minimum than the unskilled labourer."

If you take the view, in fact, that the value of the operatives' production must regulate or even affect the minimum—that is the lowest fair wage that should be paid—you are at once forced to consider other means by which that minimum wage should be ascertained, because the power of making any general determination of it becomes non-existent. To illustrate this point further, let us place the workmen and employers in a hypothetical conference, based upon what actually occurs.

The first claim brought forward we will suppose to be of skilled workmen, capable of earning high wages. They may not desire to receive the protection of a minimum wage. They may be strong enough to do without. But if they do so desire, will they be satisfied with a wage that will merely keep life within them? The protection such skilled workmen seek may be against fluctuation in prices or outside competition in bad seasons too sharply reducing wages. In such a case the fixing of the minimum wage would depend upon the value of the particular work produced in the trade represented at the conference.

Proceeding in the same direction of thought, can the high-class trades be grouped with the lower grades of production? Can the skilled and unskilled workmen all be subject to one general minimum wage, which in amount would be ridiculous in the judgment of the skilled workman, and bring him no advantage whatever.

Then, again, would not consideration have to be given in this conference how to deal with the different cases of workmen paid according to the time they work, or according to the work produced, that is, "piece-work?" Under the first mode of payment it may be possible to say that no man who works a given

time, say eight hours per day, shall receive less than a certain sum. But in the cases of what is termed "piece-work," can any general minimum wage be declared? Would it suffice to say "if a man works at any kind of work being paid by piece-work, whatever be the nature and result of that work, he shall never receive less than a minimum wage?" The argument on this point might be continued, but it will be sufficient to say that the general result of such a conference would appear to be a considerable number of minimum wages, differing according to the skill required in different branches of the trade, and in different classes of those branches, and according to the fair amount earnable by such skill; and the general effect of the conference would appear to be that each branch, and each class of a branch, has been considered separately in the determination of the minimum.

Well, if this be so, and the conference has not been a useless and purely theoretical proceeding, are you not driven to the conclusion that the amount of the minimum wage cannot be arrived at by any general rule or the application of any general standard?

Still, the suggestion that no general rule can be made in this country or in accordance with the trade policy of this country as carried on by employers and employés, does not prevent classification. Does it not seem to point towards it? Doubtless this classification means many inquiries and presents many difficulties. But such inquiries have taken place and such difficulties have been met where the rate of ordinary wages has been paid by agreement or arbitration, and in the course of such inquiries minimum wages by the score may be and have been established. Can that principle not be extended?

In this country such classification has been gradually introduced and appears to be spreading by voluntary agreement of employers and employés, sometimes guided by boards of conciliation and arbitration, or joint standing committees, sometimes cleared up before an arbitrator. Perhaps you will forgive me for instancing a most elaborate inquiry I had to conduct in connection with the manufacture of lace. The due rate of wages in classes of work had to be found by joint request of employers and employés. The whole industry was entitled the lace weaving trade of Nottingham. It has three branches or sections—the plain net, the lace curtain, and the fancy laces. The plain net section is not so complicated as the other sections, but the curtain has eight different cards on which work is produced, and the fancy lace had 21 and now has 15—thick thread laces, plain bobbin fining and Valenciennes, Torchons, Maltese, blondes, Spanish, Chantilly, cotton loop, sprigs, and many others. There had to be taken into account the classes of lace being made, the number of points to the inch, the number of bars, and the length of the rack and many other matters besides. The wages of each class and branch of lace workers required separate consideration, and was discussed and fought word by word and line by line upon these numbers of cards. Well, after those eight

weeks, I think, of conversation, I am not going to say that the twist hands of Nottingham are failing in eloquence or give up any point whatever on which they have the slightest chance of founding an argument, but I do say—and it points not only my argument, but the common sense of some of the most able workmen in the United Kingdom—that both employers and employed seemed to agree on the classes of workers to whom a minimum wage should be applied, and on what cards it was necessary, and in few instances did dispute arise as to the amount of a minimum wage where such minimum was required.

So, too, with linen weavers in Forfarshire, where, quite recently, a number of minimum wages were introduced at the close of a six weeks' strike.

So, too, in the building trade, where each department may have its own minimum wage, and where recently such wage was fixed for the lasters and plasterers of London at quite a different rate to the minimum wage of lasters and plasterers elsewhere, or to that of other branches of the building trade in London itself.

So, too, and especially in the boot trade. I am beginning to know something about boots—army boots, navy boots, marine boots, glacé kids, Louis XV. heelworkers, East End boots, West End boots, etc., and have myself fixed scores of minimum wages for every kind of boot in all kinds of localities—all different.

Of course, an instance may occur where one decision affects or standardises a large number of factories. Thus, with the bar cutters in the tinsplate industry where uniform wages and a minimum in different works followed the result of a decision given in respect of one factory only. But this does not affect the general principle that on the whole the course of trade would appear to point to a varying minimum in the first instance.

There are two other problems I might briefly mention—which always appear at every conference where the minimum wage is discussed—that of old age and of learners. All of us tend to grow old, and yet when a man reaches an age when his powers fail, still he is good for some work. His employer may be willing to continue the man's service, paying liberally for what it is worth. Ought the employer to be called upon to do more? And if he be, may not he be compelled in self defence to discharge the workman? And is there or can there be any legislation which can compel him not to? Old age pensions are not yet in being, and the establishment of a minimum wage in some industries may hurt the old workman. Can it not be met by a larger exercise of discretion or kindness by the Trade Unions, under proper restrictions to prevent use of the old for the purpose of lowering wages of the younger men? Certificates of exemption might in some trades be more widely given. The best method I have seen for dealing with this difficulty is contained in a clause usually inserted in the rules of boards of conciliation in New Zealand. I have with me a copy of this clause—one of the worst drafted documents I ever read, if my copy is correct—but its intention is more or less perceptible, though it would require adaptation to the circumstances of localities

in this country.* An eminent representative of that splendid and beautiful country will doubtless bring it more fully before you ; I will not forestall his remarks.

Then, is the same minimum wage to be paid to the lad of twenty barely taught the trade and the man of experience in his prime ? In some trades the youth is the better of the two in these days of strain and stress, but every one has to learn, and though the employment of learners should not oust the learned, a point of division has often to be found.

To these two last points I think I may fairly direct your careful and practical consideration. They always arise. They always cause bitterness. With tact they can generally be settled. But more than anything else they are the rift within the lute, hindering voluntary agreement between employers and employed in the majority of industries on the point of a minimum wage.

Now I am sure you will say that I have suggested problems enough. They afford no ground for discouragement, but, on the contrary, do they not seem to indicate that there are lines of least resistance upon which your idea or general object may mature ? Certainly specific industries are capable of having a minimum wage established in their different branches by classification, investigation, and a decision either by agreement or by arbitration. The special grievance of sweating is a great evil, and it is truly good work even to attempt to remove it. Where employers take advantage of the necessities or weakness of those they employ to exact much work in return for inequitable payment, some remedy is clearly needed. The extent to which the demand for and the agreement to a minimum wage has increased in so many industries tends to show that a remedy will be found, and also the best method for applying the remedy. Will you allow me to hope that the success that ever attends the advocacy of a just cause may be the result of your endeavours ? (Applause.)

* The copy of the clause mentioned runs as follows: "Any workman who considers himself not capable of earning the minimum wage may be paid such less wage as may from time to time be agreed upon in writing between any employer and the secretary or president of the union ; and in default of such agreement within 24 hours after such journeyman shall have applied in writing to the secretary of the union, stating his desire that such wage shall be agreed upon as shall be fixed in writing by the chairman of the conciliation board for the industrial district upon the application of such journeyman after 24 hours' notice in writing to the secretary of the union, who shall, if desired by him, be heard by such chairman on such application. Any journeyman whose wage shall have been so fixed may work and be employed for such less wage for the period of six calendar months thereafter, and after the expiration of the said period of six calendar months, until 14 days' notice in writing shall have been given to him by the secretary of the union requiring his wage to be again fixed in manner prescribed by this clause."

Present Steps towards a Minimum Wage.

MR. STEPHEN WALSH, M.P., contributed a paper on "Present Steps towards a Minimum Wage." He said: In dealing with this subject I feel I ought to confine myself to the industry of mining, and I shall speak of the federated area where field rates and wages have been regulated during the past twelve years by a Conciliation Board. Of course, the miner's ideal has always been a minimum wage, and not a very low minimum either (hear, hear). There are few people who have not heard the old saying, "Eight hours work, eight hours play, eight hours sleep, and eight shillings a day" (laughter). That refrain is at least half a century old, but the idea embodied in it is still very far from realisation.

Mr. Askwith spoke of varying conditions in existing industries. Probably no industry in the whole country affords such an infinity of varying conditions as does mining. Although not looked upon or classed as a skilled trade, mining is a trade that requires considerable skill if the miner is to become dexterous. Yet it is a trade invaded by a large number of men who have had little or no experience. The varying conditions in the mine—the roof, the floor, the temperature, the hardness of the coal—all operate either for the miner or against him. Here, again, very considerable misconception prevails in the public mind. A man may be one of the finest workmen it is possible to find, but on account of the infinitely varied conditions of his work it may be impossible for him to earn anything like a fixed wage. He is at the caprice of an official. In 1888 the Miners' Federation determined that, as far as possible, they would lift up wages. They felt that a miner's earnings were insufficient to secure for him a comfortable or even decent existence. They were told by the employers that it was impossible to force the public to pay a higher price, that, speaking generally, the laws of supply and demand operated against them, and that the prices were hopelessly insufficient to enable them to pay better wages to the working man. The men's leaders maintained that inasmuch as a workman had a right to live in a fair degree of comfort his labour should come before the employer's right to make profits out of such labour (hear, hear), and even before the consumer's right to have fuel at a low rate (hear, hear), and that, therefore, employers must insist upon better selling prices from the general public. That was done. How largely the consuming public were bettered in the bargain—to use no stronger expression—was proved by the fact that while 40 per cent. interest was added to the tonnage rate of the mine, after four years very nearly 100 per cent. was put upon the selling price. (A voice: The old game.) There were those who thought that the men were outrageous in their demands, that they were earning very large wages, that their position was one of great comfort if not of affluence. But the average wage paid by the employer in 1888 was 5s. a day for the collier in the Federation area. Even in the great lock-out in 1893, when the colliers' earnings had been

uplifted by 40 per cent., the collier could not be earning more than 7s. a day. That might be considered to be a big figure compared with other unskilled trades. But the trade was of a very fluctuating character. It must be remembered that the men were not working more than nine days in the fortnight—in the Midlands, pits were not worked more than three or four days a week. That means that the average wage of the coal hewer comes out at about 28s. a week—a figure borne out by statistics of the money paid in compensation claims. That is the very best class of workman.

It was in 1894 that a Conciliation Board was formed consisting of twelve representatives from each side, with an independent chairman, who was called upon in the event of disagreement. In 1893 the employers asked for 25 per cent. reduction, and it will be remembered what a terrible lock-out ensued, causing suffering not only to the men but to the public. In 1894 the Conciliation Board was formed, and the men assented to a 10 per cent. reduction. In 1894-96 the Board continued. It lapsed for two years, was revived in 1898, and has since been renewed at periods of three years.

Although the men have this means of defending themselves, they are still earning, roughly, about 28s. a week. Women and boys are very largely outside the union. The girls working on the surface are also not in the union. In fact, it may be said that something like 80 per cent. of the surface hands are not in any organisation, with the consequence that in negotiations with the employers the men are constantly told that these people must be excluded from consideration. The growing youth cannot have his wages determined by the Board, but they are fixed by the employer's estimate of his usefulness.

Girl labour on the surface has existed for more than 30 years, and Lancashire especially suffers from it. A few pits in the south-west district and a large number in Scotland also employ girl labour. Thirty years ago girls were paid anything from 1s. 4d. to 2s. 6d. on the pit banks, and they were working, certainly, not longer hours than at present—even shorter hours in Lancashire. The chances are that a woman will now earn from 1s. 3d. to 2s., 1s. 8d. being about the average. As the working hours are about nine and a-half per day the wage comes out very little better than 2d. an hour. It might be said that the work did not require much skill or physical energy. Cleaning the dross is not heavy work, and pushing wagons has been done away with. But many of the women are exposed to the inclemency of the weather. The fact remains, too, that these girls are earning less than they did 30 years ago, and have to depend partly for a living upon the earnings of fathers and brothers in the mine. In no case, if we take Lancashire, are the women working even in good years, more than nine days a fortnight; and a wage of 6s. 9d. a week, with a reduction for the club of which she is a member, is utterly insufficient for a woman's subsistence wage. Twenty-eight shillings a week paid to a collier are practically wages paid to him

and his girls, so that their combined wages may eke out a family living. Boys on the surface are in a very similar condition. They earn wages ranging between 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d., and work similar hours. Though much of the labour requires skill and great strength, the pay does not work out at more than 3d. per hour.

Then there is the day hand in the mine. We are repeatedly told that these men are not men for whom an organisation can bargain. Young boys going into the mine will be under the charge of officials, who have the power of raising their wages as their usefulness increases. The same thing applies to the adult hand. Whereas 20 years ago day wage men were earning 4s. to 5s. a day we find that to-day little more than 40 per cent. is suggested to have been placed on their wages.

I can only say that this apparent improvement in the men's position is very illusory ; the generosity of the employer has not been applied. As a matter of fact, when the increased hours of work and the higher price of fuel, household commodities and house rent are considered, the day hands in the mine are in a worse condition than they were eighteen years ago.

Although one of the most powerful of the trade organisations has been endeavouring to establish a minimum wage for the coal mining industry in the federated area, it has so far not succeeded in doing so. An attempt has been made to abolish the piece rate but there is the risk of inviting competition and bringing in the unemployed compelled by physical necessity. It has been generally found that if a man leaves work in a mine the man who takes his place earns sixpence a day or so lower than the wages his predecessor received. Again, the mining tonnage rate is no indication of the earning capacity of a man. The diversities are so infinite that it is impossible to say what a man can earn on a particular tonnage rate, and so the decision is left to the caprice of the official in the mine.

We have, however, established over large areas not the mere field rate but price lists and working conditions that have focussed and crystallised payment for varying conditions in the mines. But there is a large section of the mines in which this particular work has not been done.

Nevertheless, 18 years of continuous effort has failed to delete the present wages system, failed to establish a minimum wage. I can only ask the Conference to consider if a great organisation numbering well over three hundred thousand workers has failed to do this what must be the task of establishing a minimum wage in an industrial body which is hardly organised at all. That is not a plea for abandoning the task. (Hear, hear.) I hope that the labour will continue and that your deliberations will result in practical resolutions. I hope, too, that certain definite conclusions will be arrived at that will bring about a bright future for working people. (Applause.)

DISCUSSION.

A discussion followed the reading of the papers by Messrs. Askwith and Walsh.

Mr. DEWBERRY (Fawcett Association) said that if the recent Anti-Sweating Exhibition meant anything at all it meant that there were millions of workers who were either unorganised or badly organised, and who should have a minimum wage fixed for them, because, unlike skilled organisations, they were unable to fix wages for themselves. Advantage was taken of the isolated condition of these people to force down their wages to almost starvation point.

Mr. SEDDON (Shop Assistants) asserted that business had not been materially injured by the operation of the present Compensation Act.

Mr. BROWNLIE (Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society, Woolwich) said, that although the municipality in which he lived paid a minimum wage of 30s. a week, he failed to see how a national minimum wage could become an established fact so long as the present industrial conditions prevailed. Wages were largely determined by what they could purchase. What was to prevent the raising of the price of commodities? What was going on in the soap industry would go on all round. In his opinion it was not possible to have a national minimum wage so long as the means of production were owned by a small minority. (Applause.)

Miss HICKS (Kentish Town Branch, S.D.F.) regarded it as a ridiculous thing that there should be a variable minimum. The minimum should be a fixed one. If 30s. was necessary for living, why should it grow less because the worker was young or too old? The sweating wage was often brought about by the worker being in want of food. People were often glad to evade the law in order to live. Even if a minimum wage were established, unless the Government were willing to be a reserve employer, the law would be evaded both by the employer and by the worker. She thought a minimum wage of 30s. should be fixed. If the employer were a business man he could accommodate himself to any conditions of employment; if the consumer paid too little, then he must pay more.

Mr. H. QUELCH (S.D.F.) expressed some doubt as to what sweating really was. It appeared to him that all industries were sweated, and that what Mr. Walsh said was true of all workers with whom he had been brought in contact. Where wages had risen within the past 30 years they had been forced up by increased cost of living and of travelling to and from home. If that was the case with organised labour what must it be with labour that was unorganised? Sweating did not arise from the depravity of the purchaser nor from the rapacity of the capitalist employer; it arose from the poverty of the sweated. They might pay the best possible price for a commodity and yet have no guarantee that those engaged in making it had not been sweated. The remedy was to prevent everything in the nature of out-work. The worst form of

sweating was the sweating of little children. The slavery of little children must be absolutely prohibited. It was impossible to show in an exhibition the worst conditions of sweating, viz., the conditions in which the work was carried on. Those conditions could not be decently reproduced in a public exhibition. Unless they could take children out of the factory and rigorously enforce the raising of the school age very little could be done, even with a minimum wage to mitigate the worst evils of the present system. (Applause).

Mrs. ELLIOTT (Clapton Park Co-operative Society) pointed out that many a poor woman with nothing to live upon had to drive the hardest bargain with the sweaters. It was a disgrace to the richest country in the world. Although a lower wage might be paid in Continental countries there were better conditions in other respects. Sweating, in her opinion, could be traced to the purchaser. At the co-operative societies they could get articles that were produced without sweated labour.

Mr. ROSENFURB (Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses) said he belonged to a trade that was difficult to organise because the work lent itself to so much sub-division that it had from a skilled trade become almost an unskilled trade. In his opinion a move in the direction of a minimum wage was the compulsory workshop. He agreed with Mr. Quelch that the purchaser was not entirely to blame. There were thousands of gentlemen who believed that their clothes were made under fair and sanitary conditions, but he assured the Conference that the very highest in the land were clothed with garments made in sweating dens. He knew shops covered with royal warrants which never employed men engaged under Trade Union conditions. Not one naval officer in twenty had his uniform made under fair conditions. The uniforms of admirals and vice-admirals were made in some of the filthiest dens in Portsmouth. But for the law of libel the press and the Trade Unions might expose these scandals.

Miss GURNEY (Tenants' Co-partnership Housing Council) said that it was impossible to level up the price of commodities owing to foreign competition, but that was no reason why there should be any interference with the minimum wage which certain trades were able to secure. The question of the State as a reserve employer was beyond the scope of the Conference. She supposed that a minimum wage would vary at certain ages, and she believed that something might be done by a revival of the apprenticeship system.

Mr. ALLEN GEE (General Union of Weavers) hoped Mr. Askwith would tell them whether a minimum wage should be established by Parliament or by the Trade Unions. In his opinion there was no chance of getting it except through Parliament. He hoped the Co-operative Societies would show that they meant to go upon a minimum wage. He did not mean a piece rate but a weekly rate for fifty-two weeks in the year. In Huddersfield there was an industry paying five per cent. where this was done with every worker whether he was working full time or not.

Mr. MALLALIEU (Felt Hatters) said that they had been able to get a minimum wage in his industry and they insisted upon the same price being paid to women as to men.

Mr. ASKWITH said he had received three questions from Mr. Ben Tillett as to the approximate estimate of the national wealth, the amount of national income and the amount of capital used in the payment of wages. For answers to the first two questions he would refer Mr. Tillett to Mr. Chiozza Money's book on the subject. As for the third question, he believed that the Board of Trade had tried to get some sort of census of wages in some trades and see if any basis could be arrived at, but at present the figures were not in existence and opposition had been raised by many employers. In the United States there was a general census of wages. With regard to the Compensation Act, the report of the Home Office Departmental Committee stated that there was no finally harmful effect upon business either to employer or to worker, though no doubt business was affected while the Act was in contemplation. As for the question of a minimum wage, a difficulty would arise if an employer refused to employ and went out of business. There were several ways of establishing a minimum wage but he believed that the best way of attacking sweating was to first establish a minimum wage in the skilled trades and in various departments of skilled trades, gradually transferring other trades as soon as they could secure a minimum in those trades.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

At the afternoon session the chair was taken by Mr. A. G. GARDINER.

The first paper read was by Mr. SIDNEY WEBB, L.C.C., on

The Economics of the Minimum Wage.

The main question for the economist to consider is how the adoption and enforcement of a definite minimum of wages in particular trades is likely to affect, both immediately and in the long run, the productivity of the nation's industry.

Upon this point the verdict of political economy, whatever it may be worth, is emphatic and clear. To the modern economist there seems nothing in the device of a legal minimum of wages, especially where (as would in the great majority of trades be the case) it takes the form of a standard piecework list, that is in any way calculated to diminish productivity. On the contrary, all experience, as well as all theory, seems to show that, as compared with no regulation of wages, it must tend to increase productivity.*

* The present paper is an abstract of a portion of a chapter in *Industrial Democracy*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb (Longmans: 1902), in which a large number of additional facts, illustrations, and arguments on the subject will be found.

Here we have, in fact, the lesson of actual experience from a whole century of industrial experiment. It is only necessary to watch the actual operation, in trade after trade, of analogous common rules, many of them enforced by law. These common rules, like the legal minimum wage, are always minima, not maxima. Every employer prefers to be free to do whatever he chooses; to compete on the downward way as well as on the upward way. But the enforcement in any industry of a standard rate, a normal day, and prescribed conditions of sanitation and safety does not prevent the employer's choice of one man rather than another, or forbid him to pick out of the crowd of applicants the strongest, most skilful, or best conducted workman. The universal enforcement of a legal minimum wage would in no way abolish competition for employment. It does not even limit the intensity of such competition or the freedom of the employer to take advantage of it. All that it does is to transfer the pressure from one element in the bargain to the other—from the wage to the work, from price to quality. In fact, this exclusion from influence on the contract of all degradation of price, whether it takes the form of a lower rate of wages, longer hours of labour, or worse conditions of sanitation and safety, necessarily heightens the relative influence on the contract of all the elements that are left. If the conditions of employment are unregulated, it will frequently pay an employer not to select the best workman, but to give the preference to an incompetent or infirm man, a "boozer" or a person of bad character, provided that he can hire him at a sufficiently low wage, make him work excessive and irregular hours, or subject him to insanitary or dangerous conditions. If the employer cannot go below a common minimum rate, and is unable to grade the other conditions of employment down to the level of the lowest and most necessitous wage-earner in his establishment, he is economically impelled to do his utmost to raise the level of efficiency of all his workers, so as to get the best possible return for the fixed conditions.

This is the basis of the oft-repeated accusation brought by the sentimental lady or district visitor against the Trade Union standard rate, and now by foolish persons against the Workmen's Compensation Act, that it prevents an employer from preferentially selecting an old man, or a physical or moral invalid, when there is a vacancy to be filled. But it is clear that the efficiency of industry is promoted by every situation being filled by the best available candidate. If the old man is engaged instead of the man in the prime of life, the man of irregular habits rather than the steady worker, there is a clear loss all round. From the point of view of the economist, concerned to secure the highest efficiency of the national industry, it must be counted to the credit of the legal minimum wage that it would compel the employer, in his choice of men to fill vacancies, to be always striving, since he cannot get a "cheap hand," to exact, for the price that he has to pay, greater strength and skill, a higher standard of sobriety and regular attendance, and a superior capacity for responsibility and initiative.

But the rigid enforcement of a legal minimum wage would do more than act as a perpetual stimulus to the selection of the fittest men for employment. The fact that the employer's mind is constantly intent on getting the best possible workmen silently and imperceptibly reacts on the wage-earners. The young workman, knowing that he cannot secure a preference for employment by offering to put up with worse conditions than the standard, seeks to commend himself by a good character, technical skill, and general intelligence. There would accordingly with a legal minimum wage be secured what our present system fails to secure, not only a constant selection of the most efficient but also a positive stimulus to the whole class to become more and more efficient.

We have also to consider the effect on the living human being of the more adequate wages that the enforcement of a legal minimum would involve in the lowest grades. If unrestricted individual competition among the wage-earners resulted in the universal prevalence of a high standard of physical and mental activity, it would be difficult to argue that a mere improvement of sanitation, a mere shortening of the hours of labour, or a mere increase in the amount of food and clothing obtained by the workers or their families would of itself increase their industrial efficiency. Even in the United Kingdom at least eight millions of the population—over one million of them, as Mr. Charles Booth tells us, in London alone—are at the present time existing under conditions represented by adult male earnings of less than a pound a week. The unskilled labourer, who is only half fed, whose clothing is scanty and inappropriate to the season, who lives with his wife and children in a single room in a slum tenement, and whose spirit is broken by the ever-recurring irregularity of employment, cannot by any incentive be stimulated to much greater intensity of effort, for the simple reason that his method of life makes him physiologically incapable of either the physical or mental energy that would be involved. Even the average mechanic or factory operative, who earns from 20s. to 35s. per week, seldom obtains enough nourishing food, adequate amount of sleep, or sufficiently comfortable surroundings to allow him to put forth the full physical and mental energy of which his frame is capable. No middle-class brain-worker who has lived for any length of time in households of typical factory operatives or artisans can have failed to become painfully aware of their far lower standard of nutrition, clothing, and rest, and also of vitality and physical and mental exertion. It has accordingly been pointed out by many economists, from J. R. M'Culloch to Professor Marshall, that, at any rate so far as the weakest and most necessitous workers are concerned, improved conditions of employment would bring with them a positive increase of production. "A rise in the standard of life for the whole population," we are now expressly told, "will much increase the national dividend, and the share of it which accrues to each grade and to each trade." We see, therefore, that a legal minimum wage, so far as the wage-earner is concerned, is calculated—at any

rate if it takes the form of a standard piecework list—to promote the action of both forces of evolutionary progress; it tends constantly to the selection of the fittest, and at the same time provides both the mental stimulus and the material conditions necessary for functional adaptation to a higher level of skill and energy.

Let us now consider the probable effects of a legal minimum wage upon the brain-workers, including under this term all who are concerned in the direction of industry. Here the actual experience of the Factory Acts and strong Trade Unionism is very instructive. When all the employers in a trade find themselves precluded, by the existence of a common rule, from worsening the conditions of employment—when, for instance, they are legally prohibited from crowding more operatives into their mills or keeping them at work for longer hours, or, when they find it impossible owing to a strictly enforced piece-work list, to nibble at wages—they are driven, in their competitive struggle with each other, to seek advantage in other ways. We arrive, therefore, at the unexpected result that the enforcement of definite minimum conditions of employment positively stimulates the invention and adoption of new processes of manufacture. This has been repeatedly remarked by the opponents of Trade Unionism. Thus Babbage, in 1832, described in detail how the invention and adoption of new methods of forging and welding gun-barrels was directly caused by the combined insistence on better conditions of employment by all the workmen engaged in the old process. “In this difficulty,” he says, “the contractors resorted to a mode of welding the gun-barrel according to a plan for which a patent had been taken out by them some years before the event. It had not then succeeded so well as to come into general use, *in consequence of the cheapness of the usual mode of welding by hand labour*, combined with some other difficulties with which the patentee had had to contend. But *the stimulus produced by the combination of the workmen for this advance of wages* induced him to make a few trials, and he was enabled to introduce such a facility in welding gun-barrels by roller, and such perfection in the work itself, that in all probability very few will in future be welded by hand-labour. Similar examples,” continued Babbage, “must have presented themselves to those who are familiar with the details of our manufactures, but these are sufficient to illustrate one of the results of combinations It is quite evident that they have all this tendency; it is also certain that considerable stimulus must be applied to induce a man to contrive a new and expensive process; and *that in both these cases unless the fear of pecuniary loss had acted powerfully the improvement would not have been made.*” The Lancashire cotton trade supplied the same generation with a classic instance of “Trade Union folly” of this kind. Almost every contemporary observer declares that the adoption of the “self-acting” mule was a direct result of the repeated strikes of the cotton spinners between 1829 and 1836 to enforce their piecework lists, and that many other improvements in this industry sprang from the same stimulus. The

Edinburgh Review went so far as to say, in 1835, that "if from the discovery of the spinning frame up to the present, wages had remained at a level, and workers' coalitions and strikes had remained unknown, we can without exaggeration assert that the industry would not have made half the progress." And, coming down to our own day, I have myself had the experience of being conducted over a huge steel works in the North by the late Sir Charles Tennant, one of the ablest and most successful of captains of industry, and being shown one improvement after another which had been devised and adopted expressly because the workmen engaged at the old processes had, through their powerful Trade Unions, enforced a definite minimum standard wage. To the old economist, accustomed to the handicraftsman's blind hostility to machinery, this undesigned result of insistence on a standard wage seemed a proof of the shortsightedness of Trade Union action. The modern student perceives that the Trade Unions, in insisting on better conditions of employment than would have been yielded by individual bargaining, were "building better than they knew." To the wage-earners, as a class, it is of the utmost importance that the other factors in production—capital and brain power—should always be at their highest possible efficiency in order that the common product, on which wages no less than profits depend, may be as large as possible. The enforcement of the common rule on all establishments concentrates the pressure of competition on the brains of the employers and keeps them always on the stretch. "Mankind," says Emerson, "is as lazy as it dares to be," and so long as an employer can meet the pressure of the wholesale trader, or of foreign competition, by nibbling at wages or "cribbing time," he is not likely to undertake the "intolerable toil of thought" that would be required to discover a genuine improvement in the productive process, or even, as Babbage candidly admits, to introduce improvements that have already been invented. Hence the mere existence of a legal minimum wage, by debarring the hard-pressed employer from the most obvious form of relief, positively drives him to other means of lowering the cost of production.

But this is not all. Besides this direct effect in stimulating all the employers, the mere existence of a legal minimum wage would have another and even more important result on the efficiency of industry, in that it would tend steadily to drive business into those establishments which are most favourably situated, best equipped, and managed with the greatest ability, and to eliminate the incompetent or old-fashioned employer. This fact, patent to the practical man, was not observed by the older economists. Misled by their figment of the equality of profits, they seemed habitually to have assumed that an increase in the cost of production would be equally injurious to all the employers in the trade. The modern student at once recognises that a legal minimum wage, enforced throughout any trade, from its very nature, must always fail to get at the equivalent of all differential advantages of productive agents above the level of the worst actually required by

the community at any given time. When, for instance, the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners secures uniform piece-work lists, identical hours of labour, and similar precautions against accident and disease in all English cotton mills, it in no way encroaches upon the extra profits over and above those of the worst mill earned by firms of long-standing reputation for quality, exceptional commercial skill, or technical capacity. Similarly, it does nothing to deprive mills enjoying a special convenience of site, the newest and best machinery, valuable patent rights or trade connections, of the exceptional profits due to these advantages. The result is a steady elimination of the inferior establishments, and a constant tendency for the whole industry to be carried on under the most advantageous conditions. This, of course, is all to the good.

Thus, the probable effect of a legal minimum wage on the organisation of industry, like its effect on the manual labourer, and the brain-working entrepreneur, is all in the direction of increasing efficiency. Its effect on personal character would be in the right direction. It would in no way abolish competition, or lessen its intensity. What it would do is perpetually to stimulate the selection of the most efficient workmen, the best equipped employers, and the most advantageous forms of industry. It would in no way deteriorate any of the factors of production; on the contrary, its influence would act as a constant incentive to the further improvement of the manual labourers, the machinery, and the organising ability used in industry. In short, whether with regard to labour or capital, invention or organising ability, the mere existence of a legal minimum wage in any industry would promote alike the selection of the most efficient factors of production, their progressive functional adaptation to a higher level, and their combination in the most advanced type of industrial organisation. And these results would be permanent and cumulative. However slight might be the effect upon the character or physical efficiency of the wage-earner or the employer; however gradual might be the improvement in processes or in the organisation of the industry, these results would endure and go on intensifying themselves so that the smallest step forward would become, in time, an advance of the utmost importance.

Now, at this point, I ought perhaps to deal with the bogey of foreign competition, and the possible loss of our trade to rivals who are free to make their industry less efficient than our own. But as I cannot deal with everything in 20 minutes, I must perforce omit the economics of international trade.* But if the result of a legal minimum wage would be, as I have shown, to make our industry steadily more efficient and more productive, I need not waste time in demonstrating that this cannot put us at any disadvantage in our competition with the foreigner. Nations don't lose their trade

* For a very full examination of this problem see *Industrial Democracy*, by S. and B. Webb (Longmans, 1902); or *The Case for the Factory Acts*, by Mrs. Sidney Webb.

because they become more efficient and more productive; constantly reducing the amount of labour and time—that is, the cost—of production. We are not beaten by the incompetence and waste of our rivals, but by the incompetence and waste that we ourselves display in our present industrial organisation. What, at any rate, is clear to the economist is that a legal minimum wage would have no more effect, and no different an effect, on our international trade than the limitation of the hours of labour and the enforcement of sanitary conditions which our Factory Acts have imposed; and no educated person to-day—certainly no one having the least pretensions to economic knowledge—believe that our Factory Acts have been otherwise than beneficial to our international trade, which we see increasing by leaps and bounds.

I pass to a more interesting point. What would be the result of a legal minimum wage on the employer's present desire to use boy labour, girl labour, married woman's labour, the labour of old men, of the feeble-minded, of the decrepit and broken-down invalids, and all the other alternatives to the engagement of competent male adult workers at a full standard rate. What would be the effect, in short, upon the present employment, at wages far below a decent level, of workers who at present cannot (or at any rate do not) obtain a full subsistence wage.

To put it shortly, all such labour is parasitic on other classes, and is at present employed in this way only because it is parasitic.

When an employer, without imparting any adequate instruction in a skilled craft, gets his work done by boys or girls who live with their parents and work practically for pocket-money, he is clearly receiving a subsidy or bounty which gives his process an economic advantage over those worked by fully paid labour. But this is not all. Even if he pays the boys or girls a wage sufficient to cover the cost of their food, clothing, and lodging so long as they are in their teens, and dismisses them as soon as they become adults, he is in the same case. For the cost of boys and girls to the community includes not only their daily bread between 13 and 21, but also their nurture from birth to the age of beginning work, and their maintenance as adult citizens and parents. If a trade is carried on entirely by the labour of boys and girls and is supplied with successive relays who are dismissed as soon as they become adults, the mere fact that the employers pay what seems a good subsistence wage to the young people does not prevent the trade from being economically parasitic. The employer of adult women is in the same case where, as is usual, he pays them a wage insufficient to keep them in full efficiency, irrespective of what they receive from their parents, husbands, or lovers. In all these instances the efficiency of the services rendered by the young persons or women is being kept up out of the earnings of some other class. These trades are therefore as clearly receiving a subsidy as if the workers in them were being given a "rate in aid of wages." The employer of partially subsidised woman or child labour gains actually a double advantage over the self-supporting trades; he gets, without cost to himself, the extra energy due to the extra

food, and he abstracts—possibly from the workers at a rival process, or in a competing industry—some of the income which might have increased the energy put into the other trade.

But there is a far more vicious form of parasitism than this partial maintenance by another class. The continued efficiency of a nation's industry obviously depends on the continuance of its citizens in health and strength. For an industry to be economically self-supporting, it must, therefore, maintain its full establishment of workers, unimpaired in numbers and vigour, with a sufficient number of children to fill all vacancies caused by death or superannuation. If the employers in a particular trade are able to take such advantage of the necessities of their workpeople as to hire them for wages actually insufficient to provide enough food, clothing, and shelter to maintain them in average health; if they are able to work them for hours so long as to deprive them of adequate rest and recreation; or if they can subject them to conditions so dangerous or insanitary as positively to shorten their lives, that trade is clearly obtaining a supply of labour force which it does not pay for. If the workers thus used up were horses—as, for instance, on an urban tramway—the employers would have to provide, in addition to the daily modicum of food, shelter, and rest, the whole cost of breeding and training the successive relays necessary to keep up their establishments. In the case of free human beings, who are not purchased by the employer, this capital value of the new generation of workers is placed gratuitously at his disposal, on payment merely of subsistence from day to day. Such parasitic trades are not drawing any money subsidy from the incomes of other classes. But in thus deteriorating the physique, intelligence, and character of their operatives, they are drawing on the capital stock of the nation. And even if the using up is not actually so rapid as to prevent the "sweated" workers from producing a new generation to replace them, the trade is none the less parasitic. In persistently deteriorating the stock it employs it is subtly draining away the vital energy of the community. It is taking from these workers, week by week, more than its wages can restore to them. A whole community might conceivably thus become parasitic on itself, or, rather, upon its future. If we imagine all the employers in all the industries of the kingdom to be, in this sense, "sweating" their labour, the entire nation would, generation by generation, steadily degrade in character and industrial efficiency. And in human society, as in the animal world, the lower type developed by parasitism, characterised as it is by the possession of smaller faculties and fewer desires, does not necessarily tend to be eliminated by free competition. The degenerate forms may, on the contrary, flourish in their degradation, and depart farther and farther from the higher type. Evolution, in a word, if unchecked by man's selective power, may result in degeneration as well as in what we choose to call progress. It is to prevent this result that every civilised nation has been driven, by a whole century of experiment, to the adoption of

stringent factory legislation as regards sanitation and hours of labour. But water-closets and leisure do not, of themselves, maintain the nation's workers in health and efficiency, or prevent industrial parasitism. Just as it is against public policy to allow an employer to engage a woman to work excessive hours or under insanitary conditions, so it is equally against public policy to permit him to engage her for wages insufficient to provide the food and shelter, without which she cannot continue in health. Once we begin to prescribe the minimum conditions under which an employer should be permitted to open a factory, there is no logical distinction to be drawn between the several clauses of the wage contract. From the point of view of the employer, one way of increasing his expenses is the same as another, whilst to the economist and the statesman, concerned with the permanent efficiency of industry and the maintenance of national health, adequate food is at least as important as reasonable hours or good drainage. To be completely effectual, the same policy will, therefore, have to be applied to wages. Thus, to the economist, the enforcement of a legal minimum wage appears but as the last of a long series of common rules which experience has proved (a) to be necessary to prevent national degradation, and (b) positively advantageous to industrial efficiency.

Does this mean that the enforcement of a legal minimum wage in any sweated industry will involve the destruction of that industry? By no means.

When any particular way of carrying on an industry is favoured by a bounty or subsidy, this way will almost certainly be chosen, to the exclusion of other methods of conducting the business. If the subsidy is withdrawn, it often happens that the industry falls back on another process which, less immediately profitable to the capitalists than the bounty-fed method, proves positively more advantageous to the industry in the long run. This result, familiar to the Free Trader, is even more probable when the bounty or subsidy takes the form, not of a protective tariff, an exemption from taxation, or a direct money grant, but the privilege of exacting from the manual workers more labour-force than is replaced by the wages and other conditions of employment. The existence of negro slavery in the Southern States of America made, while it lasted, any other method of carrying on industry economically impossible; but it was not really an economic advantage to cotton-growing. The "white slavery" of the early factory system stood, so long as it was permitted, in the way of any manufacturer adopting more humane conditions of employment; but when the Lancashire mill-owners had these more humane conditions forced upon them, they were discovered to be more profitable than those which unlimited freedom of competition had dictated. The low wages to which, in the unregulated trades, the stream of competitive pressure forces employers and operatives alike, are not in themselves any more economically advantageous to the industry than the long hours and the absence of sanitary precautions were to the early cotton mills of Lancashire. To put it plumply, if the employers

paid more, the labour would be worth more. In so far as this proved to be the case, the legal minimum wage would have raised the standard of life without loss of work, without cost to the employer, and without disadvantage to the community. Moreover, the mere fact that employers are at present paying lower wages than the proposed minimum is no proof that the labour is not "worth" more to them and to the customers; for the wages of the lowest grade of labour are fixed, not by the worth of the individual labourer, but largely by the necessities of the marginal man, or, rather, the marginal woman. It may be well that, rather than go without the particular commodity produced, the community would willingly pay more for it and yet consume nearly as much of it as it now does. Nevertheless, so long as the wage-earner can be squeezed down to a subsistence or, more correctly, a parasitic wage, the pressure of competition will compel the employer so to squeeze him, whether the consumer desires it or not.

The question then arises what effect the prohibition of parasitism would have on the individuals at present working in the sweated trades. We need not dwell on the inevitable personal hardships incidental to any shifting of industry or change of process. Any deliberate improvement in the distribution of the nation's industry ought, therefore, to be brought about gradually, and with equitable consideration of the persons injuriously affected. But there is no need to assume anything like all those now receiving less than the legal minimum wage would be displaced by its enactment.

We see, in the first place, that the very levelling up of the standard conditions of sanitation, hours and wages would, in some directions, positively stimulate the demand for labour. The contraction of the employment of boys and girls, brought about by the needful raising of the age for full and half time respectively, would, in itself, increase the number of situations to be filled by adults. The enforcement of the normal day, by stopping the excessive hours of labour now worked by the most necessitous operatives, would automatically absorb the best of the unemployed workers in their own and allied occupations, and would create a new demand for learners. Finally, the abandonment of that irregularity of employment which so disastrously affects the out-workers and the London dock-labourers, would result in the enrolment of a new permanent staff. All these changes would bring into regular work at or above the legal minimum whole classes of operatives, selected from among those now only partially or fitfully employed. Thus, all the most capable and best conducted would certainly obtain regular situations. But this concentration of employment would undoubtedly imply the total exclusion of others who might, in the absence of regulation, have "picked up" some sort of a partial livelihood. In so far as these permanently unemployed consisted merely of children, removed from industrial work to the schoolroom, few, and certainly no economist, would doubt that the change would be wholly advantageous. And there are many who would welcome a reorganisation of industry which, by

concentrating employment exclusively among those in regular attendance, would tend to exclude from wage-labour, and to set free for domestic duties, an ever increasing proportion of the women having young children to attend to. There would still remain to be considered the remnant who, notwithstanding the increased demand for adult male labour and independent female labour, proved to be incapable of earning the legal minimum in any capacity whatsoever. We should, in fact, be brought face to face with the problem, not of the unemployed but of the unemployable, those whom no employer would employ at the legal minimum even if trade was booming and he could get nobody else.

The unemployable, to put it plumply, do not and cannot under any circumstances earn their keep. What we have to do with them is to see that as few as possible of them are produced; that such of them as can be cured are (almost at whatever cost) treated so as promptly to remove their incapacity, and that the remnant are provided for at the public expense as wisely, humanely, and inexpensively as possible.

I cannot here enter into the appropriate social regimen and curative treatment best calculated to minimise the production of the unemployable in each sub-division, and to expedite the recovery of such as are produced. Once they exist these physical and moral weaklings and degenerates must somehow be maintained at the expense of other persons. They may be provided for from their own property or savings, by charity, or from public funds, with or without being set to work in whatever ways are within their capacity. But of all ways of dealing with these unfortunate parasites, the most ruinous to the community is to allow them unrestrainedly to compete as wage-earners for situations in the industrial organisation. For this at once prevents competition from resulting in the selection of the most fit, and thus defeats its very object. In the absence of any common rule, it will, as we have seen, often pay an employer to select a physical or moral invalid, who offers his service for a parasitic wage, rather than the most efficient workman, who stands out for the conditions necessary for the maintenance of his efficiency. In the same way a whole industry may batten on parasitic labour, diverting the nation's capital and brains from more productive processes, and undermining the position of its more capable artisans. And where the industrial parasitism takes the form of irregular employment, as, for instance, among the outworkers in all great cities and the London dock labourers, its effect is actually to extend the area of the disease. The consumers' demand—which governs the employers' requirements—would suffice to keep in regular work, at something like adequate weekly earnings, a certain proportion of these casual workers. But because it is distributed as partial employment and partial maintenance among the entire class, its insufficiency and irregularity demoralise all alike, and render whole sections of the population of our large cities permanently incapable of regular conduct and continuous work. Thus the disease perpetuates itself, and becomes by its very vastness incapable of

being isolated and properly treated. A dim appreciation of the evil effects of any mixing of degenerates in daily life, joined, of course, with motives of humanity, has caused the sick and the infirm, the imbeciles and the lunatics, even the cripples and the epileptics, to be in all civilised communities increasingly removed off the competitive labour market and scientifically dealt with according to their capacities and their needs. The "labour colonies" of Holland and Germany are, from this point of view, an extension of the same policy. To maintain our industrial invalids, even in idleness, from public funds involves a definite and known burden on the community. To allow them to remain at large in parasitic competition with those who are whole is to contaminate the labour market, and means a disastrous lowering of the standard of life and standard of conduct not for them alone but for the entire wage-earning class.

The economist has thus to point out that the adoption of a legal minimum wage would in no way increase the amount of maintenance which has to be provided by the community in one form or another for persons incapable of producing their own keep. It would, on the contrary, tend steadily to reduce it, both by diminishing the number of weaklings or degenerates annually produced, and by definitely marking out such as exist, so that they could be isolated and properly treated.

There remains the question for the economist of the manner in which a legal minimum wage could be best determined and enforced. The object being to secure the community against the evils of industrial parasitism, the minimum wage for a man or woman respectively would be determined by practical inquiry as to the cost of the food, clothing, and shelter physiologically necessary, according to national habit and custom, to prevent bodily deterioration. Such a minimum would, therefore, be low, and though its establishment would be welcomed as a boon by the unskilled workers in the unregulated trades, it would not at all correspond with the conception of a "living wage" formed by the cotton operatives or the coal miners. That it must be left to themselves to secure by collective bargaining. It would be a matter for careful consideration what relation the minimum for adult men should bear to that for adult women: what differences, if any, should be made between town and country; and whether the standard should be fixed by national authority (like the hours of labour for young persons and women), or by local authority (like the educational qualification and hours for child labour). To those not practically acquainted with the organisation of English industry and Government administration, the idea will seem impracticable. Of course, there will still be people up and down the country who will go on saying that it is impossible—whilst it is in actual operation, not only in Australia and New Zealand, but under their eyes. As a matter of fact, the authoritative settlement of a minimum wage is already undertaken daily. Every local governing body throughout the country has to decide under the criticism of public opinion what wage it will pay to its lowest

grade of labourers. It can hire them at any price, even at 1s. a day; but what happens in practice is that the officer in charge fixes such a wage as he believes he can permanently get good enough work for. In the same way the National Government, which is by far the largest employer of labour in the country, does not take the cheapest labourers it can get, at the lowest price at which they will offer themselves, but deliberately settles its own minimum wage for each department. During the last few years this systematic determination of the rate to be paid for Government labour, which must have existed from the days of Pepys, has been more and more consciously based upon what we have called the doctrine of a living wage. Thus, the Admiralty is now constantly taking evidence, either through the Labour Department or through its own officials, as to the cost of living in different localities, so as to adjust its labourer's wages to the expense of their subsistence. The Post Office has just been doing the same thing on a very elaborate scale. And in our local governing bodies we see the committees, under the pressure of public opinion, every day substituting a deliberately settled minimum for the haphazard decisions of the officials of the several departments. What is not so generally recognised is that exactly the same change is taking place in private enterprise. The great captains of industry, interested in the permanent efficiency of their establishments, have long adopted the practice of deliberately fixing the minimum wage to be paid to the lowest class of unskilled labourers, according to their own view of what the labourers can live on, instead of letting out their work to sub-contractors, whose only object is to exact the utmost exertion for the lowest price. A railway company never dreams of putting its situations out to tender, and engaging the man who offers to come at the lowest wage; what happens is that the rate of pay of porters and shunters is deliberately fixed in advance. And it is a marked feature of the last ten years that the settlement of this minimum has been, in some of the greatest industries, taken out of the hands of the individual employer, and arrived at by an arbitrator. The assumption that the wages of the lowest grade of labour must at any rate be enough to maintain the labourer in industrial efficiency is, in fact, accepted by both parties, so that the task of the arbitrator is comparatively easy. Lord James, for instance, a few years ago fixed, with universal acceptance, a minimum wage for all the lowlier grades of labour employed by the North Eastern Railway Company. Indeed, the fixing of a minimum wage on physiological grounds is a less complicated matter, and one demanding less technological knowledge than the fixing of a minimum of sanitation; and it interferes far less with the day-by-day management of industry, or its productivity, than any fixing of the hours of labour, whether of men or women. To put it concretely, if Sir George Livesey (of the South Metropolitan Gas Works) could for a moment rid himself of a sort of metaphysical horror of any legal regulation of wages, he would admit that the elaborate Factory Act requirements in the way of sanitation and safety, and any limitation in the hours of labour, constitute a far

greater impediment to the management of his own business in the way he thinks best than would any legal minimum of wages for the lowest grade of labour. As a matter of fact, what would happen would be the adoption, as the legal minimum, of the wages actually paid by the better establishments, who would accordingly be affected only to the extent of finding their competitors put on the same level as themselves.

On all counts, therefore, the modern economist must conclude that the enforcement, throughout each particular trade, of a legal minimum of wages would, like the analogous enforcement of common rules as to hours and sanitation by the Factory Acts, be calculated to have good, and not bad, economic results on the community as a whole. (Applause.)

Sweating in Relation to Trade Unions.

Miss GERTRUDE TUCKWELL (Women's Trade Union League) contributed a paper on "Sweating in Relation to Trade Unions." She said: I feel I have to ask your indulgence in appearing before a body composed in preponderating numbers of Trade Unionists to read a paper dealing with the subject in all details of which you are past masters, and your patience with me while, before coming to details, I put the broad lines of our Trade Union point of view.

The complete organisation of each trade, with perfect understanding between the workers of the different nations, is the goal we aim at to effect a balance between the combinations of workers and employers and give us healthy regulation of industry.

Industry without organisation, and therefore without resisting power, must result in the forcing down of wages and conditions till they reach the lowest level compatible with the existence of the wage-earner, and since, to quote the oft-quoted definition of the Dunraven Committee, sweating consists in an unduly low rate of wages, insanitary conditions, and excessive hours of labour, we can put it that universal sweating would be the result.

Here a combination of the two extremes exists. We have the richest and strongest Trade Unions in the world at one end of our industrial ladder, and chaos at the other. The worst instances of this chaos are to be found in the homes to which the protection extended to factory or workshop is denied. The one dwelling-room, converted into an unregulated workplace in which the whole family, old and young, the child, the infirm, the sick, labour ceaselessly for 1d. to 2d. an hour, forms the object lesson which has inspired the promoters of this Conference.

It is not possible to treat this question of sweated home-work as one of women's labour only. There are many men's trades which in some branches can be carried on at home. Those who saw the Sweated Industries Exhibition will remember the types of men's

labour—the umbrella maker whose pay worked out at something like 4d. an hour, the cabinet maker, who earning on an average 15s. a week, paid 7s. 6d. for rent, and the slipper maker who made 12s. a week, working on an average 14 to 15 hours a day.

Though home-work is at the bottom of the industrial ladder, it is not possible to confine instances of starvation wages to the home. In the less skilled ranks of factory and workshop life we find the same low average as compared with the cost of living in the district; we are perpetually confronted here with an average wage of 7s. a week.

The main object of a Trade Union being to force up wages and secure a standard rate, it is interesting to note the variation in prices paid for the same work where there is no Trade Union. In shirt finishing and button holing I have found a difference of 3d. and 4d. a dozen for the same work; in trouser finishing we have noted differences for the same work of 2½d. and 4d. a pair, and I have just been informed that in some cases it amounts to as much as 1s. 6d. a dozen.

The difference in the payment for blouses is even more noticeable. There is the same sort of discrepancy in mantle-making and in underclothing, and in one of the most sweated trades—that of paper bag making—the difference appears to amount to that of 5d. a thousand as paid by two firms for the same work.

The intervention of a middle man brings still more marked discrepancies in pay. We have found a difference of as much as 2s. a dozen in shirt-making in the price paid by a firm direct and that which was received from a sub-contractor.

Apart from the variation in the prices paid for the same work, the variation in prices at different times is notorious. Firms of increasing prosperity have lowered the rate at which they pay for underclothing “given out” from 1s. 6d. to 9d., and I believe the same decline has taken place in the price for the making of “uppers” in the boot and shoe trade by home women workers.

With the curse of want of regulation goes also that of irregularity of employment. Half the day may be spent in waiting for work; in some cases sufficient work is only given out to give employment for half a week, and there are trades in which the intermittency of the work amounts to weeks of “play.”

It is obvious that the existence of the low and fluctuating pay for a class of labour in any trade must have an acute effect on the labour in the same trade which aims at fixing a standard rate.

In the umbrella trade, in Manchester, I am told that the Trade Union rate for the men's work of making frames and cutting out covers comes to 28s. a week as fixed by the Trade Union, while as done in the homes the pay amounts to 20s.

Leaving isolated instances, I have here comparative tables in two trades. The first is sent me by Miss Wilson of Leicester, and gives the rates fixed by the women in the boot and shoe trade and in many instances obtained. She prefaces her list by the remark that “very many children are employed at 14-16 and 17 years of age at a very small wage, consequently the outworkers only receive

for a great deal of the work the same price that is reckoned for the sweated child labour." This, she points out, is in non-union factories.

	TRADE UNION.	NON-UNION.
Operator on a Silking Machine	19s. (50 hours) ..	7s. (52½-54)
	(Difference of 9d. and 3d. per gross.)	
Operator on Vamping Machine	4d. per hour. ..	1d.-2½d. per hour.
Fitters on a set wage receive from per week	15s. to 18s. and 20s. ..	9s. to 14s.
Machinists on a set wage receive from per week	16s. to 20s. ..	10s. to 15s. and 16s.
Silkers on a set wage receive from per week	16s. to 19s. ..	7s. and 8s. to 13s.
Vampers on a set wage receive from per week	16s. to 20s. ..	10s. to 15s.
Closers on a set wage receive from per week	15s. to 18s. ..	7s. and 8s. to 12s.
Button Holers on a set wage receive from per week	16s. to 18s. and 19s. ..	8s. to 13s.

"As these are the principal operations," says Miss Wilson, "you can no doubt guess what the minor ones would be and how hard some of the women have to work in order to earn anything like a wage."

AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF TAILORS AND TAILORESSES.

STATEMENT OF PRICES AS AGREED TO BETWEEN THIS BODY AND THE LONDON MASTER TAILORS' ASSOCIATION, AND OF THE "SWEATED" RATES FOR SIMILAR WORK.

	TRADE UNION.	NON-UNION.
Making Dress Coat.....	£1 5s. 6d. to £1 7s. 6d. .. (6d. to 7d. per hour.)	10s. to 16s. (These are prices where middleman is employed—16s. rarely reached.)
Gentleman's Frock Coat..	Do. ..	Do.
Dress Vest.....	8s. to 9s. 3d. ..	2s. 6d.
Dress Trousers.....	7s. 3d. to 8s. 5d. ..	2s. to 4s.
Ladies' Costume—		
Pressing.....		2½d.
Machining	(With very little extras) ..	9d.
Baisting	30s. ..	7d.
Felling		1½d.
		—1s. 7½d.
Ladies' Jackets—		
Pressing.....		1½d.
Baisting		3½d.
Machining	23s. ..	4½d.
Felling		½d.
		—9½d.

It is obvious that the competition of the sweated branches of trades with those which are organised, and demand a standard rate, is disastrous. The existence of this mass of labour on which employers can fall back for the purpose of introducing competitors in a trade struggle is serious enough, but at all times the fact that

the cheapest labour is in many instances doing practically the same work as the better paid and regulated is a constant menace to "wages." The direct effect of this competition in affected trades is the most obvious, but it must not be forgotten that its effect on the whole trade of a country is, though less obvious, quite as serious. The position occupied by the lowest strata of labour must affect the whole, and the fact that there are thousands of persons unable to obtain a remuneration sufficient for more than bare existence affects also the position of the most highly organised and skilled trades, such as the textile operatives, the miners, or the engineers.

From the chaotic mass springs evil in every form—hospitals and workhouses are recruited by the underfed, overworked men and women; instances are given in H.M. Chief Inspector's report for 1895 of the deterioration in health of girl workers rendered unemployable by overwork; stunted, untrained children are turned into the labour market, and the overwork of women and the competition of children meets with its necessary corollary in the great army of the unemployed.

The same mischievous want of organisation accounts for the glut of work at one time and irregular employment at others, of which all home workers complain; accounts also for the keeping alive of dying industries in the homes which cannot compete with machine labour nor afford adequate remuneration to the worker, such, for example, as match box making.

If I may cite one more point in which sweated labour competes unfairly with organised, I will instance the cases which we have met with, in which the outworker is subsidised by poor relief, and a struggle with rate aided labour is added to the difficulties of Trade Unionists.

You have met to consider the solution of these problems which it is impossible to meet by Trade organisation.

We are accustomed in matters of national importance, such as the conditions of factory life, to call in the law of the State in cases in which the law of the trade is likely for any reason to be inoperative. This appears to be an instance in which our intervention as citizens rather than as Trade Unionists is necessary. As a supporter of Trade Unionism it is impossible that I should suggest any method likely to trench on the province of the great Trade Unions. To suggest that where it is impossible to form a combination to regulate wages in a trade, the State should be called on to give us machinery by which the wages of that trade can be regulated is, I think, to ask for that which must be an essential help, not a hindrance, to Trade Unionism.

I dealt with the variation in rates of pay for home workers at some length in order to show how considerable a margin exists for forcing up the average wage. Considerations of space alone deterred me from citing the enormous discrepancy existing in many instances between the price paid to the worker and that charged for the finished article—but this, of course, is an element to be taken into account.

I would ask for this State regulation for sweated trades because of their powerlessness to combine. Not only would the great body of Trade Unions benefit from their regulation, but we believe that the improvement in the position of the sweated workers, which would result from the establishment of their wages would be the best possible factor in thenceforth making combination possible to them also.

I think I cannot end better than in the words of Lady Dilke, the late chairman of the Women's Trade Union League, and say that I am far from looking on Trade Unionism as the last word in the industrial question. "It is not the gospel of the future," she said, "but salvation in the present. The life of any great movement such as this for the salvation of the worker is like the life of man; it bears in its breast from the very beginning the seed of decay. I expect that by-and-by Trade Unionism will finish its work, but it is very far from having finished its perfected work." Those are her words, and one great factor, it seems to me, in helping us to perfect the work would be the establishment of a minimum wage in sweated trades. (Applause.)

DISCUSSION.

Discussion took place on the papers of Mr. Sidney Webb and Miss Tuckwell.

Mr. STOKES (London Trades Council), after remarking that the wage of a woman should not differ from that of a man, and should not be less than 30s. a week, referred to co-operative societies, which, he maintained, would not, in their present state, bring about a minimum wage.

Mr. PETE CURRAN agreed with the last speaker that anything less than 30s. would be a sweating wage. Workmen, he said, were often twitted with encouraging the sweating system, but the producer of the shoddy article only got enough wages to enable him to purchase the shoddy article. He maintained that an all round minimum wage would tend towards a general increase in the purchasing power, and in that way it would be to some extent a palliative for present-day conditions. He subscribed to the idea that all remedies to improve the capitalist system could only be palliatives of an immediate character. Destitution could never be done away with until society was reconstituted on a definite basis. He admitted that there were unemployable people. A good many of them lived in Piccadilly (laughter), and if they could get rid of that class they would go some way towards finding a remedy. He would not fix the onus of the position upon those people; they were the victims of their environment. What about the people outside the legal minimum rate of wages—the people who could not be employed at all? None knew better than Mr. Sidney Webb what was going on in the way of the improvement of mechanical science, and there would be thousands of men

thrown out of employment, not because they were unemployable, but on account of the development of mechanical science. He submitted that while the capitalist system lasted they would have to seek some remedy for the development of machinery by establishing a legal eight-hour day. That could be brought about if the law-makers were desirous of doing it, and the people should compel their legislators to recognise that fact. As for syndicates, they could not wash their faces now without a syndicate (laughter). This system which gave employers the opportunity of getting labour in the cheapest market they must combat. They all deplored the fact that only a small portion of the workers were in organisations, and they had to recognise that the Trade Union movement was in the minority to-day. Considering the state of the unskilled labour market, it would be impossible to establish a minimum wage by Trade Union effort alone.

Miss CLEMENTINA BLACK said that improved processes nearly always led to improvement in selling prices, and they must remember that when a minimum wage was received by a wage earner it did not remain in his pocket, but went to promote trade. Nothing was more advantageous to trade than that the working classes should be well paid. The upper classes were already paying all they could spend, but the working classes might be spending more. Every worker who received a higher wage than formerly helped to put to work someone who was unemployed. Improvement of mechanical methods, if coinciding with an advance in wages, was an advance all round.

Mr. MAXWELL (Scottish Wholesale Co-operative) described an interesting experiment made by his society. They took a room with the necessary machines, and gave employment to a body of girl shirtmakers. The hours were 44 per week, as against the 18 hours a day worked in London by women who provided their own thread and received about 10d. The society lost money at first, but soon put the concern on a paying basis and helped the workers by giving them a share of the work they created. This they did in spite of paying an average wage of 18s. 3d., and having to compete with the sweaters. He did not believe that sweating was kept going by only the very poor; there were other people who made no inquiry as to whether goods were made under proper conditions.

Dr. HADEN GUEST (I.L.P.) said that, speaking as a medical man working in the East End of London, he knew at least 15 children who were dying solely on account of the conditions in which the families lived. He was not content that they should introduce reforms gradually. (Applause.) Other products, he maintained, should be subordinate to the men and women of a country. In the present state of society there would always be not only the unemployable (who should be provided for, and regarded from a humane standpoint) but the unemployed. A minimum wage would not interfere with the severity of competition, and it was only because it was part of the administrative machinery of socialism that he would support it.

Mr. BEN TURNER (Batley) said that work should not be only for a wage but for the enjoyment of life. Those who were in work should have a minimum wage, and those who could not find work should rely upon the State for productive and useful work. They had been told that the railway companies had fixed a minimum wage. He could tell them that the companies had done "now't of the sort." (Laughter). There were 200,000 railway servants who were paid £1 a week or less. It was certain that the railway companies fixed no minimum wage, except that they paid the lowest possible bit they could get workers for. One of the causes of sweating in his opinion was piece-work, a system invented to sweat the worker. As for co-operation, that was all right; it was the co-operators who were wrong. (Laughter.) He had a label in his hat; he wore a Trade Union shirt and co-operative clothing. He trusted they would bring pressure to bear upon their representatives in the House of Commons to do something for "the bottom dog."

Mr. HALSTEAD (Co-operative Productive Federation) thought a minimum wage would always be a fluctuating matter.

Mr. STEWART (Postmen's Federation) said they had been told that the minimum wage was a varying wage, but he believed that the minimum wage was not fixed by the profits of industry but that the law that fixed it was the iron law of starvation. Personally, he did not believe that any industry would go to the wall if they set up a system of minimum wage. When they had the same wage for men and women alike, the latter would no longer be used to cheapen the wages of men: One of the first steps to be taken was to abolish piece-work and child labour, another was to help unorganised labour to organise itself. When they got the minimum wage the number of the unemployed would be reduced, because the conditions of life would be better.

Mr. SMITH (London Cabdrivers) thought that the Government should force employers to pay labourers sufficient money to protect them in the same way as they paid for an army and navy to protect the capitalist.

Mr. BARNETT (Manchester) complained of the infrequent visits of the factory inspector and agreed that home work should be abolished.

Miss GERTRUDE TUCKWELL said she agreed that there should be a varying minimum, seeing that the cost of living varied in different places. She also agreed that women should be paid the same wages as men—for the same work. But it must be remembered that there were certain women's trades in which only women were engaged, and she thought that even if they could not get a 30s. wage something practical would be done by fixing up a 7s. wage to 15s.

Mr. SIDNEY WEBB pointed out that a legal minimum wage did not necessarily mean a proper wage; it meant merely a certain fixed definite wage. An investigation had recently been made by the Labour Department of the Board of Trade in order to arrive

at some standard rate for towns throughout the country irrespective of the competitive wage. The question was whether they preferred to take a fixed wage or take the chance of the market. They must base the fixed wage on a physiological standard. As far as he knew anything about women in industries it was a practical impossibility to find any case in which a woman did the same work as a man. In the cotton weaving industry they found men and women getting the same piece-work rates. As for piece-work they ought to be very careful before they concluded that piece-work was a bad thing. Time work, after all, was the work of the slave. As a matter of fact, the large majority of the organised trades not only preferred piece-work but would actually strike if placed upon time work. The piece-work to be avoided was unregulated piece-work. If they got a standard list it was a benefit to have piece-work. In his opinion the most seriously sweated industry in London was that of the unskilled dock labourer who was paid by time. If they thought that a minimum wage was not going to increase the productivity of industry let them not think it bad for the worker because it increased unemployment. All advantages were won upon the productivity of English industry. It was an old fallacy that machinery injured the workmen. Everything that increased the prosperity of the country was better for the wage-earner and for the employer. A minimum wage was only a means for ensuring that the employer did not get all the advantage. He denied that if they moved gradually they would not move quickly. If they wanted to get anything in England they got it gradually.



SECOND DAY.

MORNING SESSION.

Mr. GEO. N. BARNES, M.P., presided over the second session of the Conference on Thursday. Addressing the delegates at the opening of the meeting he said: I am here in a representative capacity and, in conjunction with Mr. Gill, chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, tender you the best wishes of the body and express the hope that some definite result will accrue to labour from your deliberations.

The abolition of sweating is one of the most difficult problems set before the reformer. It really represents the whole industrial question, and its solution would solve other problems. It is not too much to say that if sweating and unemployment were abolished, nearly all other industrial evils might be left to settle themselves. With regard to the minimum wage problem, Sir Charles Dilke, who occupied the chair with so much distinction yesterday, dealt with the question fully, and Mr. Stephen Walsh also dealt with the efforts made by miners to adopt a minimum wage. I cannot, however, refrain from making one observation, and that is that it seems to me that there is very little to show for all the work done during the past 20 or 25 years. It is now 20 years since the Industrial Remuneration Conference was held. Since then the Sweating Commission has come and gone. We have had more than one Anti-Sweating Exhibition, culminating in the exhibition held under the auspices of *The Daily News*. Yet there are probably as many sweated persons now as there were 20 years ago (hear, hear), and I believe I am right in saying that there is absolutely nothing on the statute book of the country to give effect to the principle of the minimum wage.

Nevertheless, during that period the productivity of labour has been increased by improved processes, by scientific knowledge, by "speeding up" in the workshop and in other ways. The whole industrial organisation has been placed on a more economical basis by the combination of capital. The manufacture and distribution of thread, for instance, is in the hands of one combination; soap shows a tendency to go in the same direction; engineering, ship building and other industries have been put in fewer hands.

The result is the increase of the national dividend but little advance has been made in the distribution of that dividend. (Hear, hear). Some capitalists are able to amass fortunes by using the labour of others; some Trade Unions have been able to lift themselves out of the industrial mire, but those in the lowest ranks are

left to the tender mercies of competition and to stew in their own juice. These latter form a residuum as men without hope and incapable of effort. I agree with a speaker of yesterday that it is just that class which requires help and that in helping them we shall help others. The condition of that class constitutes a menace if not a positive danger to society. There are some who regard these people as permanently hopeless, but it seems to me that those who argue in that way do not know the facts and forget that we are all in some degree the creatures of our own surroundings.

Going back fifty years to the Factory Act of that period I find legislation persistently opposed. It was said in answer to the demand for a Ten Hours Bill that all the profit was made in the last hour and that to cut off that hour would be to cut off profits altogether. Nevertheless, that last hour was cut off and the result was that labour was made more congenial, more efficient, and therefore more productive. Not only did labour benefit, but the owners of factories and the whole country benefited by the increased standard of comfort and the increased standard of intelligence.

Others, again, say that the present industrial system cannot bear any further burdens. The obvious answer is that any system must be modified and made subordinate to a decent standard of life, to healthy homes and to an intelligent people. I believe it is possible to impose a minimum wage on our present system of industry. If it cannot be done in the home-work then let us begin where it is possible. There are two main lines towards which our efforts can be directed. The first is the extension and encouragement of collectivist activity on democratic lines; the second is the closer association of the State and voluntary organisations, such as Trade Unions and co-operative societies. I do not, however, expect good and permanent results until public authorities are elected and guided by democratic sentiment. There are, indeed, public authorities who are more ungenerous in their dealings than some individual employers, because the direct human contact is not so much a factor in making the bargain. The remedy is for labour to get its views more distinctly voiced on these authorities. (Applause.) On the whole, however, the conditions of work under public authorities compare very favourably with those under private employers, and I find on reference to documents on hours and wages of labour issued during 1900-5, which were years of trade depression, and marked by hardening conditions for those in private employ, that the hours of labour of those publicly employed were, on the whole, reduced, while their wages were increased.

The aid of the State should be brought in to supplement voluntary effort. The education of the people was undertaken first by voluntary effort and later on was taken up by the State in response to the voice of public opinion. Similarly, voluntary associations of workmen have done something to establish minimum conditions, and I think that a Wages Board might very well be set up to ratify those conditions, which might vary according

to place and circumstances. There would, of course, still be trades that were unorganised because they are isolated. These should be encouraged and helped to combine, and I see no reason why the plan of the New Zealand Acts should not be followed and a very small number be taken to represent a trade and that number be recognised as a union. The co-operative movement might be brought in where Trade Unions are unsuitable. In Donegal I was brought in contact with an association that bought the products of home labour in Connemara. Very poor wages were paid, though the products went to London and were bought by rich people. If co-operation were introduced, I see no reason why the seal and sanction of the State should not be given to such associations whose operations were applicable to large areas. I believe at any rate that something might be attempted, something done.

I hope that your deliberations may result in practical suggestions being made that will form public opinion and stimulate it to bring speedy succour to those who so much need it. (Applause.)

Child Labour and a Minimum Wage.

Miss CLEMENTINA BLACK read a paper on "Child Labour and a Minimum Wage." She said: It was estimated by the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Employment of School Children in 1901 that *at least* 200,000 children of school age in this country were employed for wages. There is no reason to suppose that in the intervening five years that number has diminished. Some of these children are employed in home-work and in the carrying to and fro of home-work. As I went home yesterday I passed in Cheapside a little girl carrying a large bundle of tailoring. In all probability she was going to a good City tailor, whose customers, no doubt, thought that their clothing was made upon that tailor's premises. Some children are employed in and for shops as errand boys, etc., and many boys are injured for life by the carrying of heavy baskets. Many young boys are employed on carmen's vans, working for very long hours, and not rarely lifting heavy goods. Some children are employed as half-timers, especially in country towns, others, most disastrously of all, in street trading, which means, in part at least, selling in public-houses. When the late Miss Hogg, who first drew attention to this evil, consulted some of the teachers on the subject she found them unanimous in deploring the frequency with which such children sought customers in public-houses.

Even in establishments visited by the factory inspector this evil of child labour exists, and a case is known where a boy of twelve was employed for twenty-four hours with only one break of an hour. In another case a baker's boy was found before six o'clock in the morning cleaning the ashes from the oven. He was twelve years old, and for three years previously had been employed in delivering

loaves and running errands. Miss Martindale mentions the case of a boy found carrying a lump of clay weighing nearly 69 pounds. The boy's own weight was 77 pounds, and two years later the boy had scarcely grown, while his weight had increased by four pounds only. Several children of 13 and under were found working full time in brickfields. A rather remarkable fact, mentioned by a lady who knows it, is that men working in brickfields, though they are men of a pretty rough type, will not allow their own boys to work there.

Precisely the same thing is true of the glass works in the United States, where boys of ten and under run to and fro all day or all night with loads of hot glass. They work for the glass blowers—but they are not the glass blowers' children. In some parts of America the condition of the children is worse than with ourselves, which shows that a country may be well advanced in what is called progress, and yet, if the law does not intervene to protect the children, their labour will be exploited.

In the cotton mills of the Southern States children as young as seven are employed for very long hours by night as well as by day. In Georgia there is no law to prevent the working of children of any age for any number of hours. Of course, there are people who are trying to put a stop to this, but there are others who resist these attempts. Only last year American doctors came forward—just as English doctors did 80 years ago—and declared that from a hygienic point of view there was no need to prevent girls under 14 from standing at their work for twelve hours a day, or to prevent boys and girls under 14 from working a twelve hours' night. These are white children—not negro children. The negroes will not let their children do this.

If white children are not doing the same in this country it is not because English people are more scrupulous than Americans, but solely because our law has made it a punishable offence to employ children thus in factories. But since the law does not forbid it in the case of messenger boys and hotel boys, these may be employed all night in England—and probably are.

This kind of thing injures the children physically, mentally, and morally. Dr. Thomas, assistant medical officer to the London County Council, has stated that out of 386 wage-earning school-boys examined by him, 140 were anæmic, 131 showed signs of serious nervous disorder, 64 suffered from deformity, and 51 showed signs of severe heart trouble. In 1905, a London school-master in charge of 277 boys said, that out of 27 employed in various trades, only six were in good health. In 1900, a Manchester alderman spoke of the high death rate among Industrial School children, many of whom had been street sellers, while a Dublin doctor reported many cases of pneumonia among juvenile street traders.

Educationally there is plenty of evidence that the children suffer. One instance may suffice. Of the 27 employed boys mentioned above, 18 were below the average standard for their age—one as much as four standards below.

There is also plenty of evidence that children employed very young do not turn out well, either industrially or morally. Of the children brought to the police courts in Washington by far the greatest number were those engaged in street selling. Those employers of children who work them too hard nearly always complain of the viciousness of the children. The American glass makers do so; and the English cotton masters used to do the same.

Yet child labour continues. Why? There are two reasons. The first is that employers want the labour because it is cheap, the second is that parents want the wages of the children because they are poor. Who can measure the temptation when a parent sees the child actually short of food to set that child to work?

Because of that poverty our legislators hesitate to forbid child labour; although in the long run child labour intensifies instead of alleviating poverty. One great step, therefore, towards getting rid of child labour is to abolish this apparent necessity for it.

The establishment of a minimum wage would diminish the underpayment of adults and thus remove the excuse for the employment of children. It would also disincline employers to make use of child labour, which would cease to be cheap.

Even if there were no other reason in favour of a minimum wage, the fact that it would help to release children from toil would justify me in asking all who are present to give in their names as members of the Anti-Sweating League.

DISCUSSION.

Discussion followed on the paper of Miss Clementina Black.

Miss ALLEN (Reigate Women's Co-operative Guild) said that unless the minimum wage were made a living wage many workers would never have time to organise.

Mr. KOSH (Erith) remarked that work given in the name of religion in return for soup and bread too often helped to reduce the toiler's wage. Articles produced by sweated labour should be labelled, just as goods from foreign countries were labelled.

Miss GURNEY (Tenants Co-partnership Housing Council) advocated the systematic registration and inspection of home workshops as was done in Germany.

Mr. D. J. SHACKLETON, M.P. (Darwen Weavers' Association) said that there were no child workers in the cotton weaving industry, for though a young person of 16 minding two machines would earn 14s., a man earning 28s. would be doing double the work. He was surprised to hear Mr. Walsh's complaint about boy labour in the mines and women working on the surface. These were the children of miners, and if the men were powerful enough to organise themselves, surely they might organise their girls. Could not men earning £2 a week see their way to pay for

their children to go into a union? If the aristocrats of Labour would only take as much trouble to organise their children as they did to organise themselves they might raise their labour. The system of work in the cotton industry was such that they could maintain the standard by the pressure of employers as well as of operatives. In the case of children he advocated the raising of the age limit. If they only had the assistance of parents who could afford to keep their children out of the factory, they could get on quicker. The age limit could be gradually raised, and thus they would arrive at the point at which they were aiming gradually and with less friction. Impracticable proposals only kept them back. Workers in Lancashire could afford to keep their children out of the factories a bit longer, and hundreds of them were keeping them out twelve months or so longer than they used to. If people who said there had been no improvement during the past 25 years would come to Lancashire they would be laughed at. They could not talk like that to Lancashire operatives. It might be slow progress, but it was the only thing unless they adopted Socialism entirely. (Applause.) To say that 30s. should be a minimum wage for everybody whether they could work or not, was, in his opinion, a "tall order." If, however, Trade Unions could force a minimum wage, there was nothing illegal in asking Parliament to fix a minimum for those trades that could not do so. If they could establish the principle much would be accomplished.

Mr. H. QUELCH (S.D.F.) said that if anyone thought that a minimum wage was going to entirely remove the evils of sweating, the paper of Mr. Sidney Webb successfully demonstrated the contrary. A larger output would certainly mean a large displacement of labour. Mr. Webb argued that the greater the output the greater the share of the worker. That was absolutely untrue, as was proved by recent statistics on wealth production by Sir Robert Giffen. Mr. Webb referred to parasitic employment, parasitic in the sense that the employer was getting labour at less than the current rate, the difference being made up by the earnings of other members of family. There was a form of parasitic employment that could not be touched, and that was child labour. He quite failed to follow Miss Black's argument that a minimum wage would prevent child labour, indeed, he thought it would encourage it. Certainly, if by minimum wage they meant a piece-work minimum they would find women taking as much work as they could get in order to exploit their children. It was suggested that all they had to do was to moralise the consumer, but Trade Union labour only appealed to workpeople. They did not expect Mr. Shackleton and his friends in the House of Commons to establish a minimum wage for child work, but they expected them to move in that direction. He said that at Bolton last Sunday, and they did not laugh at him. Sixteen years was the limit they should declare for.

Mr. BEN TURNER (Batley) said that in large towns, where the wages of the artisan were better than in the small towns, they had the greatest difficulty in dealing with the parents of street sellers. He doubted whether they would be able to fix a minimum wage for

these street sellers. As for child labour, there were manufacturers who wanted men with large families in order that they might get cheap labour. He hoped to see the abolition of half-time labour, and the raising of full time labour to 14 years.

Mr. BARNETT pleaded for the abolition of outwork, and the establishment of workshops. He knew manufacturers who employed children from 14 to 16 years of age and then discharged them in order that more children of 14 might be employed. No alien should be allowed to land unless he could produce his Trade Union card.

Miss WILSON (Leicester Trades Council) described how, in a business that had been turned into a company, women who some time ago earned 35s. were not now earning more than 15s. for the same amount of work. She knew manufacturers who constantly advertised for hands, not because they wanted them but merely to tyrannise over the women. In the recent exhibition they saw a worker who had been seven years apprenticed to a trade at which she earned 8s. 6d. a week, working ten hours a day. If that was the case with a skilled worker, what might an unskilled worker expect? She thought that unskilled workers might be included in the Trade Unions. There were plenty of people ready to help these people to form a union.

Mr. HARKER said that, although he was a Socialist, he believed they must proceed by degrees. So long as the present work system continued so long would there be sweating; it was only a matter of degree. The out-worker was the crux of the whole position. Something might be done to help women workers by establishing crèches.

Mr. BREMNER (Glasgow) favoured the total abolition of street trading for children. In Glasgow it was restricted and the by-laws prohibited street trading by girls under 16. He did not see how they could abolish home-work but it might be regulated. Employers should be compelled to see that people who took away work had a license for their house. It might be possible to get a minimum wage for home-work if it were regulated.

Mrs. BRIDGES ADAMS said that Mr. Shackleton made not a whisper of opposition to the resolution passed at the Trade Union Congress at Liverpool in favour of raising the school age to 15½ or 16 years. She maintained that no Labour man would be elected for any Lancashire constituency who was not prepared to raise the age to 16. Let the children be trained in technical schools.

Mr. YOUNG (Leeds) gave an instance of a woman who took work and employed a large number of children after school hours for a copper or two a week. The mothers agreed that the children were saving shoe-leather and were out of harm's way. At Plymouth he knew cases where work was taken home after a long day's labour. When work was taken home the house should be registered as a factory and inspected.

The Rev. C. ROLLAND RAMSAY (Glasgow) urged that industrial history should be taught in schools. If a minimum wage were paid to the head of a family it would in many cases relieve the children from work.

Miss CLEMENTINA BLACK said that when the proposals of the London County Council for the partial abolition of child labour were sent to a Commission of Inquiry it was decided that the need of the parents necessitated child labour. She did not think there should be a minimum wage for a child because she did not think that a child should work. It was the parent who should receive a minimum wage. They were getting good technical schools in London now but it was no good having the schools if children were not sent to them. Parents were tempted not to send them because they could make a few pence out of their work. At the Borough Polytechnic industrial history was taught. Factory inspectors were the most overworked class of the community and had a thankless task. No employer was glad to see them and the workers did not thank them, though it was largely to them that workers owed the improvement of industrial conditions. She saw from the report of a factory inspector in Victoria that home-work had not been abolished, but had died out because it did not pay the employer.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

At the afternoon session the chair was taken by Mr. HERBERT BURROWS.

Sweating in Relation to the National Dividend.

Mr. L. G. CHIOZZA MONEY, M.P., introduced a paper on "Sweating in Relation to the National Dividend." He said: There is, I think, no better way of stimulating national shame upon the subject of the general underpayment of labour than by contrasting the earnings of the great mass of British workpeople with the interest and rent which are derived by those who are in command of the economic machine.

Sweating, by which is commonly understood extreme underpayment, is only one phase of a very large subject, and that subject is poverty. The existence of an enormous number of poor people in what is reputed to be a wealthy country is vaguely known and as vaguely wondered at. It should be the endeavour of everyone who is interested in any one or all of the many phases of poverty to acquaint himself specifically with the best information which is available as to the actual amount of poverty which exists, and as to the facts relating to the manner of distribution of wealth which makes poverty so common. Armed with this material, those who sympathise with the sweated can show with near approximation what amount of underpayment of labour exists throughout the country as a whole, and the criminality of gross underpayment in view of the available resources of the nation.

By the National Dividend we mean the aggregate of all the incomes, large and small, of the people of the United Kingdom. We can form an approximately correct idea of its extent by adding to the incomes of the income tax paying classes, as ascertained by the Inland Revenue authorities, an estimate of the total amount of wages and small salaries earned by those who have not the pleasure of paying income tax. I give a brief account of how I arrived at the income of the British people in 1904.

First I take the gross assessment to income tax for 1903-4 which is nearly £903,000,000. I correct this, on the one hand, by deducting items which are not real income, such as the cost to a landlord of repairing his house, etc., and, on the other hand, for amounts of income which ought to come, but which do not come, under the attention of the authorities. These various corrections, with the details of which I do not burden this paper, reduce the £903,000,000 of gross assessment to £830,000,000, which figure represents the net income enjoyed by the income tax paying classes.

Now that disposes of an enormous amount of income, but only of a very small number of people, for the income tax is levied upon those who are in receipt of upwards of £160 a year, so that we have not got very far in point of population. Below the income tax line we have to deal with not only the whole of what are commonly called the manual labour classes, but with those other orders of poor people who, in a very real sense, are working men, viz., small tradesmen, clerks, shopmen, travellers, canvassers, teachers, agents, small farmers, inn-keepers, lodging house keepers, civil servants, pensioners and so forth. From a close examination of the census records I have arrived at the conclusion that there are about three millions belonging to those occupations who earn less than £3 a week. How much do they earn on the average? I have gone over that very carefully and believe that their average earnings cannot be placed higher than £75 a year, ranging from the 8s. or 10s. a week of the office boy to the £3 a week of the superior clerk. Accepting this estimate tentatively, we get as the income of this particular part of the working population £225,000,000.

It remains to deal with the greatest bulk of all, viz., the manual workers commonly so-called, including, in addition to all those engaged in agricultural, industrial, and domestic service, soldiers, sailors, policemen, and postmen.

Those, using the census of 1901 as a basis, I estimate to number 15,000,000, men, women, boys, and girls, in the year 1904. Unfortunately, we have not in this country, as we ought to have, a permanent and continuous census of wages. We are very neglectful in the matter of records, and the only official census of wages which we have ever made was got out in 1886 by the Board of Trade. I have used this as a basis and allowed for the changes of wages which have taken place since that date.

In 1886, the average wage, giving due weights to the respective proportions of men, women, and children, was only 17s. 6d. per week. In 1904, allowing for the general rise in wages in the

interval, it amounted to 20s. 6d. per week. It should be borne in mind that this figure represents rates of wages and not earnings. If we want earnings we must make an allowance for idleness from whatever cause arising, whether from sickness, accident, lock-out, strike, weather, slack time, total unemployment, or drink. Allowing for these things, we cannot assume that the average wage is earned for more than 44 weeks out of 52 weeks in such a year as 1904—20s. 6d. a week for 44 weeks means £45 in the year.

But we have to consider that not all those who figure in the census sheets as manual workers can be counted as normal workers. There is the great army of casuals, ne'er-do-wells, aged persons, men and women broken in health, and last, but not least, those employed in what are called sweated industries. I do not think that, of the 15,000,000 manual workers, we can estimate these, most unfortunate of the industrial army at less than one-fifteenth of the whole, or say, 1,000,000 persons. The earnings of these 1,000,000 persons I estimate at £25,000,000 per annum., or an average of about 10s. per week per person.

The remaining 14,000,000 manual workers I assume to draw the average earnings of £45 a year already referred to, which amounts to £630,000,000. With the £25,000,000 of the unfortunate 1,000,000 persons we arrive at £655,000,000 as the total earnings of the manual labourers in 1904.

We have now got out the aggregate income of the United Kingdom, made up as follows:—

(a) Those with over £3 a week	£830,000,000
(b) Those with less than £3 a week (Manual workers £655,000,000 plus, lower middle classes, £225,000,000)	880,000,000
	<hr/>
	£1,710,000,000
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It will be seen that the income respectively above and below the income tax line of £3 per week is almost equal in amount. £830,000,000 lies above the line; £880,000,000 lies below the line.

The important consideration now arises, how many people enjoy these respective amounts of income—how many people in our nation of 43,000,000 people have over £3 per week? This important question I have been able to answer, and as the method of obtaining the answer has survived a great deal of both friendly and hostile criticism, it may be taken as being as nearly accurate as is needed for a proper judgment to be formed in the matter. The number of income tax paying individuals is, as nearly as possible, one million. It follows that nearly half of the income of the nation is possessed by one million people, who, if each of them be taken as a representative of a family of five, stand for only 5,000,000 people in the nation of 43,000,000 people. The second half of the national dividend is shared up by the balance of the nation, viz., 38,000,000 of people.

These are exceedingly significant and extraordinary facts, but even more significant and extraordinary is the further calculation which I will now put before you.

I have been able to split up the one million income tax payers at the £700 a year line. Between £160 a year and £700 a year there are 750,000 taxpayers, representing $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions of people, who take only £245,000,000 out of the £830,000,000. The balance of the £830,000,000 is £585,000,000, and this enormous sum is the annual income of only 250,000 taxpayers, who represent with their families not more than $1\frac{1}{4}$ million of the entire population. Broadly speaking, *one-thirtieth of the entire population take more than one-third of the entire national dividend of the country.* To put it in another way, $1\frac{1}{4}$ million people take in rent and interest a sum as large as the entire earnings of the manual labour classes, who, with their dependents, number 30,000,000 of people.

The 250,000 taxpayers who take nearly £600,000,000 worth of income, include in their number, of course, the owners of practically all the factories, docks, warehouses and workshops of the country. The small number of income tax payers will, perhaps, not seem so surprising if it is remembered that there are only 100,000 factories in the whole of the United Kingdom, while the total number of factories, workshops, docks, wharves, quays, and warehouses registered in the United Kingdom does not amount to more than about 250,000.

There is much talk of small shareholders, but, as a matter of fact, shareholders, both large and small, are remarkably few. There is a firm in the City—Messrs. George S. Smith and Son—who collect all shareholders' names, and make an alphabetical list of them for advertising purposes. Mr. George Smith informs me that there are only 500,000 names on his lists, which are practically complete, so that of the 1,000,000 people above the income tax line, *only one-half are shareowners.* The whole of the railway stock of the country is owned by only 180,000 people.

I think it will be agreed that the consideration of the facts referred to helps us to get the sweating question into perspective. I will now proceed to show that it does something more than that. It enables us to determine whether the economic structure of the country permits of the better remuneration of labour as a whole and of the sweated trades in particular. I remind you that the number of manual workers is about 15,000,000. What would be the cost of the legislative enactment of a minimum wage? I have already given good grounds for the belief that profits are large enough to provide a very considerable addition to the wages fund. Let us see what would be the effect of a considerable all-round rise in wages.

Let us suppose that the 15,000,000 manual workers had their wages increased by an average all-round rise of 5s. per week, or £13 per annum; 15 million times £13 is £195,000,000. If this were added to the £655,000,000 now drawn by them, it would make their total earnings £850,000,000, or, as nearly as possible, half, and half only, of the national dividend. On the other hand,

the income of the 250,000 capitalists and landlords would be reduced from £585,000,000 to £390,000,000. In short, the one-thirtieth part of the nation, rather more than one million people, who *own and run the nation*, would still be left with an aggregate income of nearly £400,000,000 between them.

Assume, again, that the manual workers were each to receive 7s. 6d. per week more than at present. This would mean an addition to the income of the 15,000,000 manual workers of £292,000,000 per annum, making their total income £947,000,000, or a little more than half of the entire national dividend. Such an addition would reduce the income of the *owning classes* from £585,000,000 to £293,000,000, so that the handful of owners would still be left with an aggregate income of nearly £300,000,000.

It may be said that these things are very easily worked out on paper, but that they would be exceedingly difficult to accomplish. As a matter of fact, however, not only do the figures conclusively show that there is a tremendous wages fund from which a better and proper remuneration of the working classes may be drawn, but it is not more difficult to show from a thousand current examples that the simultaneous reduction of dividends and an increase of wages could easily be made.

In the first place, I think it of the first importance that the public at large should have a true knowledge of the facts to which I have referred. It seems to me that it needs but that knowledge to create an overwhelming opinion that a general rise of wages is something more than overdue. As to the underpaid themselves, a true knowledge of the facts could not but lead to a very holy discontent. The present proportion which wages bear to the national dividend is only tolerated because it is unknown. That is why I felt it incumbent upon me, as my contribution to this conference, to place the facts before you as concisely and clearly as possible.

In the second place, it would be the easiest possible matter, if I had time, to put before you hundreds of current balance sheets, and to show you by existing examples the manufacture in detail of the contrasting elements of Riches and Poverty, which I have already shown you in the gross. The process is going on everywhere around us, and I hold that it is futile to talk about remedies for sweating while we consent to methods which produce poor people who, in their turn, are catered for by the supply of sweated products. The poor are the chief customers of the sweater.

I do not propose to place many examples before you, but content myself by presenting several striking ones which may be taken as illustrative rather than exceptional. I have examined for 1904 the balance sheet of Messrs. J. Lyons and Co., who employ a very large number of young girls at low wages. I find that the Company's gross profits on trading for that year are £474,000 while salaries, wages, rents, rates, repairs, horse-keep, maintenance, etc., only come to £327,000. There was, therefore, a net profit of £147,000. I don't know exactly what salaries and wages came to,

but it is clear from the balance sheet that they were less than the £147,000 worth of profit. Thus the sleeping partners got more than the working partners.

The case of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Electric Supply Company Limited is even clearer. I have the balance sheet for 1905 which shows that the people of Newcastle paid the Company £145,000 for Electric current, etc., and that the Company paid for rent, coal, etc., only £37,000; for wages only £34,000, leaving a profit of £74,000. Here the sleeping partners took far more than the working partners.

Take again the National Telephone Company's balance sheet for 1904. The public paid the Company £2,000,000, and the total outlay for rents, wages, materials, management, etc., was £1,150,000 leaving a net profit of £850,000. It is perfectly clear from these figures that the sleeping partners took far more than the working partners.

I should like it to be particularly observed that when I refer to wages in connection with these balance sheets I mean not only wages for manual labour but for mental labour also.

I repeat that it is unnecessary to multiply examples but these lamentable contrasts between profits and wages are a commonplace of limited liability balance sheets.

It is the fact that the underpayment of labour is deliberately counted upon which makes it possible for company promoters to promise large dividends. Thus, in a gas company prospectus issued in the public press in 1905, it was deliberately calculated that labour, manual and mental, would cost less than £2,000 per annum, while nearly £6,000 of profit per annum would result from the operations.

It should not be forgotten, also, that usury grows by what it feeds on. As soon as the big dividend is realised, usury can claim its capital value in the stock market and the rise in value of the shares, instead of adding to the remuneration of the worker, actually becomes a weapon to be used against him. This, again, I may illustrate. I wrote in the *Daily News* of the 30 per cent. dividends and the low wages of Messrs. Lyons and Co. An indignant shareholder immediately wrote to me to point out that: "Most of the shareholders have paid £6 or £7 per share, and so get a return of not more than 5 per cent."

In conclusion, I would represent with all the emphasis of which I am capable that it is a mockery of the poor to offer them an empty sympathy. The nation, by its united activities, produces, as I have shown, a tremendous income. It is surely the business of the nation to see that no single unit is allowed to work for a sweated wage. It is not my province in this paper to examine the theory of the minimum wage; that is in other and capable hands. I should like, however, to record my own strong opinion that the time is ripe for the enactment of the minimum, and I believe that the first application of the principle should be made in connection with those grossly underpaid industries which are commonly regarded as sweated, but which are only the worst examples of

an underpayment which extends throughout almost the whole of the trades and industries of the United Kingdom. (Applause.)

In reply to questions, Mr. Money said that he believed the remedy for existing conditions was by way of legislation and the gradual bringing under public control of the necessary basis and tools of industry. They could not have that all at once and he favoured the minimum wage as a palliative in the meantime. He did not agree that the way out of the difficulty was self-employment. In trying to do everything for himself a man wasted his labour. They must work for each other.

The proceedings were continued with the reading of a paper by Mr. J. A. Hobson, M.A., on the

Influence of a Legal Minimum Wage upon Employment.

Mr. J. A. HOBSON said: Opponents of the legal enforcement of a minimum wage urge the objection that it would cause a reduction in the volume of employment in the sweated industries not compensated by any corresponding increase of employment in other industries; in a word, that it would aggravate the unemployed problem. The argument runs thus. "By raising artificially the wages you increase the cost of production of the goods; increased cost of production causes a rise of price; with a rise of price will come a diminution of sales and a corresponding shrinkage of employment; large numbers of the very women whose wages you seek to raise will be thrown out of work and earn no wages at all."

Let us examine this argument. First, it does not necessarily happen that a rise of wages causes a rise of cost of production. So far as time wages are concerned, an increase of pay per hour or per day will have some effect in raising the standard of efficiency of labour; better nourished, more energetic and more cheerful workers give out a larger amount and a better quality of labour power. The economy of higher wages is certainly applicable to the weak, hopeless, dispirited worker in a sweating factory or workshop. To piece wages, too, the same consideration will to some extent apply. The higher legally enforced piece-wage will not necessarily involve a corresponding rise in net cost of production; for if it enables and induces the workers to turn out more and better work per day, the saving of time and of loss from damaged or rejected goods will compensate in part, at any rate, the rise of piece-rates.

Cost of production, therefore, does not necessarily rise to correspond with a rise of wage. But suppose it does, a higher wage-bill is not necessarily followed by a rise in selling prices and a consequent shrinkage of trade. There are two buffers between a rise of wages and a rise of prices.

Where a trade, screened from the full strain of competition by privilege, limitation of natural resources, combination, or other control of market, is earning a normal rate of profits higher than is necessary to maintain the capital and business enterprise, in a word, where there exists a fund of surplus profit the rise of wages will tend to come out of this fund, and will not cause a rise of prices.

In other words, even under what is termed "the competitive system," a great many industries, a far larger proportion of the total number than is commonly supposed, are able to afford a rise in wages. In the case of most of these "profitable" industries, a rise of wages, whether due to legal enactment or the pressure of workers, will come out of profits, it will not pay the employer to raise prices and restrict his sales.

In examining the rates of sweating wages one is often struck by the wide divergence in rates paid in the same locality for the same sort of work. The difference is not infrequently as much as 50 per cent. Now, if the higher rates leaves the employer or the middleman a sufficient margin of profit, as it must be held to do, there evidently emerges a surplus profit in the cases where the lower rates prevails. A legal minimum wage can absorb this surplus in a rise of wages.

But what about those trades exposed to the full force of cut-throat competition where profits are pared down to a minimum, and the employer earns a small precarious livelihood? Does a rise of wages necessarily cause a rise of prices and a shrinkage of trade and of employment here? On this point one may legitimately appeal to the general tenour of labour legislation in this country, the Factory and Workshop Acts, Public Health, Employers' Liability, and other laws, all of which have had as one of their economic consequences a *tendency* to raise the cost of production in the trades with which they are concerned.

The unenlightened employers who have opposed these measures persistently asserted that the new restrictions or expenses imposed upon their business would destroy their profits, cripple their competition with foreigners and close their mills. The laws were passed, the burdens were imposed, no such disaster as was predicted actually occurred. Why not? Well, partly because the improved safety and sanitation, the shorter hours, and other betterment in the condition of the employés raised the efficiency of labour, but partly also because the fear of reduced profits operated upon the employers as a stimulus to improved economy in the conduct of their business. A rise in the wage-bill or in other expenses led to the invention or adoption of improved machinery, the utilisation of hitherto wasted products, or other improvements either in the technique or in the administration of the business. A trade dependent for its economy upon abundance of cheap, low-grade labour is notoriously an unprogressive trade; an enforced rise of wages will commonly be a spur to progress.

These considerations ought to make it clear that a rise of wages by legal enactment in the sweating trades does not necessarily raise prices and restrict employment.

But we are not justified, I think, in assuming that the economic effects of the legal minimum can always be confined to the stimulation of efficiency of production or the reduction of surplus profits.

It is likely that cases exist where "sweating" is (from the standpoint of the profit-maker, not of the public) a genuinely economical method of production, and that in some sweating trades the enforcement of a legal minimum wage will have the effect of raising prices. Reduced demand for the higher-priced goods and consequent reduction of employment would seem to follow. In trades where some of the work is done in the factory or workshop, and other work is given out, as in many clothing trades, to be executed at a lower rate of wages, a blow will be struck against the employment of outworkers. The economy of sweating being forcibly put down, the work formerly given out will now be done in the workshop or factory. There will be less home work and more factory work. The general effect of this transfer will be good, bringing a larger proportion of the trade under the better conditions of factory or large workshop life. But many of the actual home-workers, being disabled by domestic and other duties from factory work, will lose their employment and be reduced to worse straits than before. Nor will the reduction in this employment necessarily be compensated by the increase of factory employment. For if it really paid to give out the work before, we may assume that it costs more to get it done in the factory which must now provide the work space, light, etc., that were saved by putting out the work.

It seems to me reasonable to hold that in some cases the curtailment or annihilation of sweated home work will mean a rise of price of the goods and that the factory will not gain in employment all that is lost by the home-workers. A net reduction of employment in the trade may result.

Then, again, we are confronted by the familiar scare of foreign competition. Raise the price of sweated goods ever so little, the trade may go abroad, leaving behind the unemployed workers. This objection, of course, raises the wider issue of public policy which underlies the whole attack upon "sweating."

It ignores, however, the fact that our chief competitors are prepared to join us in adopting anti-sweating legislation. But assuming they were not, our duty is plain. From the standpoint of national economy our answer is: let the sweated trade go abroad, mere quantity of employment is not our first concern, it is not the true interest of Great Britain to seek to retain within her borders a degraded parasitic trade, whose presence generates physical and moral disease in our industrial society: public policy demands that no trade shall continue to exist in this country which fails to conform to certain minimum conditions of employment: a sweated industry involves a net economic and social loss to the nation that contains it. It is no argument against the legal suppression of a sweating trade that it will go to Germany. We should reply, so much the worse for

Germany. As to the sweated workers deprived of this low paid work, two things must be said. In the first place the constant flow of cheap foreign workers into our ports who feed the chief "sweating" trades will stop when the "sweaters" who utilise their labour are no longer permitted to do so. In the second place, if a result of a legal minimum wage or of any other measure operating in the public interest is to throw out of employment any body of workers previously employed, it is manifestly the duty of the State to take care of these displaced workers as a part of the public provision for the unemployed now recognised as devolving on the State. To make proper provision for unemployed persons at the public expense is a better, and, in the long run, a cheaper social policy than to allow them to continue to work for sweating wages in unsanitary workrooms, breeding and bringing up a new generation of physical, industrial and moral inefficients.

But though some loss of employment in the sweating trades will follow any effective enforcement of a minimum wage, it is not true that a net reduction of employment for the nation results from this policy. If this were the case, if the result of such a legal regulation were to increase in any measure the volume of unemployment, the objection would be extremely serious. For an increase in the number of the unemployed at the bottom of the industrial ladder would tend to depress, by further excess of competition, the wage in such low-skilled labour markets as are incapable of "legal" regulation, and in general to weaken the power of labour organisation throughout the country.

But to suppose that any reduction of employment in certain special trades, due to the enforcement of a higher wage, could reduce the general aggregate of employment is to ignore the wider unseen but inevitable results of the new policy.

The most general effect of a policy raising the wages in the lowest walks of industry is to increase the amount of the national income which goes as wages to the workers. This is caused partly by raising the efficiency of labour and the productiveness of industry, partly by transferring to wages a portion of the national product which otherwise would have gone in surplus profit to certain sections of the capitalist and employing classes. The workers would be getting an enlarged aggregate amount of wages, and an enlarged proportion of the total income of the nation.

Some millions of pounds, let us say, will be skimmed away from the top of the incomes of the rich possessing classes and added to the wages of the workers, not merely to the workers in sweated trades, but to other workers in higher grades of labour, whose wages will tend to rise as a result of a higher level at the bottom. The effect of this transfer from profits to wages will be to raise and to regularise the demand for commodities. For the surplus profits, which were partly accumulated in excessive capital not required for the maintenance of the ordinary current of production and breeding congestion and commercial depressions, and were partly expended on capricious luxuries, whose fluctuating demand stamped irregularity upon the trades producing them—this surplus

profit transmuted into higher wages will serve to raise the ordinary standard of consumption for the masses of the workers. Now, this raised standard of consumption involves an increased demand for labour in the processes of production.

A rise in the normal standard of consumption of the people means an increase in the sound staple industries engaged in furnishing the necessaries and conveniences of life. Not only will an increase in the volume of employment issue as a result of the higher wage level, but hardly less important is the increased stability or regularity of employment caused by exchanging the demand for necessaries or conveniences on the part of the workers for the luxurious expenditure of the rich.

An increase of the general purchasing power of the workers, secured by a legal minimum wage, will thus enlarge the volume and regularise the character of employment.

It will exercise one other healing influence, slow but certain. Sweating is a vicious circle, one essential condition of the survival of many sweating trades is the existence of a market for very cheap and very inferior goods. This market is furnished by the prevalence of low-paid labour: the very poor buy these articles because they cannot afford to buy better and more expensive ones. So far as this part of the "sweating" area is concerned a rise in the wages of low-skilled labour, especially in that of women who form the great majority of sweated workers, will be to enable them and to induce them to substitute for the cheapest and worst goods a somewhat dearer and better sort of article. Nobody deliberately chooses to buy the cheapest and worst, but with the poorest it is often a question of necessity; raise the incomes of the poorer workers we raise by slow growth of choice, experience, and custom the quality of their demand: as they refuse to buy goods which can be made by "sweated" workers the sweating trade will shrink by the natural operation of the law of supply and demand.

This, of course, is only applicable to a part of the field of "sweating," but it serves at least to indicate one further contribution which the policy of the minimum wage can make towards the destruction of sweating by operating upon the standard of consumption. (Applause.)

DISCUSSION.

Discussion followed on the papers read by Mr. Money and Mr. Hobson.

In reply to questions, Mr. Hobson said that personally he should not differentiate wages on the ground of sex, but he should on the ground of locality and other conditions. It was impossible to prohibit all home work, but he thought it might be conducted under healthy conditions if properly regulated. In most trades the capital employed was not fully utilised and employed to the best advantage. As long as that was so they might say that there was capital in excess of that fully used.

Mr. BROWNLIE (Woolwich) said that no Labour member would be prepared to defend the proposition that an agricultural labourer in Devon should receive 30s. a week, the same as received by municipal employés in London. Wages must be determined by local conditions. He would point out that the salaries received by Cabinet Ministers and other government officials were not determined by competition.

Mr. CHAPPELL (Cardiff) thought that some blame attached to Trade Unions in this matter.

Mr. CRAIG (Scottish Tailors and Tailoresses) said that the general health of the people was largely dependent upon the tailoring trade, and in his opinion the local authority should be compelled to provide workshop accommodation. County Council contracts were sublet to sweating dens. His association always set its face against outwork.

Miss MARY MACARTHUR (Women's Trade Union League) said that, judging from the debates, the object of the Conference did not seem to be fully understood. The Conference was not called to solve the social problem, but to deal with one small phase of it. The League was formed in order to crystallise the attention and interest aroused in consequence of the Sweating Exhibition. In order to do this, it had been decided to concentrate on one point—a legal minimum wage for sweated industries. It was needful to define what a sweated industry was. It was no doubt true that all trades were sweated industries—(laughter)—so she must say that the object was to deal with the *super-sweated* industries. She must plead guilty to being an idealist and a Socialist, but she did not look upon the Conference as a propaganda meeting. Socialism was, of course, the only ultimate solution—(hear, hear)—and the ideal system was not one in which wages existed at all. At present, however, what they wanted to do was to consider how certain sweated industries could be raised to a standard which would enable the workers to live in decency and comfort. The low wages earned by women in the super-sweated industries were at once the cause and the consequence of their unorganised conditions. A minimum wage would raise such workers to the standard where organisation would be possible: it would help them to help themselves. If they could only secure for women earning 7s. 6d. a week double that amount something would be done. Speaking generally of the minimum wage, they did not want to discuss the amount so much as to affirm the principle. (Applause).

Mr. J. G. WEBSTER (Southwark S.D.F.) thought that the existence of unemployment was the chief cause of sweating. The State itself was one of the principal sweaters, but given State employment in all industries and the State no longer a sweater the question of a minimum wage would no longer arise. Any rise of wages almost always meant a rise of prices. Whenever the wages bill was increased the employers of labour recouped themselves by putting the additional cost upon the commodities sold to the consumer.

Mrs. PHILIP SNOWDEN (Keighley I.L.P.) agreed with the last speaker that it was difficult to separate any particular part of the social programme from the other parts. Not until to-day had she been in favour of a minimum wage because she feared the tendency of a minimum to become a maximum. She was in favour now, and she agreed that the means by which it could be accomplished were the organisation of the Trade Unions and legislation. Experience taught her that if they wanted girls to join Trade Unions they must address them on higher grounds than wages. They must appeal to the best that is in them. They would go forth from the Conference as missionaries to teach others the desirability of supporting a minimum wage, and to spread the doctrine necessary to compel legislation to grant it. In dealing with sweated girl labour there were problems that could never be settled by men alone, and in giving women the vote they would increase the public spirit of women of the better classes, who were largely responsible for the evil, and hasten to the realisation of their ideals and the solution of the problem. (Applause.)

Mr. GALBRAITH (London Society of Compositors) said it was a standing disgrace to the country that so many workers were still outside the ranks of Trade Unionism. It was just those people who had to be helped out of the position in which they had placed themselves entirely through their own fault.

Mr. MILLERCHIP (Wallhall Co-operative Society) said that the factory legislation of the past, instead of decreasing home labour, had tended to increase it in those industries in which machinery was not brought into use. They wanted to make the direct employer responsible for the work he produced, and to place as many obstacles in the way of home-work as possible.

Dr. GUEST (I.L.P.) asked whether it would be in order to select a committee for the purpose of drafting a Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: Practically that is what the League was started for. Sir Charles Dilke's Bill is before the House now. I should not think it wise to appoint a committee from this Conference.

Mr. SHAW (Central S.D.F.) pleaded for clerks as a badly sweated class. Around the Guildhall tens of thousands of men and girls were employed under conditions that would hardly bear description. It was a class that paid the penalty of all respectability—it suffered.

Mr. MORRISON (Hawick Social Reform Society) asked whether it was of much use asking either of the two political parties to help them. Was it not asking sweaters to abolish sweating?

Mr. ENSOR (Poplar Labour Representation Committee) seconded Miss Macarthur's appeal for practical suggestions. In his opinion it was difficult to separate the question of a minimum wage from that of unemployment.

Mr. HOMES (Machine Minders' Society) read a letter from Toronto saying that Trade Unionism was flourishing there; that there was no sweated labour, no unemployment, and no poor rates there. In this country trade societies had since 1866 increased the minimum three or four times, while 66 hours per week had been reduced to 52½ hours.

Mr. HOBSON remarked that he supported the minimum wage because he did not think that in most cases the employer had the power to add the increase of wages to the price of the articles he sold. It would not pay the employer to raise the price and limit the sale of his goods. What effect would the minimum wage have upon the general distribution of wealth? The general tendency would be to increase the proportion of wages out of the total income of the people, and thus strengthen the standard of comfort and increase regular employment. As for the difficulty of dealing with displaced workers, it was, in his view, a matter for State arrangement.

The CHAIRMAN apologised for the absence of M. Arthur Fontaine, Directeur du Travail, owing to a Government crisis in France, and then introduced Professor Stephen Bauer, Secretary of the International Association for Labour Legislation, who addressed the Conference.

Professor STEPHEN BAUER said: Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I am most sensible of the honour of assisting at the first great national movement for a practical minimum wage policy, and my pleasure is only impaired by the absence of an infinitely more competent continental authority, M. Fontaine, who was to address you on this subject. I know how deeply he regrets having had to renounce this pleasant task at the last hour, and I am sure you are sharing these regrets.

The new policy, which is destined, I hope, to take shape in consequence of this Conference will at the outset have to meet two objections—is a wage policy necessary? and, secondly, will it not be a charge on your nation in the world's competition?

As regards the first question, an international investigation tends to show that in all countries where home work, with the exception of family work, has been subject to inspection or to legal restrictions of work, the pure family workshop began to prevail. Inaccessible to the eye of the law, sweating only took another and, let us add, a more dangerous shape.

If the excessive lowness of rates of wages in the sweated trades—one to two shillings a day on the Continent—did not prove the necessity of a wages policy, these facts would prove it. But will this policy stand the attitude of competing nations? And is it not the eastern part of the Continent which forms to a great part the recruiting ground for sweating?

The objection which is raised was formulated against factory legislation in 1818. It has failed to obstruct national legislation, and the Continent has followed the British example. We might apply the same rule to the new wages policy. But it would indeed be worth while to investigate the extent of competition in the world's market of articles of sweated trades and the countries concerned. And once the British precedent established and such an investigation having given results, international steps might

follow, in order to enlarge on a more stable and in a quicker fashion the principle of the minimum wage policy.

This principle is indeed destined to pervade our regulations of wages. It lies at the bottom of social insurance. It is realised in municipal and state enterprise. It is accepted by employers who agree to conclude collective bargains. To enforce it in the sweated trades means thus only to facilitate the weakest members of the working community sharing the privileges of its stronger members.

There is one proof for the chances of an international action, which your national initiative would have to inaugurate. The technical basis of any wage policy is the publicity of rates of wages, and this knowledge the British legislator has first facilitated by the "Particulars Clause." This clause has subsequently been adopted by France and Germany for certain classes of homework, and the International Association for Labour Legislation is asking its application to all trades. If in two years this wish is fulfilled, it seems only natural to build further upon this basis.

What would be the consequence of international action in this respect? A double one. *It would increase the purchasing power of your customers abroad, and it would cause a decrease of the pressure on your labour market by foreign immigration.* People who emigrate seek better employment and cheaper food. Let them have better wages, better conditions of work, and they will prefer to stay at home instead of swelling the ranks of your unemployed.

That is why we have to greet this new movement. Only after having secured the incomes can you go farther in restricting in an effective way the work of the weakest. This new departure will increase the necessity of dealing with children's employment, and of enforcing a more comprehensive unemployed policy. It will accentuate the necessity of protecting advances of wages against the greed of monopolists, and especially against increases of rent. The stern logic of social development demands that we grapple with one question after the other, with more complicated questions than our predecessors have dreamt of.

However difficult, therefore, it may be to forecast the end this movement is leading to, one thing is certain: a great hope is entertained among the people in the smaller workshops of the Continent that your practical commonsense and your greater experience may find in the improvement of your own national conditions a remedy for their own evils. And they are appealing to-day, through my feeble voice, and in spite of my incompetence for the task, not only to your sense of national responsibility, but also to that of human brotherhood, which you have never failed to respond to and to entertain in this country. (Applause.)

On the evening of the second day of the Conference the delegates were received at the Whitehall Rooms, Hotel Metropole, by Mr. George Cadbury, the President of the National Anti-Sweating League, and enjoyed together a few extremely pleasant hours.

THIRD DAY.

MORNING SESSION.

Anti-Sweating Laws in the Colonies.

Lord DUNRAVEN occupied the Chair at the morning session, and among those who occupied seats on the platform were Earl Beauchamp, Lord Boston, the Hon. W. Pember Reeves (High Commissioner for New Zealand), the Hon. Bernard Wise (Member of Legislative Council, and late Attorney-General of New South Wales), the Rev. John Hoatson (late Vice-President of the Victoria Anti-Sweating League), Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., Lady Farrer, Mrs. Herbert Gladstone, Mrs. Pember Reeves, Miss Dorothy Hunter, Mrs. H. J. Tennant, Mr. J. Keir Hardie, M.P. (Chairman of the Labour Party in the House of Commons), Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., Mr. Herbert Burrows, and the Rev. Peter Thompson.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said: I should like to say, though I hope it is scarcely necessary for me to do so, that it has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to accept the invitation and the compliment implied in it, to take the chair to-day at this, the last, meeting of this most memorable conference. The Sweating Question has been, and is, to me one of the most extreme interest. I cannot pretend that I possess a full and up-to-date knowledge of the problem. Such knowledge as I do possess was gained a very long time ago in presiding over the committee of the House of Lords that inquired into the system in 1888-9. The reports of that committee were somewhat different in character; I found myself, as a matter of fact, in a very peculiar position. For the first time, as far as I know, the chairman of the committee found himself differing very materially in his ideas of report from all his colleagues, or, I should put it, he found his colleagues differing very materially and totally illogically from him. The consequence was that I had to make a report all by myself. I do not want to dwell upon that fact, but it is a source of great gratification to me to think that such legislation as has already taken place has been to a very large extent founded upon the recommendation contained in that report. It arrived at facts, and the facts contained in the report are still extremely valuable. It was a most difficult thing to get at the real facts in a case of this kind, as many of the workers were unwilling to present themselves as the miserable and destitute people they

really were. There came many of them to London in borrowed plumes—in borrowed clothes—and it was very difficult to get from them the truth as to the conditions under which they lived.

A great many of them were extremely nervous as to what the consequences to themselves might be if they divulged the circumstances under which they worked. But that committee did manage to unearth the truth, and if England is still in doubt as to what the facts of the case are they will find that the evidence of that committee is valuable reading still. The facts revealed at the committee's investigation in 1888-9 are still in existence, and a remedy is still to be found. I am greatly impressed by two main features revealed at the inquiry, first, that the people were unorganised and that the difficulty of organising them seemed to be unsurmountable; how far is it possible to pursue the worker into his own home? It is a comparatively easy thing to deal with factories, but it is another matter altogether to interfere with the rights of the people in their own homes. I look forward with great hope to the result of this conference. I, myself, am very partial to conferences. I have had something to do with conferences during the last three years, in the sister island across the Channel. (Laughter.) And one of the results has been, that they have brought upon my shoulders an unstinted flow of most unmerited abuse. (Laughter.) At the time of the sweating inquiry I was a very long way ahead of public opinion, but I do not suppose I am now, I am inclined to think that public opinion has considerably developed since those days, but still differences remain, and they have got to be dealt with. We are now in a much better position to deal with them than we were in 1888-9. Then there was very little information at our disposal, and we had absolutely no experience to help us. We could not point to any definite experiment that had been made, but now we have a great mass of information; foreign countries have inquired into this question, definite experiments have been tried, and legislation has been undertaken in Australia and New Zealand.

Of course, the special question of a minimum wage has, and must have, a most important bearing on the subject of sweating. A fair minimum wage is a great solving of many difficulties. It places the workers themselves in a position of being able to help themselves, and it changes the dullness of despair into hope and possibilities. Yes, the remedy depends entirely upon the social and the economic conditions of the various localities in which the evil unfortunately exists. It might be that a remedy applicable to a new country, such as Australia or New Zealand, would prove totally unsuitable to an old country like ours. But in many cases the disease is the same, although it might have become more chronic with us than in New Zealand or Australia, the disease, I say, is the same, and although the remedy might not be identical, it must be of an analogous character. What has been done in this matter by our own kith and kin across the ocean will be shown by the papers which are to be read to-day. The Rev. Mr. Hoatson has been vice-president of the Anti-Sweating League of Victoria. I assume that

the conditions of the sweated trades there are much the same as they are in Great Britain, and Mr. Hoatson will be able to speak with authority on the subject. The Hon. W. Pember Reeves is the statesman mainly responsible for inaugurating valuable industrial legislation in New Zealand, while the Hon. Bernard Wise, late Attorney-General for New South Wales, is the pioneer of the anti-sweating movement in that country.

The CHAIRMAN then read the report of the Standing Orders Committee, which was to the effect that certain amendments they had received were beyond the scope of the Conference which had been called to discuss the question of a minimum wage only.

A DELEGATE having asked that the Conference might be allowed to express an opinion as to whether the amendments submitted were in order or not.

The CHAIRMAN replied that as a matter of order the question should be asked later in the day.

Industrial Arbitration as a Remedy for Sweating.

The Hon. Bernard Wise was then called upon to address the Conference on the subject of "Industrial Arbitration as a Remedy for Sweating."

Mr. WISE said. I make no excuse for addressing a few remarks to the Conference on the question of a minimum wage. In my own little State that question has had a most important bearing on the subject of sweating. I will go further, and say that a minimum wage is the only foundation upon which it is possible to erect a proper safeguard against sweating. In England the minimum wage has still to be argued; in Australia it has become such an accepted axiom of industrial polity that in listening to and reading the discussions of the last few days I felt almost transported to a pre-historic age. (Laughter.) Not that there is absolute unanimity on our side. We have our faddists, too, and we have heard speeches and read articles which were supposed to prove pretty conclusively that a minimum wage must lessen the national productivity. But Australians do not take much stock in political economy, for they have proved that none of the prophecies of the economists ever come true; and so they have rated the economic argument against a Minimum Wage at its true value,—that is to say as having no more relation to facts than the theory that "Customs duties must raise prices," or any other State formula which men make use of to save themselves the trouble of thinking.

Now, in South Wales more than 20 years ago, four large trades—the builders, printers, wharf labourers, and coal miners—acquired by their own efforts a minimum wage. These are highly organised trades carried on in very limited areas, and so they were able to enforce the rule that no one should belong to the trade unless

he belonged to the union. In such a case there is no danger of payment falling below the minimum rate. It is the same in the North of England, where the same rule has been adopted in the case of both employers and men; but that method, which is brought about in certain districts by economic compulsion, has no reference to weaker and less organised trades. I entirely agree with what fell from your president as to the impossibility of closely following the experiments of another country; but I insist that there is much in the experience that we have gained in Australia which could be a guide to people here. In the year 1900 I had the advantage of introducing and carrying through both Houses of Parliament an Industrial Arbitration Bill which was designed mainly to meet this very difficulty of sweating. I warn you not to take for granted all that you may read as extracts from Sydney newspapers about the working of the Arbitration Act. The *Times* has continuously parodied the work of the New Zealand Act, but, fortunately, Mr. Reeves has been in London to point out the wide difference between the criticism and the facts. The underlying principle of any Industrial Arbitration Act is that it regards an industrial dispute as a public nuisance which ought to be controlled and punished by law like any other breach of the peace. The reason is that the chief hardship of such a dispute falls upon the innocent victims—upon the women, who, as the strike proceeds, see their homes emptied of all that makes a home—on the children of starved bodies and stunted growth—upon the traders who are driven into the Bankruptcy Court by enforced credit. The burden falls upon all these people, who must suffer from any dislocation of industry. Therefore, upon public grounds, the State claims the right to put a stop to disputes and strikes. In New South Wales we have made it a misdemeanour, punishable with three months' imprisonment, for any man to go on strike or for any employer to lock out until he has submitted his case to the Arbitration Court. (Cheers, and a voice, "You ought to make it six months.") Well, we are moderate people. I am happy to say that this has had the effect of preventing any strike since the Act came into existence. Once the parties are before the Court the battle is half won, for the hot-headed disputants have time to reflect, and they are compelled to put before the public the details of their contentions. The result is that public opinion—the arbitration of all industrial disputes—can be formed. But do not imagine that the Act or anything of its kind can prevent strikes. It was never so intended. All that it can do is to prevent small sparks from blazing into devastating fires. Some questions will still have to be fought out between the parties themselves, as some disputes between nations can only be determined by the arbitrament of war, but that is no argument against the attempt to settle differences between masters and men by means of a tribunal. It will save time if I read the order which was made by the Court in the case of the most sweated industry in New South Wales—the clothing trade, The conditions under which

the men and women worked in this particular trade were a disgrace to humanity. Soon after the passing of the Act they formed themselves into a union, and a case was brought into Court against a large employer of labour. It was brought forward by the Tailoresses' Union, and as soon as it was brought into Court it was stated that the parties had agreed on a log, and they asked that if the Court considered that the log was fair they should not only bind the one firm to agree to it but that all other firms in the trade should also be bound in the same way. I should say here that the Court has power to declare that any order made as against one set of employers or one set of men should be made a common rule. The award was as follows :—

(1) The period of apprenticeship shall be four years, but no indenture or contract of any kind shall be required. (2) Apprentices shall be paid according to the following scale :—All apprentices, both table hands and machinists, first half-year, 2s. 6d. per week; second half-year, 5s. per week; third half-year, 7s. 6d. per week; fourth half-year, 10s. per week; fifth half-year, 12s. 6d. per week; sixth half-year, 15s. per week; seventh and eighth half-years, 17s. 6d. per week. (3) Not more than one apprentice shall be employed to every tailoress employed inside a factory or workroom. (4) The minimum rate of wage of tailoresses paid by the week shall be :—Trouser hands, trouser machinists, vest hands, vest machinists, coat hands, and patent machinists, £1 per week; coat machinists, to be competent to put in pockets and sleeves, £1 5s. per week. (5) To rank as competent to earn the minimum wage of £1 per week, trouser hands shall make on an average 36 pairs of trousers per week; hands making less to be paid a weekly wage out of their average out-turn at the rate of 6½d. per pair. To rank as competent to earn the minimum wage of £1 per week, other hands than trouser hands shall do work on an average which shall be equal to £1 per week at the present standard of piece-work rates now in force in the factory. Hands doing less to be paid a weekly wage on their average out-turn calculated at that standard. (6) All overtime, whether on weekly wage or on piece-work, shall be paid for at the rate of time and a half. All public holidays, if worked, to be paid for at overtime rates. (7) Any union official employed at A. Hordern and Sons' clothing factory may collect dues during lunch time. (8) The union shall be recognised in the factory. (9) This award shall come into force 1st January, 1903, and shall remain in force for two years. (10) The penalty for any breach of this award by any industrial union, or any person, firm, association, or corporation, not being a member of any industrial union, shall not exceed £200, or by any member of any such union, shall not exceed £5; and any such penalty incurred by the claimant union, or any of its members, or by any tailoress who is not a member of the claimant union, is to be paid to the secretary for the time being of A. Hordern and Sons' Industrial Union of Employers; and any penalty incurred by the respondent union, or any member thereof, or any person, firm, association, or corporation, being an employer and not a member

of such union, is to be paid to the secretary for the time being of the claimant union. (11) And the Court doth hereby further order, award, and direct that the said unions, and every member of such unions, and every person, firm, association, corporation, and tailoress, not being a member of any industrial union shall respectively do, observe, and perform every matter and thing by this award set out, imposed, or required on its, her, his, or their, part respectively to be done, observed, and performed, and shall not do anything in contravention thereof, but shall in all respects abide by and observe and perform the same.

Now you may ask, as your chairman did, what hold have you on the home-worker? Of course, we have a very large extension of the term "shop." We cannot prevent a woman taking work home and doing it assisted by her children, but the Court having declared a minimum wage every person working in the trade is entitled to receive it. If a woman reduced by poverty takes work home and does it for less than the minimum wage she can bring an action against her employer even as long as two years afterwards to recover the difference between what she has received and what she ought to have received. (Cheers.) With that liability facing them there is no great desire on the part of the employers to give out home-work. (Laughter and cheers.) You may ask also what has been the effect of a minimum wage on the unemployed question. Well, as far as we can judge, it has had no effect as regards the number of unemployed, but of course the Progressives have insisted that the full effect should be given to the Alien Emigration Act. So that the advantages of the Arbitration Act might not be destroyed, no alien is admitted into the colony without proof of good character. We also in Australia hold that the youth, to prevent the evils of unemployment, should be developed physically to take their positions as citizens, consequently the Labour party have put forward a demand for compulsory military service. If a country is worth living in it is worth fighting for. The best safeguard against a military caste is a democratic and national army. We have insisted also that men falling out of work through age should be given old age pensions. Men and women above 65 years of age to receive ten shillings per week, provided that their total income does not exceed one pound per week. (Cheers.) I do not see why in England the Board of Trade should not be empowered in certain industries where sweating is notorious to arrange for the fixing of a minimum wage by an impartial tribunal, with power to extend the order to other districts and make it a common rule. I am satisfied that any wholesale attempt to introduce industrial arbitration into all trades must be a failure owing to the complexity of the conditions in this country. As preliminary experiments special trades should be picked out and some authority should be empowered to institute inquiries on oath into the conditions of those trades and then have power to make an award covering the whole conditions of the trade so as to ensure that the people in that trade live under proper conditions. (Cheers.)

Legislative Experiments in New Zealand.

The Hon. W. PEMBER REEVES, speaking on the subject of "Legislative Experiments in New Zealand," said: At any time it would be somewhat of a disadvantage for any humble person to follow so able and eloquent a speaker as my friend Mr. Bernard Wise, but I am specially handicapped because he and I must tread largely on the same ground. You will, I feel sure, allow me to associate myself with everything he has said in his most eloquent defence of industrial arbitration, though on one or two other points I do not see eye to eye with him. I have, of course, my own views about armies (hear, hear), and then, again, I might speak a little more reverentially of political economists, but Mr. Wise has been a political economist, and I have not. I think he has underestimated the magnitude of his task and the courage which was necessary to attempt it. His difficulties in New South Wales differed from ours in New Zealand. We had no precedent to go upon—no one had any experience of any arbitration act. But in New South Wales, when Mr. Wise brought in his Bill, they had the example of the working of the New Zealand Act to go upon. This, though in one way a help, yet positively increased the bitterness of the opposition. They knew what arbitration meant. Mr. Wise also had to apply the system to a great city containing half-a-million people,—something far larger than our towns of 50,000 to 70,000 in New Zealand. That makes his experiment so especially valuable from the English point of view. It is a great honour to me to have the privilege of addressing you representing as you do the aristocracy of labour in this country. Ninety-five per cent. of the population of Great Britain do not know anything about our institutions, and do not care. The remaining five per cent. have learned something about them from the attacks made upon them in your great newspapers. I am not surprised at the 95 per cent. I am a little surprised that laws which have tackled problems, which every man says he would like to see solved—laws which have done so much for humanity do not get fair play, even chilly fair play, and do not get sympathy, even critical sympathy. The chance of saying something which may clear the air on this matter is one which must not be thrown away. If the chances of doing any other good are not very great, the chances of doing harm are nil, and, therefore, I can speak boldly out and tell you the whole truth on this occasion.

You will allow me, with the utmost possible respect to you, to be as unconciliatory as I choose. (Laughter.) One conciliatory remark, however, I must make. It is that I do not hold that our laws are a final solution of the industrial problem; they are courageous, humane, and successful attempts to do something. If I say that they are not a solution of the problem I have not said that to conciliate you; I have merely said it because it is true. If this gathering of the aristocracy of labour meant business an enormous step could be taken here now. But if the people who have

this question at heart mean to be discouraged because of differences let them stop here and now—the difficulties can be overcome. They have been overcome in other countries, and much sacrifice and determination is needed to overcome them. Are we here merely to talk, or are we here to try and hammer out the best way to set about curing the evil? All were agreed before coming here that legislation is needed; is anybody ready to suggest a means of overcoming the evil, if not, are you prepared to study a suggestion from a very humble source? Our great difficulty is not to find out methods of carrying this great reform into execution, but to rouse that half-puzzled, half-contemptuous giant—the people of Great Britain. Once you have done that you will find plenty of helpers. Mr. Asquith will give you figures. The newspapers would discover that after all there is a great deal to be said in favour of the idea; and as for politicians, well, they will tumble over one another in offering their help. The best way to proceed is to do what can be done by statutory enactment, and then to provide machinery for examining the conditions of each industry. You must have certain principles to go upon, but outside that the more elastic the system the better. We have done something by statutory enactments and then have gone on to work by examining into the conditions of industries, and regulating them by the awards of State tribunals. We have passed laws prohibiting the employment of children and regulating their wages. No human being under 14 years of age is allowed to work in our factories at all. Those who are between 14 and 16 are allowed to work only when it is certified that they have been properly educated and are physically fit. No children between the ages of 14 and 20 may work in factories without being paid. At the lowest age they must draw at least 5s. per week, and each year their wages must be increased by 3s. per week until the young men have become improvers, when, of course, they get £1 per week. By doing that we get rid of that hoary old fraud of employing young persons for nothing, under the pretence of teaching them a trade. Furthermore, young people may not work more than 45 hours, except in cases of overtime, and they must be paid for overtime at the rate of 6d. per hour extra, adults being paid a minimum of 9d. per hour extra. Another principle is that every workshop is a factory, and no distinction can be drawn between home-workers and factory hands. All workers get certain whole day holidays each year, and a half-day holiday once a week.

Now, if I am not wearying you, I will now come to the machinery of our Industrial Arbitration system. I would like you to remember that our system is not merely a minimum wage law; it deals with all the conditions of industry, because it deals with all the matters that can possibly arise between employers and employes. One of our objects is the prevention of strikes and lock-outs, both are a nuisance to the public and unfair and arbitrary to the workers engaged in them. I do not want to sail under false colours before you, and you will permit me to mention that in my belief,—as in the opinion of my friend Sidney Webb,—there is a better way for a settlement

of industrial disputes than the old system of strikes and lock-outs. (Hear, hear.) However, to pass from that—you are here to find a remedy for sweating, and I will show you how our act might be of some help to you in what you propose to do. Our second object was to build up and strengthen our Trade Unions, and our third object was for the workers to secure better and more humane conditions for labour as a whole. In New Zealand all these objects have been fulfilled. The Act has been in operation now for eleven years, and it never was in more active use than it is at present. The machine is threefold. We work first by industrial agreement between master and men; secondly, by conciliation boards for the arrangement of disputes; and finally, by the Industrial Arbitration Court to settle disputes authoritatively. We encourage arrangements between employers and the workpeople, arrangements which may be registered and so acquire legal force. The New Zealand correspondent of the *Morning Post* discovered that a certain Unionist who was angry about some award given by the Arbitration Court had found it in practice better to make arrangement with employers than to go to the Court, and from that startling discovery the correspondent of the *Morning Post* solemnly and gloomily hinted at the people who were getting sick of the Arbitration Court and its machinery, and were finding the old fashioned system better. If that gentleman had known anything about the origin of the Act and its past history he would have known that outside arrangements had always been encouraged, and there have been infinitely more of these arrangements since the Act came into force than before. If you have a compulsory machine in the background to which either party might appeal they will soon discover potent reasons why they should come to an arrangement themselves. Our second stage is Conciliation Boards. We have in each industrial district a Board composed of two employers and two workmen, with an independent chairman; they have great power, but they do not have the power of making the final binding award. Nearly all the disputes are now taken to the Arbitration Court, but that does not mean that the conciliation boards are not doing very useful work, and they may do more good work in the future than they have done in the past. Here is an instance: It is a case last month in the city of Wellington in which a union of men were extremely anxious to have a conference with their employers, the employers were not very anxious to meet the workers, because they thought it could not be a success. However, they were persuaded to meet by the Conciliation Board, and the result was that they came to an amicable settlement. The finding of the Conciliation Board was forwarded to the Arbitration Court in order that it might have legal force, and in the end the masters thanked the Conciliation Board and its chairman for the good work it had done. (Cheers.) They admitted that they had not expected that any good would come from the conference. The chairman of the Board laid stress on the fact that he had all along been anxious to have a friendly discussion. The climax of our system is the Arbitration Court, which is a tribunal of three

persons—one elected by the Federation of Workpeople, one by the Federation of Employers, and an independent president. Its machinery is based upon their recognition of industrial unions of employers and employes. Thirty thousand Trade Unionists and about 3,400 employers are registered under the Act. When the Act was passed there were no more than 10,000 unionists in New Zealand. The president of the Arbitration Court is appointed by the Governor of the Colony in Council, and he must have been a judge of the Supreme Court; no less a qualification would satisfy the employers in the Colony. The Court's ruling must be and is obeyed. One of the most competent predictions of the political economists was that our laws would not be obeyed. Of course, I do not say that all these elaborate and complicated awards are obeyed by every employer; there are many cases of individual infringements, but nearly all are petty attempts at evasion. These are dealt with by the magistrates, and fines are usually inflicted. Last year 267 cases of infringement were brought before the Courts. Of this number 217 were won by the prosecution, 19 withdrawn, and about 31 dismissed. The magistrate has power to inflict fines on Trade Unions collectively up to £500. I may tell you also that non-unionists have been fined for disobeying an award. It is quite true that in the early days of the working of the Court a very large number of most valuable concessions were made to labour, and this was simply because times were getting more prosperous after years of depression, and, as was only natural, the men gained some advantage. Unionists know that they are much better off under the Arbitration Act. Of course, they have to take the rough with the smooth, and, like the employers, they must sometimes put up with a position which they do not like. Some of the awards hit the employers very hard indeed. It is the business of the Department of Labour to see that the awards are obeyed. In a case where any employer has underpaid it is within the power of the Court to decree that back pay shall be paid up (hear, hear, and cheers) from the very beginning of the infringement of the award. Often the employers pay up rather than face prosecution, and last year the sum of £2,000 was recovered in this way by inspectors and handed over to the workers. (Cheers.)

Let me say this, in conclusion, I promised to tell you how, as far as I can see, this system might be of practical use to you in the crusade on which you have embarked. It is quite true that no general law, such as we have passed in New Zealand, would stand the remotest chance even of consideration in the British Parliament. Employers would oppose it, and Trade Unions also would oppose it, even more determinedly than the others. But the very essence of our system is that it is an elastic system. We apply it in one way, and it is quite open for you to apply it in another. All you want to do at first is to take the New Zealand system very much as it is, and, instead of applying it generally, make out a schedule of trades to which you think it might be applied. It will work well in some trades, even if it does not prove suitable in others. I should imagine that you might find it more convenient,

owing to the size of your trades, to have "trade boards," instead of "district boards." I should not advise you to follow the example of Victoria by having your Boards elected by the workpeople and employers irrespective of organisation—it must be based on unionism. You should have two tribunals, because one finds that a double tribunal is an enormous safeguard against troublesome mistakes; besides, the public have a more comfortable feeling when they know that proper care is being taken. I have said that any system which you may consider ought to be based upon Trade Union organisation. I would remind you that a Trade Union under an Arbitration law does not merely mean a body of workpeople who have accumulated enormous funds. When Arbitration is law a Trade Union may be quite poor, but yet will be safe because it is protected by the State. Workmen are not black-listed and turned into the street simply because they are members of the union. (Hear, hear.) I do also think that if you are going to take in hand certain trades you ought to see that in those trades there shall be no strikes and lock-outs in future; you should say to the people, "We are going to have fair conditions and industrial peace." (Applause.)

DISCUSSION.

Mr. BEN. TILLET (Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union), said that he rather thought that that was his field day. A large number of Trade Unionists had spoken against the introduction of any such system as that which had been spoken of that day, and he thought this was due to ignorance of its true meaning. He was a compulsory arbitrationist, not because he cared for the capitalists or the employers or the middle classes or public opinion, but because he was conscious of his class. (Cheers.) The present labour wars were killing more people in one year than the average blood-thirsty wars did in fifty. (Hear, hear.) And it was because he found that people were not permitted to live that he felt class conscious, he had had experience of New Zealand and Australia; he found that in those Colonies a natural revolution had taken place. He felt that in this country Trade Unionism had hardly made itself felt, its potentialities were not recognised by the vast majority of the people. The worker should be able to claim from the State as much protection for his body and health as the rich now did for their property. (Cheers.) He had the honour of giving evidence before the Sweating Commission of 1888 and he would like to say that what he said then in regard to aliens, etc. had more than come true. He was convinced that unless we had industrial arbitration a minimum wage would never be secured and they would never have the workers coming into the Trade Unions. (Cheers.)

Mr. SHACKLETON, M.P. (Darwen Weavers' Union), asked as to the effect of the proposed legislation upon the unions. In

his own district only one sixth of the people were organised, with the result that wages were 15 per cent. less than the ordinary average wage.

Mr. PEMBER REEVES replied that their machinery was based entirely on Trade Unions. People who are not organised have no right to be represented on the industrial tribunals, though they get the same wages as unionists.

Mr. PETE CURRAN (General Federation) asked whether a number of organised workers in New Zealand had not been sent to prison for infringements of awards.

Mr. REEVES: That is quite untrue. No union has been fined, and certainly no single worker has been sent to prison. (Cheers.)

Mr. PETE CURRAN: Will the Arbitration Law work so well in an old and complex country like ours as it does in New Zealand?

Mr. REEVES replied that that was entirely a matter of opinion, and went on to suggest that they should educate the people up to it. He admitted, however, that such a law would not be as easy to pass here as it was in the Colony.

Mrs. PANKHURST (Manchester Central Branch I.L.P.) asked whether it was true that it had been possible to have the legislative experiments in New Zealand because women were directly represented in the legislature. (Loud laughter and cheers.)

Mr. PEMBER REEVES replied that before women had the vote in New Zealand the Lower House twice passed and the Upper House twice threw out the Arbitration Bill, but after women had the vote the Upper House agreed to the measure. (Cheers.)

The Hon. BERNARD WISE said that in New South Wales the labour votes were passed before women had votes. (Laughter.)

Replying to a question addressed by Mr. JAS. MACPHERSON (Shop Assistants' Union),

Mr. PEMBER REEVES said: The Arbitration Act applied to children in shops, and the awards secured the minimum wage for those who worked in shops.

The Conference then adjourned for luncheon.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

Mr. A. G. GARDINER (Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Anti-Sweating League) presided at the afternoon session,

In re-opening the proceedings the CHAIRMAN announced that the Lancashire delegates were compelled to leave at four o'clock. They were most anxious to vote on the resolution, and it was, of course, desirable that they should have that opportunity. He would, therefore, ask Mr. Hoatson to read his paper, discussion would then be invited, but it would be closed at 3-45, in order that the vote might be taken.

Victorian Minimum Wage System.

The Rev. JOHN HOATSON, of Leek (late Vice-President of the Victorian Anti-Sweating League), then read his paper on the "Victorian Minimum Wage System." He said: The principle of the minimum wage was first embodied in legislation in Victoria in the Factories Act of 1896. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the system adopted for its enforcement I give a brief description.

In any trades affected special Boards are appointed, consisting of from four to ten members, half elected by employers, half by employed. These nominate some outsider as chairman; or, in the event of disagreement, such nomination is made by the Governor-in-Council. The Boards are empowered "to determine the lowest prices or rates which may be paid to any person or persons, or classes of persons, employed either inside or outside a factory or workroom" in the trade concerned. The kind of work, the various processes, the age and sex of the workers, all are to be considered. Determinations are enforced by penalties, and stand until the Board themselves alter them, or until appeal to the Supreme Court shall annul them. In certain trades the operation of the Determinations is limited to particular districts; but extension may take place on petition from districts outside.

In addition, when fixing the minimum wage, Boards have also to fix the maximum number of hours per week for that wage, and a higher scale is to be determined for overtime, which itself is limited in various ways.

As bearing upon problems here, it may be further mentioned that outside work is to be paid at piecework rate only; that improvers are limited in number in any workplace, and that both for improvers and apprentices minimum rates are to be fixed, varying with experience; the Act itself fixing an absolute minimum of 2s. 6d. per week for the least experienced.

Four persons, other than Chinese, and one Chinese, constitute a factory. Places where out-work is done, and outside workers, are all to be registered and subject to inspection.

The Act of 1896 was experimental, being limited to three years, and applied only to specified trades, viz., the Clothing Trade (including Boots, Shoes, etc., but excluding Dressmaking and Millinery), Furniture Making, and Baking. Under its provisions five Wages Boards were immediately appointed to deal with the Boot Trade, Clothing, Shirts, Underclothing, and Baking, a sixth being appointed later for the Furniture Trade.

The Determinations arrived at by all these Boards, excepting the underclothing, where difficulties arose, were soon in operation, with such favourable results, that by the end of 1898 demands were widely made for the renewal and general extension of the Act. The trades selected had been amongst the worst sweated; but hardships prevailed in many others, which, it was held, only the minimum wage principle could remove.

In 1900 the Act was renewed for two years with the important addition that any trade might be brought under it by resolution of *either* House of Parliament. By 1902 the Determinations of 29 Boards were in force. In that year political complications caused accidental suspension of the Act for three months; but in 1903 it was renewed with three noteworthy amendments. New Boards required the consent of *both* Houses; and a Court of Appeal was established, to consist of a Supreme Court Judge, assisted by two Assessors, representing employers and employed, to give advice. The power to limit the number of apprentices, possessed since 1896 by the Wages Boards, was abolished, a very important change, the effect of which is doubtful. The Act was again made temporary, the period being fixed for two years.

The Act of 1905—mainly a consolidating Act—at last took Minimum Wage and Wages Board legislation beyond the experimental, no time limit whatever being imposed.

The story of the agitation and inquiry preceding and following the Act of 1896 is full of suggestion. Without quoting at present specific cases of sweating I may refer to certain general conclusions based on the Report of the Royal Commission of 1883-4, the Chief Inspector's Reports of 1885, 1888, 1890 and onwards, his Special Report on the "Sweating System in the Clothing Trade" in 1890, and the Reports of the Factories Act Inquiry Board of 1893. These conclusions are as follows:—

- (1) That sweating was general in the clothing trade, and frequent in a number of other trades.
- (2) That it was especially bad in those branches of the clothing trade where females were in a majority amongst the workers, and worst where they were almost the only workers.
- (3) That as the proportion of outworkers increased so did sweating, both in extent and intensity.
- (4) That in the baking trade (owing, doubtless, to the peculiar conditions of that trade), and in the furniture trade (where Chinese worked unlimited hours amidst the lowest surroundings) deplorable conditions prevailed.
- (5) That the unregulated "Apprentice" system, by which young people actually paid to work, injured workers in many trades.
- (6) That sweating was largely promoted by the non-registration of outworkers.

Mr. Levey, Chief Inspector, declared in 1888 that sweating was almost unknown in Victoria. But in 1890 he candidly admitted that he had been mistaken, and called attention to its wide prevalence, especially amongst outside workers, the conditions of the shirtmakers being described as "truly pitiable." Mr. Levey's conversion was typical of that of many, and was due to his discovery that evils, familiar to investigators here, were in existence, and rapidly growing, in Melbourne.

The question of outwork especially attracted attention. It was found to have caused the closing down of not a few factories and a great reduction in pay. Mr. Levey pointed out that "there does not seem to be any rule for the price which is paid for it, and the outside workers have to provide themselves with a room." In the tailoring prices ruled 30 to 40 per cent. below the factory "log," in bootmaking 15 per cent., in addition to certain expenses. The report of the 1893 Board showed still greater disparity. To quote two or three examples: Sac-coats were made inside for 2s. 9d. to 3s. 6d., outside for 1s. 3d.; youths' coats, inside for 1s. 9d., outside for 6d.; men's trousers for 1s. 3d. inside; 6d. outside. The condemnation of unregulated outside work was complete.

It was in consequence of the steadily increasing revelations of cruel hardships that the advanced Act of 1896 was passed. The selected trades brought under its provisions were those already mentioned, in which sweating appeared most pronounced and where the workers seemed most helpless.

In New Zealand, in 1894, the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act, with which the Hon. W. Pember Reeves' name is so closely associated, had been passed. Its principles were very closely studied by Victorian reformers, and its admirable purpose fully recognised. But the all but unanimous opinion was in favour of a different line in legislation, and the minimum wage policy was adopted.

The reasons for this preference were somewhat as follows: It was felt that Victorian conditions—the greater extent of her manufactures, the special character of these, and the concentration of so much in one large city, Melbourne—were very different from those in New Zealand, and called for a more drastic treatment.

Legislation was especially needed for the unorganised trades, females and outworkers, whom experience had shown unable to form effective combinations for self-protection. Whilst the compulsory arbitration method might apply effectively in averting or settling disputes between organised labour and capital, Victorians felt that it would not practically benefit the helpless victims of Victorian sweating. The combining of unorganised women, a necessary preliminary to appeal to Arbitration Courts, seemed impossible, even in the comparatively limited area of Melbourne; and former experience testified to this.

For example, a Tailoresses' Union was formed after the great strike of 1882-3. The "log" adopted by that Union, and nominally accepted by employers, was constantly cut, and by 1890 the Union was practically dead. Critics might blame the members for suffering the Union to fail, but those who knew the conditions were not surprised, and not prepared to condemn harshly. When leaders become marked, when evidence given to Commissions is printed with letters instead of names attached, and when contest with employers' reductions seems fruitless, leading only to loss of already sweated pay, one cannot be surprised that women bear present ills lest worse befall, and have scant spirit left to combine,

Mr. Harrison Ord, who succeeded Mr. Levey as Chief Inspector, wrote in his report for 1895:

“ The marvellous patience of the women engaged in the trades in which sweating is carried on must excite the pity and admiration of all persons who come in contact with them. Late at night they will be found hard at work ; and when questioned, it is seldom that a harsh word of complaint is heard from their lips. The prices received are stated, but it is without anger ; and a hope is faintly expressed that things will improve.”

These very qualities were those which operated against forming combinations.

Mr. Levey, in 1890, recommended the formation of an “ outside union ” to assist the Government, but he recognised that the task would be very difficult. The regulation of hours and wages by statute was mentioned, but seemed to him too drastic to recommend.

It was, however, this strong policy, as the only way likely to be effective, that commended itself to the Victorian anti-sweaters and the Government.

I might also mention that the decision to take this course was largely influenced by the Trades Hall, which, with its organised strength, has consistently fought for the unorganised and helpless. The workers, at least, had no doubt as to the best cure for the disease.

Passing on to the benefits secured by the Minimum Wage System, evidence may be grouped under three heads :—

1. CONTINUOUS AND EXTENDING LEGISLATION.

The limitation of the Acts of 1896, 1900, and 1903 was chiefly due to the willingness of reformers to allow experience to demonstrate the soundness of their principles, of the ultimate victory of which they were confident. Prudence and confidence alike have been justified. The scope of the system has been steadily extended, and the system itself, after nine years of experimental legislation, made permanent. Amendments and additions like the latest apprentice clauses, and the Court of Appeal provisions do not touch the central principle. Apprentices themselves are under the minimum wage, and the Court is there to help in settling and enforcing it.

2. TESTIMONY FROM EMPLOYERS.

Naturally, there was division amongst these. At meetings held towards the close of 1898 the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers, whilst asking for inquiry by a Commission, was generally agreed that benefits had resulted from the Act ; and its extension to several trades, notably cigar making, tinsmiths, and glass bevelling, was advocated. The Chamber represented only a portion of the employers. Those outside were less favourable in their views.

But amongst these was one whose opinion was exceedingly valuable. Sir Frederick Sargood, head of one of the largest soft goods firms in Australasia, and one of the best known and most

esteemed politicians in Victoria, in a private conversation in 1899 said in my hearing: "The Act is killing off the dishonest employer." Four years earlier he had opposed its principle. But when the renewal and extension of it was before the Upper House in 1900, and, on the clause empowering either House to bring trades under it, a member asserted that their House, at least, would never use the power, Sir Frederick declared that he himself intended to move with regard to more than one trade, "and so would the honourable member if he knew the trade as well as I do." (Feb. 14th, 1900.)

3. BENEFITS TO THE WORKERS.

(1) *Average Increase in Wages.*—In the Chief Inspector's Report for 1904, figures are given in 37 trades or branches of trades, showing increases in average weekly wages, above the averages before the Determinations came into force, of from one penny (Ovenmakers) to 11s. 4d. (Coopers). The average of the 37 increments (for there is no decrease recorded) is over 4s. 4d. These figures cover all the workers in the specified trades.

(2) *Average Increase in "Female Trades."*—The average of increments in eight of these trades, wherein female labour is chiefly or largely employed, is a fraction under 2s. In the three trades, clothing, shirt, and underclothing, where women greatly preponderate, the average gain is over 1s. 4d.; whilst in the last named, wherein all but five are female workers, the increase is 1s. 8d. Again, in the clothing trade, the average for all females in two years before the Determination was 1s. 7d. below that of 1904.

The significance of these figures is enhanced by the fact that before the early Determinations came into force it was not possible to get complete records of the sweated outworkers. There is little doubt that had such been obtainable the increase would have been found appreciably larger.

(3) *Contrasts with Former Sweating Rates.*—A few cases taken from official records afford striking evidence of the improvement effected where sweating once was rampant:—

- (a) A trousers finisher (1893) working 10 to 12 hours per day earned 5s. in a week. Minimum now, 20s. Average of piece-workers, 21s. 5d.
- (b) A shirt finisher (1890), "good worker," maximum 2s. 6d. per day. Others (1893-4) per week "working constantly," 7s. to 8s. Minimum now, 16s. Average in-worker, 20s. 5d.; out piece-worker, 15s.
- (c) Shirt makers of one class, before Determination, 2s. 4d. per dozen, afterwards (1898), 3s. 3d.; finishers, before Determination, 4½d. per dozen, afterwards, 8d.
- (d) Mole trousers: pay increased from 5d. to 9½d. (Board's log) per pair; stock vests, 6s. per dozen, increased to 11s.; stock coats, 1s. 3d. each, increased to 2s. 3d.

(4) *Contrasts with trades not under the Boards:—*

- (a) For nearly two years the Underclothing Board failed to make any Determination. It was not till 1899 that the difficulties were overcome, and a minimum for both time and piece-work fixed. Hence, in 1898, Mr. Ord had to quote the following figures, showing the great differences between prices paid to outworkers and fair rates for similar goods in factories:—

	Price paid to Outworker. Per doz.	Fair price paid in a Factory for Low-class Goods. Per doz.
Night dresses	2 6	6 9
Knickers	1 6	2 11
Chemises	1 6	2 9
Pillow cases	0 9	2 5 with frill.
Pillow cases	0 4½	1 6 plain.

This at the very time when the Inspector testified that the Clothing and Shirt Board's Determinations had secured fair prices to workers.

- (b) The Dressmakers' Board is the most recent creation, its Determinations having come in force only in September, 1904. The average wage in 1903 was 11s. 11d. per week, as compared with 12s. 7d. in the supposedly much inferior underclothing, 14s. 10d. in the shirt, and 22s. 2d. in the clothing in the same year, whilst Miss Mead reported workers with five years and more experience receiving only 7s. 6d. to 10s., and characterised the whole trade, outside forewomen, as getting very low wages. The latest report includes only four months' work under the Determination, but shows already considerable advance in pay, the raising of bodice hands from 10s. to 16s. being a conspicuous illustration.

- (c) The milliners are still outside the Act. There were 1,410 females engaged in the work according to the 1904 report. Their average wage was 9s. 10d. per week. Contrast this with the 1,361 underclothing workers at 12s. 11d., the 1,084 shirt hands at 14s. 7d., the 4,393 females in the clothing at 17s. 1d. Comment is needless.

(5) *Contrasts in "Femals Trades" between wages under Boards and those in districts not under Boards:—*

The report of 1904 shows 224 workers in the clothing, the average of whose wages is 1s. 6d. below that of the 5,113 under the Board. In the same year 208 dressmakers are reported in outside districts, receiving an average of 7s. 2d. as compared with the 12s. 2d. paid to the 6,224 who had been a third of the year under the Board.

I propose now to deal with some of the objections urged against the Victorian system; and in this connection I would take especially those embodied in an article by Mr. G. W. Gough in the *Economic Journal* for September, 1905, as several of these are typical.

Mr. Gough declares that the Determinations have been broken, owing to collusion between employer and employed. But the evidence adduced belongs entirely to the earliest period. The evil was far less rampant than Mr. Gough implies, and its continuance was averted by later legislation, so that in the report for 1904 (which Mr. Gough evidently had not seen) the inspectors testify almost unanimously that in every regulated trade the Determinations are faithfully observed. It is also to be noted that the very evidence upon which this objection is based is gathered from the report of the Chief Inspector, in which that gentleman, despite all evasions of the Act, says, "With a full knowledge of the significance of the statement, I say I believe the system has been successful."

The friction on the Wages Boards themselves is indicated as another objection, coupled with the failures of one or two of the Boards. A general answer to this, as to other criticism raised, is that defects in administration, or in certain parts of the machinery, whilst calling for remedy, are no real objection to the principle behind. But here again Mr. Gough's attack fails through its reliance on evidence which later experience contradicts. Plausible enough a few years ago, his criticism is beside the mark now. Friction was inevitable, and was expected in the earlier stages; but, despite this, Determinations have been made, and are working well in 38 trades or branches. Where alterations in method have been shown necessary they have been made as fresh experience has been gained.

What have the actual failures been? Mr. Gough mentions five—the Underclothing (at first), the Carriage, the Tanners', the Fellmongers', and the Tinsmiths' Boards.

In the case of the Underclothing Board, the first failed and resigned in May, 1898. But the second, in spite of great complications, succeeded, and its Determinations were gazetted in June, 1899, since which date all has worked smoothly.

The Fellmongers' Board's Determinations led to a closing down by many employers for some months in 1901. Both Board and Determination were abolished by the Act of 1902. Another Board was appointed, and its Determinations came in force in May, 1904. The original difficulty concerned the limitation of legal hours to 48 weekly. Agreeing on 54 the Board has succeeded in removing friction and increasing the average wage by 2s. 11d.

How far the Tanners' Board has failed may be judged from the fact that it was appointed in 1900, and its Determinations of May, 1901, still apply, no difficulties being experienced in their enforcement. They were reported in 1904 to be considered "fair and reasonable." Several employers had considerably added to their premises, and the increase of average wages was 2s. 8d.

The Tinsmiths' Board failed over the point of the rates for making jam tins, which now are excluded from its control. The latest report shows it at work fixing Determinations for other branches of the trade.

The Carriage Board failed, and has not yet been revived.

There is the complete record of failure, real or alleged. The nett result is—one Board dissolved, one with part of the trade excluded, and the other 37 of the 38 in existence in 1904 working smoothly, the Determinations well observed, and the Department having “comparatively little trouble in enforcing the rates.” The sole exception reported concerns the Chinese in the furniture trade. And the Chinaman—well, that is another story.

Mr. Gough dwells on the loss of employment said to be suffered by old and less efficient workers. To me this appears to be the only serious objection. I admit the difficulty. The later Acts in Victoria sought to meet it by allowing the Chief Inspector to grant yearly licences to such workers, whose number is limited to one-fifth in any factory, and whose minimum rate of pay (lower than the general Determination) is stated on the licence. I am doubtful as to this provision. The class affected would seem to need special treatment; but I am suspicious of anything endangering the adequate remuneration of average workers. Difficulty arises under any system which actually abolishes low or sweating rates. Of two evils choose the less, and devise means to remedy that also.

I question if the actual loss of employment by these workers is as great as alleged. Nearly two-thirds of Victorian workers are under the Act. There was a steady increase (broken only in 1903) from 3,370 factories with 40,814 workers in 1896 to 4,436 with 60,977 in 1904—20,163 more employed, or an increase of nearly 50 per cent. The population increased only 30,024, or 2½ per cent. Without pressing these figures unduly, I think they show that unemployment greatly diminished. A system under which such results are found cannot be without merit.

Mr. Gough states with grim satisfaction that the Commission of 1902 “proposed a clean sweep of the existing system—the very best evidence as to its irritating and inadequate character.” I have better evidence still to the contrary. Even the reactionary Government of 1903 continued the Act, and, a month after Mr. Gough’s article appeared, the Government of 1905 made the system permanent.

I take a last objection, voiced by Mr. Gough in two forms: that the increase in wages was nominal rather than real, owing to the introduction of a task system, and that the legal minimum tended to become the average wage.

As regards the first form of this objection, the evidence again is not up-to-date. It is true that the Inspector’s Report for 1898 indicated the evil (though it did not hinder his cordial approval of the Minimum Wage System), and that certain witnesses before the Commission of 1902 spoke of task work here and there. But in the later reports complaints are absent, and the workers are clearly shown as satisfied.

The second form of this objection has already received incidental answer in this paper. So far as figures go, a careful examination of average wages in regulated trades does not bear out the objection. Data are not available for correct comparison in all the

trades, as the Determinations in most include many different minima for different kinds of work. But in seven men's trades in which there is only one minimum, the average excess over the minimum is 3s. 7½d. Similarly in ten women's trades the average excess is 2s. 3d. In some other trades high excesses are shown. Thus, cigar makers whose minimum for wrapper leaf work is 30s., and for cigar leaf work 40s., average 52s. 8d., whilst the men in the clothing trade, with minima of 25s., 30s., 40s., 45s., and 50s., average 53s. 9d. These figures refer to workers on time rates. Statistics as to piece-workers, enabling comparisons to be made, are only partially available; but there is no reason to think that any materially different result would be reached. Wages vary of course from year to year, these figures being those of 1904. But there is nothing to indicate that the minimum tends to become a maximum. It averts descent below a living wage; it does not hinder advance beyond.

Before leaving the matter of objections to the Victorian system, let me repeat that attacks on the administration of the law do not touch its central principle, and that criticism to be effective must not be based on the early difficulties, which later were overcome. The attacks of Mr. Gough and others break down on these points. Even Mr. Gough, whose article is deliberately hostile, is obliged to admit success in three most important trades, wherein sweating was worst; and the most thorough antagonist cannot do other than agree that the workers are satisfied that the system is beneficial. Attacks upon it have come almost entirely from quarters where from the first hostility was shown, or from those who belong to particular schools of economics.

Now, as to application of the Minimum Wage System here. It has been urged that the Victorian conditions are widely different, that the regulated industries especially are of very slender proportions compared with those in Britain. Of course, many conditions are different. But the question is: Are the conditions vital to the problem amongst these? I venture to assert that they are not. Consider, for example, the following:—

The evils of unorganised labour, especially that of females.

The still greater evils of the system of unregulated outwork.

The low wages and low standard of life associated with such, and the consequent apathy and hopelessness of the workers.

The practically insurmountable difficulties attendant upon getting these workers to combine effectively.

The complications introduced by the labour of married women, and those who are subsidised from home, especially in so-called "respectable trades."

The trades in which sweating is most frequent and bitter.

On all these and other points there is almost complete similarity between British and Victorian conditions. The disease is the same, the symptoms are the same.

Of course, in Victoria the industries are on a much smaller scale. A model is smaller than the machine it represents. But

its working is the same. And, indeed, in dealing with sweating I should think that the vaster the extent the more thorough the treatment to be given. Not a milder but an even stronger remedy is called for here.

This, at least, I claim, that the record of Victorian agitation and legislation is an excellent object lesson, indicating alike the difficulties and dangers, and the substantial success which will greet prudent yet decided action.

The question as to the effect of a minimum wage on the older and less efficient workers is certainly serious. Only actual experiment can show how far the fears of some will be realised. But if hardships are inflicted, they should surely be the objects of separate treatment. The old and inefficient are not to be made the instruments in dragging down others, besides being sweated themselves. Not the perpetuation of inferior, but the production and fostering of superior workers and work should be our ultimate aim.

There will be practical difficulties in administration, especially in respect of expense. Any legislation on the lines of the Victorian (any, indeed, which is to do any real good) would necessarily mean a great increase in the staff of inspectors. Efficient registration and inspection are keystones. Victoria has been splendidly served by her officials, and she has cheerfully borne the cost, recognising that spending in this way means increased gain. Will the English Government be prepared to face the cost, which, after all, will be far less than that of a West Coast little war? We must help them to be prepared.

But with the best staff of inspectors there will be ample room still for voluntary help, such as the Women's Trade Unions, or others, and the Anti-Sweating League can give.

In Victoria the Anti-Sweating League, on which I worked for five years, from its formation in 1895, not only influenced legislation (Sir A. J. Peacock, the Victorian Chief Secretary, testified that the League educated public opinion and prepared the way for the Act of 1896), but also helped efficient administration. Consisting of both employers and employed, knowing neither sect nor party, we brought moral suasion to bear first of all, and, where necessary, posted the inspectors as to cases of sweating and breaches of the Act. We were occasionally informers, and proud of the job. Work like this would need doing here, and the Victorian League's experience should be valuable to those doing it.

I would advocate, then, the application of the minimum wage by means of Wages Boards, first of all to the most sweated trades in the most sweated districts where the workers are most helpless. A Bill like Sir Charles Dilke's would form a good basis for legislation. As in Victoria, there would be initial difficulties; but these would be conquered, and sweating would be scotched and ultimately killed. General approval would follow, and the Act would be extended as to both trades and districts, with enormous gain to the whole community.

The great Trade Unions can protect themselves. The really sweated cannot. Neither Buyers' Leagues, nor private efforts, nor abstract resolutions at Church or Nonconformist assemblies, nor even an Anti-Sweating League will succeed without legislation. Voluntaryism fails here. Victoria has shown the Mother of the Empire the better way, and has reached a happier state. It is for the mother to follow and profit by the daughter's experience. (Applause.)

Since this paper was prepared the Victorian Report for 1905 has arrived. In every particular it bears out the conclusions drawn from the facts and figures contained in that for 1904. The total number of factories is given as 4,623, of workers 63,270, and of those under the Act 44,500, distinct increases in each case.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. HOLSDEN: What effect has the increase of wages had upon the various industries?

Mr. HOATSON: As the Wages Boards increase in number the number of workers also increases. It is difficult to give the figures with regard to the general effect upon the industries, but trade was never better in Melbourne since the boom period than it is now.

A DELEGATE: Is the work done in convents supervised under the Act?

Mr. HOATSON: No.

In reply to a question by **Mr. JAS. MACPHERSON** (Shop Assistants' Union), it was stated that shop assistants were not under the minimum wage system. One of the worst sweated classes in Melbourne were the clerks. They could never get them to organise. To mention some of the institutions who underpaid their clerks would astonish the philanthropic world.

Mr. ROWLERSON: What control have you in cases where women who make shirts take them out and sub-let the contract at a lower price than they themselves get?

Mr. HOATSON: We can only control it by the most drastic inspection and enforcing the penalties. Not only is the employer liable if he does not pay the minimum wage, but he is liable also for back pay.

Mr. PETE CURRAN at this point asked leave on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee to move the following resolution:—

“That this Conference welcomes the formation of the National Anti-Sweating League heartily endorses the policy of securing by legislative action a minimum wage in the sweated industries, and pledges itself to forward that policy by every means in its power.”

He said: I am given to understand that some of the delegates present were desirous of moving an amendment, but I am informed that the Standing Orders Committee have decided that we shall take the vote of the Conference for and against the resolution.

A DELEGATE: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Curran says he has been asked by the Standing Orders Committee to move the resolution. I would like to know whether that is so or not. And what has become of the various amendments?

The CHAIRMAN: No. Mr. Curran was invited to move the resolution by the Committee of the League. The whole procedure, however, is in accordance with the decision of the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. MALLON (Secretary of the National Anti-Sweating League): It may possibly be my mistake; perhaps I was not sufficiently explicit. It was on behalf of the League Committee that I asked Mr. Curran to move the resolution. The various amendments were rejected by the Standing Orders Committee simply because they were not in order.

Mr. H. QUELCH (Social Democratic Federation): I have never heard of such a proceeding; a resolution is before us, and no amendment whatsoever is to be accepted. To suggest that we cannot modify this resolution is simply preposterous. It is not necessary for Mr. Curran to read the resolution; here it is, and you will have to swallow it. We are all in favour of it with certain modifications. Unless we have it modified, you will not get anything like a unanimous vote.

Mr. CURRAN: I am here to move this resolution, and I am willing to bear the responsibility of moving it. It would be impossible for any Committee to draw up a resolution covering all the points that we would desire to see included. Let me draw Mr. Quelch's attention to the wording of this resolution. The Conference endorses the policy—

A DELEGATE: What policy?

Mr. CURRAN: Why, the policy of securing a minimum wage. The Conference "pledges itself to forward that policy by every means in its power." Now, there are a certain number of delegates present who feel sore with regard to outworkers. If the League will take their instruction from this resolution, and take steps to secure legislation, those responsible for such legislation will surely be prepared to consider the position of outworkers. We want some practical result from this Conference. If after sitting here for three days and discussing a number of valuable papers, we are going to pass some abstract resolution which will not enable us to do anything, our time will have been wasted. There is nothing retrograde in the resolution, there is nothing of a reactionary character in it, and I hope it will be carried unanimously. I have sat for ten years on the General Purposes Committee of the Trades Union Congress, and five men elected by the Congress have the right to prevent any amendment from being brought forward. This resolution does not mean an ultimatum; it simply gives power to the League to do everything they possibly can in the way of bringing pressure to bear on the House of Commons. I do not think that for a single moment that the question of outworkers will be overlooked. The principle embodied in this resolution is quite sufficient to justify a united vote.

Mr. CHARLES FENWICK, M.P. (Mutual Confident Association), in seconding the resolution, said: I welcome the formation of a National Anti-Sweating League as a step in the right direction. If it succeeds in its object, which is to increase the material resources of the poor, and give them an opportunity of living a freer life than they do under the present circumstances, then its promoters will have earned the gratitude of us all. I can bear testimony to the large amount of interest excited in the provinces by the exhibition recently held at the Queen's Hall. It was the subject of general talk, and I know of no better means of bringing home to the minds of the people of this country in a concrete form the evils of sweating than the holding of such an exhibition and a conference such as this. Mr. Curran has said, and rightly said, that this is not a retrograde resolution. It is a step forward, and I appeal to my fellow delegates to endeavour to come to an unanimous agreement. I hope that no desire on our part to snatch a sectional victory will actuate us in a decision that we are about to arrive at. This resolution does not altogether suit a large number of the delegates present, neither does it suit me, but I do appeal to the common sense of the Conference, and ask you to give your unanimous assent in the hope that it will have some effect upon the public mind, and bring others into line with us so that we may be able to do something to assist the toilers of this country. (Cheers.)

The Secretary of the Standing Orders Committee explained that the amendments handed in were duly considered, and the opinion was that they were distinct resolutions, and did not deal with the question before the Conference.

Mr. QUELCH remarked that he had come to the Conference with the sole desire to assist its promoters. He could not help thinking, however, that to establish a minimum wage by itself would only intensify the evil; they must add to it the total suppression of out-work. (Cheers.) He asked that his amendment should be accepted as a supplementary resolution, unless this was done, or the resolution was modified, he would not vote in favour of it.

Miss MACARTHUR (Women's Trade Union League) said she thought there was considerable misapprehension as to what the rule laid down by the Standing Orders Committee really was. That Committee had certain duties delegated to it. Those present would remember that on the opening day of the Conference it was stated that amendments, although not invited, would be accepted, and should be sent in to the Standing Orders Committee. The first amendment sent in, to be moved by Mr. Quelch, and seconded by Mr. Stokes, who was a member of the Standing Orders Committee, read as follows:—

“That this Conference recognises that sweating is inevitable in the capitalist system, and can only be abolished when all the means and sources of wealth are socially owned, and a system of production for use is substituted for that of production for profit. In the meantime, however, as

means of mitigating the worst evils of sweating, the Conference advocates the complete suppression of 'out-work,' the establishment of a minimum wage, the extension and more adequate application of the Factory Acts, the raising of the school age of children, the general legislative limitation of the hours of labour to eight per day, and the State organisation of the unemployed."

The second amendment read as follows :—

"That this Conference calls upon the Labour Party in the House of Commons to at once take steps to bring pressure on the Government with a view to the early introduction of a Bill abolishing outworking in all trades, thereby compelling employers to provide workshop accommodation for all they employ."

The Standing Orders Committee decided that these were not amendments but substantive resolutions, and consequently out of order.

We Socialists, continued Miss McARTHUR, have had an opportunity of voicing our views, they will be reported in the Press, but the point is—are we going to render useless all the labour and thought and time that has been expended on arranging this Conference in order to deal with this one phase of the social problem? The speaker went on to say that she hoped she was as consistent a Socialist as Mr. Quelch or any man or woman in that hall, but she appealed to the Conference for the cause which they all held so dear to pass the resolution unanimously.

Mr. QUELCH said that after that explanation they did not want to quarrel. He asked that after the first resolution had been dealt with his amendment should be put from the chair as a substantive resolution.

Mr. ROWLERSON wished to disassociate himself from any attempt to wreck the resolution. Their object, he said, was to strengthen it.

The CHAIRMAN said it would be possible to receive a resolution on the subject of out-workers separately, although in the opinion of the League Committee that was really involved in the existing resolution, but to prevent any misunderstanding he would arrange for the resolution to be put.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried without dissent.

Mr. ROWLERSON then moved :—

"That this Conference urges upon the Executive Committee of the National Anti-Sweating League the importance of at once taking the necessary steps to abolish out-work in all industries."

Mr. PETE CURRAN seconded this resolution, which was also carried.

Sir CHARLES DILKE in moving a vote of thanks to the Corporation authorities for the use of the Guildhall, said he agreed with

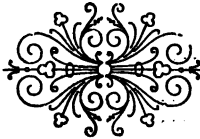
everything that had been said on the question of out-work. But it appeared to him that that was really involved in the first resolution; he did not see how it was possible to establish a minimum wage without taking into consideration out-workers; such papers as they had listened to that day in themselves justified the promoters of the Conference in calling it together. He felt certain it had done good.

Mr. HERBERT BURROWS, in seconding, said they had received every courtesy at the hands of the Corporation authorities and he hoped that they would instruct the secretary to send a formal letter to the Lord Mayor thanking him and the Corporation for their kindness.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that this would be done. On the motion of the Rev. Peter Thompson, seconded by Mr. George Shann, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the Chairmen.

Mr. A. G. GARDINER, in responding, expressed the hope that much good would come out of the Conference, which he described as a memorable link in a long chain. The Exhibition at the Queen's Hall owed its origin to the excellent example of Germany, the next step was the formation the National Anti-Sweating League, and now the step ahead was an attempt to secure legislation; therefore the work rested with them. The Conference represented 2,000,000 organised workers, they could do much and one thing they could do was to make the League rich in funds. He hoped that they would not go away feeling that the work was at an end; it had only just begun, they had to appeal to the public and he hoped that every association and every co-operative society would join them in their efforts. The Chairman mentioned that the subscription was only 1s. and that the handbook—the powder and shot of the Union—was still obtainable at the price of sixpence.

This concluded the Conference.



DELEGATES

TO THE

NATIONAL ANTI-SWEATING LEAGUE CONFERENCE

AT THE GUILDHALL,

ON OCTOBER 24TH, 25TH, AND 26TH, 1906.

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Abbott, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Society (Grays).
Adams, Mrs. Bridges.....	S.D.F.
Adkins, G.	Anchor Co-op. Society Limited.
Aldridge, Henry R.	National Housing Reform Council.
Allen, Miss	Women's Co-op. Guild (Reigate).
Andrews, J.	S.D.F. (Stratford).
Archibald, Thomas	Preston District Powerloom Weavers' Assn.
Arnold, T. Geo.	Royal Arsenal Co-op. Society Limited.
Ashton, Thos., J.P.	General Fed. of T.U.
Ashworth, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild.
Ashworth, Wm.	Royal Arsenal Co-op. Society Limited.
Askew, J. B.	S.D.F. (Tunbridge Wells).
Atkinson, Ernest	I.L.P. (Brierfield).
Baker, R. T.	London Society of Compositors.
Banham, Geo.....	Amal. Union of Clothiers' Operatives.
Banks, Alderman J. H.....	Borough of Poplar Trades Council.
Bannister, Smith.....	Burnley Weavers' Assn.
Banton, Alderman G., J.P.	I L.P. (Leicester).
Barnes, Geo. N., M.P.	The T.U. Congress Parly. Committee.
Barnes, W.	Battersea Trades and Labour Council.
Barnett, E.	Manchester and Salford Trades Council.
Barnfather, Mrs.....	Women's Co-op. Guild.
Barrass, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Lower Edmonton).
Bassford, H.....	Ilkeston and District Hosiery Union.
Bell, F.	Durham Miners' Assn.
Bell, J. N.....	The Labour Party.
Bell, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Abbey Wood).
Bell, Richard, M.P.	Amal. Society of Railway Servants.
Belt, George.....	S.D.F. (Arbroath) and Hammersmith L.R.C.
Betts, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Tunbridge Wells).
Black, Miss Clementina	Women's Industrial Council.
Black, H.	Amal. Society of Tailors (East London Jewish).
Blyth, J.	London Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
Bondfield, Miss M. G.	Nat. Amal. Union of Shop Assistants.

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Boorman, F.....	Amal. Society of Cricket Ball Makers.
Booth, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Derby).
Borisson, Miss M. A.	Garden City Co-op. Society Limited.
Bray, Walter	Colne and District Weavers' Assn.
Breese, Councillor John	Nelson and District Weavers' Assn.
Bremner, R.L., M.A., B.L.	Scottish Council for Women's Trades.
Brewer, Wm.	S.D.F. (Enfield).
Bridger, Councillor E.	Godalming Co-op. Society.
Briggs, Miss Ada.....	Women's Co-op. Guild (Parkstone).
Brixal, Mrs. E. T.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Bowes Park).
Broderick, J. T.	Aylesbury Co-op. Society.
Brown, Mrs.....	Women's Co-op. Guild (Wood Green).
Brown, Mrs. E.	Godalming Co-op. Society.
Brownlie, J. T.	Royal Arsenal Co-op. Society.
Bullough, Peter	Amal. Assn. of Operative Cotton Spinners.
Burnell, J. S. G.	Hackney Trades and Labour Council.
Burrows, Herbert	Women's T.U. League.
Burrows, H.....	Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union.
Burt, The Rt. Hon. Thos., M.P.	Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Assn.
Burton, H.	Dover and District Trades and Labour Council
Butler, C. W.	Westminster Labour Representative Assn.
Butler, J. G.	Royal Army Clothing Tailoresses' Assn.
Byrne, Michael	Amal. Society of Tailors.
Campbell, Mrs. Paul	I.L.P. (Walthamstow).
Carr, W. H.....	South East Lancashire Card and Blowing Room Operatives' Assn.
Chadwick, G. H.....	Northern Counties Amal. Assns. of Weavers.
Chapman, T.	Upholsterers' Trimming Makers' Union.
Chappell, Councillor John J.P. ..	The Cardiff, Penarth and Barry Coal Trimmers' Union.
Cheesebrough, Geo.	Burnley Weavers' Association.
Clear, M. H.	Co-op. Union Limited.
Clynes, J. R., M.P.	The Labour Party and Oldham Trades Council.
Coffin, G.	West London Industrial Co-op. Society Ltd.
Cohen, H.....	
Cole, Wm.	Co-op. Society Limited (Guildford).
Coleman, L.....	S.D.F. (N.E. Manchester).
Collins, F. Y.	Sheerness Co-op. Society.
Collins, John	Grimsby Steam Fishing Vessels, Engineers' and Firemen's Union.
Colpus, H.	Godalming Co-op. Society.
Conley, James, J.P.	The Labour Party.
Cook, Geo.	London Consolidated Society of Journeymen Bookbinders.
Cook, Mrs. Mabel	National Anti-Sweating League (West Hartlepool).
Cooke, A.	I.L.P. (Bristol).
Cooper, Ben.....	Cigar Makers' Mutual Assn.
Cooper, H. W.	Darwen Weavers' Assn.
Cottam, Austin Z., J.P.....	Clitheroe Weavers' Assn.
Craig, Andrew.....	Scottish Tailors' and Tailoresses' Assn.
Crinion, James, J.P.	Amal. Assn. of Card and Blowing Room Operatives.
Curle, Alderman J., J.P.	South-Western Counties Fed. of Trades Councils.
Curran, Pete	The Labour Party and Gen. Fed. of T.U.

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Daft, Mrs.	Co-op. Women's Guild (Ecclesall).
Dale, J. Gilbert	I.L.P. (Westminster).
Daly, M.	Amal. Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
Davidson, John	Borough of Woolwich Labour Representation Assn.
Davidson, Dr., W.A.	I.L.P. (Hammersmith).
Davis, G. S.	River and District Co-op. Society.
Davis, L.	East London Progressive Union.
Davis, Mrs. S. P.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Salisbury).
Davis, W. J.	General Fed. of T.U.
Dixon, J.P.	Postmen's Fed.
Donaldson, Rev. F. Lewis	Christian Social Union (Leicester).
Douglas, George	London Society of Lithographic Printers.
Dowle, Miss.	River and District Co-op. Society.
Dubery, H.	Fawcett Association.
Dushman, Harris	Amal. Society of Tailors (Stepney Branch).
Elliott, Mrs.	Women's Organisation (Clapton Park Co-op. Society).
Ensor, R. C. K., M.A.	L.R.C. (Poplar).
Evans, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Brighton).
Everton, Mrs.	Watford Co-op. Society.
Fagan, Hugh	Amal. Society of Steel and Iron Workers of Great Britain.
Fairchild, Councillor E. C.	S.D.F. (Hackney and Kingsland).
Fenwick, Chas., M.P.	Northumberland Miners' Mutual Confident Assn.
Feuer, Henry	London Branch of Polish Social Party.
Fielding, William	Rotherham and District Trades and Labour Council.
Fleet, Mrs.	Co-op. Women's Guild (Norwich).
Flynn, Terence A.	Amal. Society of Tailors.
Freund, G.	Wandsworth Trades and Labour Council.
Frith, Samuel	Journeyman Brassfounders' Trade and Friendly Society.
Frost, B.	Amal. Assn. of Operative Cotton Spinners.
Galbraith, J.	London Society of Compositors.
Gander, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Erith).
Garrett, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Society (Stratford).
Gasson, Mrs. M. A.	Women's Co-op. Society.
Gavin, James	Amal. Society of Steel and Iron Workers of Great Britain.
Gee, Alderman Allen, J.P.	General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers, and General Fed. of T.U.
Gill, A. H., M.P.	The T.U. Congress Party. Committee.
Gilmour, E.	Borough of Woolwich Labour Representation Assn.
Gouldsbrough, Dr.	Blackburn Weavers' Assn.
Green, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Southern Sectional Council).
Greenwood, R.	Army Clothing Employes' Union.
Grime, W. H.	Operative Cotton Spinners (Provincial Assn.)
Grisley, Geo.	Amal. Protective Union of Engine Drivers, Crane Drivers, Hydraulic and Boiler Attendants.
Guest, Dr. L. Haden.	I.L.P. (City of London).
Gurney, Miss Sybella	Co-partnership Tenants' Housing Council.
Guthrie, J. T.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Clapham).

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Halstead, R.	Co-op. Productive Fed.
Hampson, S.	South-East Lancashire Card and Blowing-room Operatives' Assn.
Hanmore, Mrs.	Co-op. Women's Guild (Bromley).
Hardie, T. Keir, M.P.	The Labour Party.
Harker, J.	Manchester and Salford Trades Council.
Harris, J. Theodore	Co-op. Brotherhood Trust, Limited.
Harris, Wm.	Blackburn and District Trades and Labour Council.
Harvey, W.	National Assn. of Operative Plasterers.
Hay, —.....	S.D.F. (Reading).
Haywood, E. H.	I.L.P. (Guildford and District).
Headon, A.	Amal. Shirt and Jacket Workers.
Henderson, A., M.P.	The Labour Party.
Henderson, Ralph	I.L.P. (Clapham).
Hendin, Clara S.	S.D.F. (Kensal Rise).
Herbert, S. C.	S.D.F. (Clitheroe).
Hicks, Miss Margaret	S.D.F. (Kentish Town).
Higgs, Richard	I.L.P. (Dover).
Hindle, James	Burnley Weavers' Assn.
Hines, Geo., J.P.	I.L.P. (Ipswich).
Hochman, Bernard.	Watch and Clockmakers' Bureau.
Hodd, Sidney	I.L.P. (Kensington).
Hodge, John, M.P.	The British Steel Smelters, Mill, Iron and Tinplate Workers' Assn. and The Labour Party.
Hodgson, Thos.	Northern Counties Amal. Assns. of Weavers.
Holes, E.	Rainham and District Co-op. Society.
Holland, James	Amal. Assn. of Operative Cotton Spinners.
Holmes, James	General Fed. of T.U.
Horton, J.	Woolwich District Trades and Labour Council.
Howes, H. W.	Printing Machine Managers' Trade Society.
Hudson, W., M.P.	Amal. Society of Railway Servants and The Labour Party.
Hughes, Thos.	Durham Miners' Assn.
Hutchinson, Mrs. F. M.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Woolwich).
Ince, George A. R.	The Reigate Industrial and Provident Society Limited.
Irwin, Miss Margaret.	Scottish Council for Women's Trades.
Isanstatt, T.	Amal. Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
Ivinson, Ben	I.L.P. (Bradford).
Jahries, J.	S.D.F. (Marylebone).
Jennings, Mrs.	Croydon Co-op. Society.
Johnson, Francis	I.L.P.
Johnson, James, J.P.	Amal. Assn. of Operative Cotton Spinners.
Johnson, John, M.P.	Durham Miners' Assn.
Johnson, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Society (Grays).
Jones, Walter	Wood Green Industrial Co-op. Society.
Jopson, F.	The Grays Co-op. Industrial and Provident Society Limited.
Kahan, Mrs. S. B.	S.D.F. (Burnley).
Kay, Councillor H. W.	Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union.
Kiley, Joseph	Blackburn Weavers' Assn.
King, A.	Tottenham, Edmonton, and Wood Green Trades Council.
Kips, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Lower Edmonton).

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Knee, Fred.	Workmen's National Housing Council.
Knight, Edward	Netherfield Co-op. Industrial Society Ltd.
Knowles, Councillor Samuel	Hyde, Denton and District Trades and Labour Council.
Kosh, Sig.	Erith Trades and Labour Council.
Kough, Kathleen.	S.D.F. (Tottenham).
Laycock, W. J.	Glass Bottle Makers' Trade Protection Society.
Layton, Mrs.	S.D.F. (West Croydon) and S.D.F. (Erith).
Leach, A.	S.D.F. (Walthamstow).
Leach, W. H.	Yorkshire Fed. of Trades and Labour Councils.
Leatham, Mrs.	I.L.P. (Chiswick).
Leckie, Lewis	Amal. Union of Upholsterers.
Levine, R.	East London Progressive Union.
Linton, Councillor Wm.	National Union of Boot and Shoe Clickers, Pressmen and Machinists.
Litchfield, Fred.	Ealing Tenants Limited.
Lockwood, Mrs.	Oakham Co-op. Society Limited.
Lord, F.	Bromley Co-op. Society Limited.
Lowen, L.	London Silver Trades Council.
MacArthur, Miss Mary R.	Women's T.U. League.
Macdonald, J.	London Trades Council.
McFarlane, Alan	Wood Green Labour League.
McGrath, T. R.	London and Provincial Union of Handsewn Boot and Shoe Makers.
McNat, Bailie T. C.	I.L.P. (Leith).
Macpherson, James	National Amal. Union of Shop Assistants.
Macpherson, J. T., M.P.	The British Steel Smelters, Mill, Iron and Tinplate Workers' Assn.
Macpherson, Mrs. Mary A.	National Women's Labour League.
Macrosty, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Charlton).
Madden, Edward	Amal. Society of Tailors.
Madden, J.	Redhill and Reigate Trades Council.
Maddock, Miss E.	Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists.
Mallalieu, Councillor Thomas....	Amal. Society Felt Hatters.
Marchant, E.	Folkestone Co-op. Society Limited.
Martin, Mrs. M.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Harrow Road).
Martyn, Mrs. E. H.	I.L.P. (Tottenham).
Masters, Alfred	Bone Brush Makers' Trade Protection Society.
Matthias, Otto	Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
May, Henry J.	Co-op. Union (Southern Section).
Mayne, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Marban Place).
Maxwell, William	Scottish Co-op. Wholesale Society.
Melling, Wm.	Northern Counties Amal. Assns. of Weavers.
Miller, J. A.	West London Industrial Co-op. Society Ltd.
Millerchiz, W.	Walsall District Co-op. Society Limited.
Mitchell, Alderman Isaac.	General Fed. of T.U.
Mitchell, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Bowes Park).
Morrison, J. T.	London Saddle and Harness Makers.
Morrison, Robert C.	Hawick Social Reform Society I.L.P.
Mortished, J.	London Society of Compositors.
Moxdale, A. J.	Fawcett Assn.
Mullin, Wm., J.P.	Amal. Assn. of Card and Blowing Room Operatives.
Myatt, Mrs. E.	Co-op. Women's Guild (Nottingham Dist.).
Myer, Morris	S.D.F. (East London Jewish).

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Nankivell, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Enfield Highway).
Naylor, T. E.	London Society of Compositors.
Neal, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Bowes Park).
Nettleship, Mrs.	Protective and Provident Society of Women Working in Trades in Oxford.
Newell, Wm. J.	Royal Arsenal Co-op. Society Limited.
Newland, Arthur	London Cabdrivers' Trade Union.
Nightingale, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Derby).
O'Dell, G. E.	I.L.P. (North Kensington).
Ogden, John W.	Heywood Weavers' Assn.
Ogilvie, David.....	Royal Arsenal Co-op. Society Limited.
O'Grady, James, M.P.	National Amal. Furnishing Trades Assn.
Orbell, H.....	Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union.
Osman, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Acton).
Otley, T.	National Assn. of Operative Plasterers.
Packham, F.	Bromley Co-op. Society Limited.
Palace, Alfred	Lithographic Stone and Plate Preparers' Amalgamated Society.
Pankhurst, Mrs. E.	I.L.P. (Manchester Central).
Park, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Bromley).
Parker, Jas., M.P.	Halifax I.L.P.
Peacock, James	Hyde and Hadfield Weavers' Assn.
Pease, Edward R.	The Labour Party.
Pemberton, A. R.	Fawcett Assn.
Pettigrew, W.	Fur Skin Dressers' Union.
Pidgeon, Miss Mary J.	Co-op. Women's Guild (Enfield Town).
Pilcher, John	Battersea and Wandsworth Co-op. Society Limited.
Plummer, John	Coal Porters' Union.
Pobjoy, Mrs. H. S.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Bedminster).
Ponder, Mrs. Alice.....	I.L.P. (Lowestoft).
Pope, William.....	Northern Counties Amal. Assn. of Weavers.
Powell, R.....	Co-op. Union Limited.
Priestman, Councillor, A.....	I.L.P. (Bradford).
Proctor, William E.	Burnley Weavers' Assn.
Pugh, A.	The Steel Smelters, Mill, Iron, and Tinplate Workers' Assn.
Quelch, Harry.....	S.D.F.
Ramsay, Rev. C. Rolland, M.A....	Scottish Council for Women's Trades.
Randall, Mrs. T.....	Women's Co-op. Guild (Rochester).
Reddeford, W.....	I.L.P.
Richards, A.	Boiler Makers and Iron and Steel Ship- builders.
Richards, A. C.	I.L.P. (Goole).
Riley, Joseph	Blackburn and District Power Loom Weavers' Assn.
Richardson, T. H.	Durham Miners' Assn.
Rimmer, Wm.....	Operative Cotton Spinners (Provincial Assn.).
Roberts, G. H., M.P.	I.L.P. (Norwich).
Robinson, H.	Amal. Society of Tailors.
Robinson, W. C.	The Labour Party and Amal. Assn. of Beamers, Twisters and Drawers.
Rosenberg, Geo. A.	Chatham and District Co-op. Society Ltd.
Rosenfurb, F.	Amal. Society of Tailors.

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Ross, Charles	Scottish Tailors' and Tailoresses' Assn.
Rowlerson, Gurney	Amal. Society of Tailors.
Sampson, M.	The Master Ladies' Tailors and Mantle Makers' Organisation.
Schwann, Lady	Manchester Women's T.U. Council.
Schwartz, S.	London Furriers' Union.
Sclare, M.	Leeds Machinists, Tailors and Pressers' Trade Union.
Seago, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (East Ham).
Seddon, J. A., M.P.	St. Helen's Socialist Society.
Self, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Tottenham).
Seligman, S.	Cardboard Box Makers' Union.
Semmonds, Mrs. E. L.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Wood Green).
Senington, A. A.	Bristol Trades Council.
Shackleton, Mrs.	Darwen Industrial Co-op. Women's Guild.
Shackleton, D. J., M.P.	Darwen Weavers' Assn.
Shann, George, M.A.	Selly Oak Progressive Assn.
Shaposhnikoff, J.	Government Workers (Branch of the Amal. Society).
Shaw, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Epping).
Shaw, C. N. L.	Central Branch S.D.F.
Shaw, E. S.	Hammersmith L.R.C.
Shaw, George Bernard	Fabian Society.
Shelly, F. G.	I.L.P. (Islington).
Silver, L.	Amal. Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
Simmonds, Mrs.	Wood Green Co-op. Guild.
Sitch, Thomas.	Chain Makers and Strikers.
Slater, Gilbert, M.A., D.Sc.	I.L.P. (Woolwich).
Smith, A.	London Cabdrivers' T.U.
Smith, J. E.	National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers (Leeds).
Snowden, Mrs. E.	I.L.P. (Keighley).
Snowden, Phillip, M.P.	The Labour Party.
Solomin, L.	East London Tailoresses' Branch of the Amal. Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
Southwell, John	Northern Counties Amal. Assns. of Weavers.
Spires, Councillor F.	Birmingham Trades Council.
Spooner, Miss	Women's Co-op. Guild.
Stephenson, J. J.	The Labour Party.
Stokes, J.	London Trades Council.
Stout, W. T.	Nelson and District Weavers' Assn.
Stranks, Councillor	Croydon and District Trades and Labour Council.
Stuart, G. H.	Postmen's Federation.
Sumner, Thomas	Preston District Powerloom Weavers' Assn.
Summerbell, Councillor T., M.P.	Sunderland and District Trades Council.
Synker, Miss Fanny	East London Tailoresses' Branch of the Amal. Society of Tailors and Tailoresses.
Tattersall, J. E.	The General Union of Assns. of Loom Over- lookers and Powerloom Overlookers' Mutual Aid Assn.
Taylor, G.	London Clothiers' Cutters T.U.
Taylor, Councillor John, J.P.	Midland Counties Trades Fed.
Telling, J. T.	National Assn. of Operative Plasterers.
Tennant, Mrs. H. J.	Industrial Law Committee.
Thompson, Alderman William ..	National Housing Reform Council.
Thompson, Thomas H.	Labour Protection League.
Threadgill, A. E.	The Grays Co-op. Industrial and Provident Society Limited.

NAME OF DELEGATE.	NAME OF SOCIETY.
Tillett, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Bristol, South-Western Section).
Tillett, Ben.....	Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union, and Gen. Fed. of T.U.
Tomlinson, Samuel	Blackburn Weavers' Assn.
Tuckwell, Miss G.	Women's T.U. League.
Turner, Alderman Ben.....	The Labour Party and Yorkshire Textile Fed.
Turner, John	The General Union of Assns. of Loom Overlookers.
Tutvoye, E. W.	I.L.P. (Brixton).
Vigis, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Stratford).
Ward, Wm. H.	Ashford Co-op. Society Limited.
Wareing, James	Preston and District Powerloom Weavers' Assn.
Webb, Miss C.	Women's Co-op. Guild (Worthing).
Webb, Miss	Women's Co-op. Guild (Battersea).
Webster, William	S.D.F. (Southwark).
Weeks, Mrs.	Watford Co-op. Society.
Weiner, N.	Independent Cabinet Makers.
Whittleton, S.....	I.L.P. (Carlton, Yorks).
Wicks, S. F.....	S.D.F. (Epsom and District).
Wigan, E.	Clapton Park and District Co-op. Society.
Wigley, Joseph	Northern Counties Amal. Assns. of Weavers.
Wilkins, Councillor W. G., J.P....	National Housing Reform Council.
Wilson, John, M.P.	Durham Miners' Assn.
Wilson, Miss	Leicester Trades Council.
Wilson, W. T., M.P.....	Amal. Society of Carpenters and Joiners.
Wimhurst, Mrs.....	Women's Co-op. Guild (Belvedere).
Wiseman, A.	Westminster Labour Assn.
Withers, Mrs.	Enfield Highway Co-op. Guild (Waltham Abbey Branch).
Wood, Harold.....	Hyde and Hadfield Weavers' Assn.
Worldidge, Mrs.	Women's Co-op. Guild.
Wright, Councillor Peter	Newport (Mon.) Trades and Labour Council.
Young, J.	Leeds Trades and Labour Council.
Young, Miss R.	Assn. of Shorthand Writers and Typists.

