

CUALLAÓT OIBRE ÉIREANN IR CÓMHAIRLE NA CEÁRD  
Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress

# THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

BEING THE

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL  
EXECUTIVE FOR 1924-1925

AND THE

Report of the Proceedings of the  
Thirty-First Annual Meeting held  
in Newry on August 3rd to 6th,  
1925

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
32 LOWER ABBEY STREET, DUBLIN

1926

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# Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress

## National Executive 1925-1926

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# Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress.

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*National Executive, 1925-1926.*

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ELECTED AUGUST, 1925.

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**Chairman :**

DENIS CULLEN, Irish Bakers', Confectioners', etc., Union.

**Vice-Chairman :**

SENATOR J. T. O'FARRELL, Railway Clerks' Association.

**Secretary :**

THOMAS JOHNSON, T.D., Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks.

**Treasurer :**

WILLIAM O'BRIEN, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

**Committee :**

T. CASSIDY, Typographical Association, Derry.  
 L. J. DUFFY, Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin.  
 SENATOR T. FARREN, Workers' Council, Dublin.  
 SENATOR T. FORAN, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin.  
 A. HERON, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin.  
 O. HYNES, Ancient Guild of Brick and Stone Layers, Dublin.  
 T. IRWIN, Operative Plasterers' Society, Dublin.  
 M. J. MacGOWAN, Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Drogheda.  
 W. McMULLEN, M.P., Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast.  
 T. J. O'CONNELL, T.D., Irish National Teachers' Organization, Dublin.  
 MISS E. O'CONNOR, Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin.  
 T. RYAN, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Waterford.  
 M. SOMERVILLE, Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Dublin.

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**Office :**

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# The Labour Party in the Oireachtas.

## DAIL EIREANN.

John Butler	...	...	...	Waterford
Patrick Clancy	...	...	...	Limerick
Hugh Colohan	...	...	...	Kildare
Richard Corish	...	...	...	Wexford
William Davin	...	...	...	Leix-Offaly
Edmond Doyle	...	...	...	Carlow-Kilkenny
James Everett	...	...	...	Wicklow
David Hall	...	...	...	Meath
Patrick Hogan	...	...	...	Clare
Thomas Johnson (Chairman)	...	...	...	Co. Dublin
Daniel Morrissey (Whip)	...	...	...	Tipperary
Timothy Murphy	...	...	...	West Cork
Thomas Nagle (Whip)	...	...	...	North Cork
William Norton (elected Feb., 1926)	...	...	...	Co. Dublin
Thomas O'Connell (Vice-Chairman)	...	...	...	Galway

## SEANAD EIREANN.

				Term of Office expires in
William Cummins	...	...	...	1937
Michael Duffy	...	...	...	1931
Thomas Farren	...	...	...	1931
Thomas Foran	...	...	...	1937
John T. O'Farrell	...	...	...	1937

REPORT OF  
THE  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE  
FOR  
1924-1925.



# REPORT

OF THE

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

OF THE

### IRISH LABOUR PARTY & TRADE UNION CONGRESS

For the Year 1924-1925.

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#### I.—AFFILIATIONS.

1. The National Executive are glad to be able to report that the membership and representative character of the organisation have been augmented during the year by the affiliation or re-affiliation of the following Unions and Councils:—

Associated Society of Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen  
(2,100 members).

National Sailors' and Firemen's Union (1,000 members).

Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses (700 members).

Navan Trades' Council.

Newry Trades' Council.

#### II.—RELATIONS BETWEEN AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS.

##### Balbriggan Building Trade Dispute.

2. At last year's Congress the following resolution—

"That the Balbriggan Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the Dublin Operative Plasterers' Society be censured for their actions in connection with a Building Trade Strike in Balbriggan"

tabled by the Drogheda Workers' Council, was withdrawn, and the matter referred to the National Executive (see page 199 of the 30th Annual Report). The National Executive obtained statements on the dispute from the two Unions concerned and from the Drogheda Branch of the National Federation of Building Trades' Operatives. The Dublin Operative Plasterers' Society stated that the man who, it was contended, should have been withdrawn from the job during the strike was not a member of the Society. The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union declared that the strike did not appear to be fully supported by the craftsmen on the job, three of

the carpenters called out having returned to work, and in view of the lack of solidarity shown by the tradesmen the Union did not feel justified in calling out their members. The Drogheda Branch of the Federation stated that the dismissal of two Union painters which led to the strike was due to the threat of action against a non-Union painter, and that any lack of solidarity was occasioned by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the Plasterers, while they assert that the plasterer alleged not to be a member of the Dublin Operative Plasterers' Society presented a card.

A considerable period elapsed before the replies of all the bodies concerned reached the National Executive. On the information received, which seemed to indicate an unsatisfactory state of organisation among the workers on the job, and particularly in view of the fact that the job had long been finished, it was decided that the case did not call for any further action.

### **Trades Councils and Congress.**

3. On two or three occasions during the year the question of the relationship between Unions and their Branches and Trades' Councils or Workers' Councils has been brought before the National Executive. The position under the Constitution at present in force is that the National Executive and Congress have no explicit authority in the matter of Trades Council organisation. It is possible for a Union to affiliate to Congress and for its branches not to be affiliated to the local Councils in their respective areas, and also for branches to be affiliated to a local Council which is not affiliated but is hostile to Congress, even though there is in the area a Council affiliated to Congress. On the other hand, it is possible for a Council affiliated to Congress to accept as a member a Branch of a Union which has not sought, or has been refused, affiliation to Congress. It is clearly anomalous that such a state of affairs should be possible, but at the same time it would be undesirable to go to the other extreme and insist upon uniformity only obtainable at the cost of over-centralisation. The matter is one which might be usefully considered when our Constitution is being revised. As we indicate in the Section of this Report dealing with Political Organisation, we think that a revision of the Constitution is necessary, in view of the changes which have taken place since its adoption in 1918.

### **III.—THE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT.**

4. The industrial and agricultural depression and long-continued Unemployment has been the subject of the most serious consideration by the National Executive throughout the year.

5. In September, 1924, the Association of Chambers of Commerce passed a resolution calling upon the Government to appoint a representative Committee which would inquire into the whole in-



dustrial situation, and make recommendations for the prevention of strikes and lock-outs, and the Minister for Industry and Commerce invited an expression of our views upon the proposal. We replied that we were prepared to assist in the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the whole industrial situation, but that we were strongly opposed to measures of compulsory arbitration, which seemed to be the real motive of the Association's resolution. Nothing further came of this proposal. It will be remembered that there was some talk of a general conference of employers and employed in September, 1923, to which we gave encouragement (see page 73 of the 30th Annual Report), but this also had no practical result. We are still of opinion that a genuine attempt by a representative body of employers and workers to survey the whole industrial situation and endeavour to reach agreement upon lines of policy calculated to bring improvement would be of considerable value, even if it were only to focus public attention upon the seriousness of the present situation and secure a general understanding of the difficulties and differences of principle and method with which all parties concerned have to reckon.

6. On November 11th, 1924, following upon a Labour Party motion in the Dáil, which is referred to elsewhere, a deputation from the National Executive interviewed members of the Government—President Cosgrave and the Ministers for Finance, Industry and Commerce, and Local Government—in order to impress upon them the urgency of the need for providing employment and extending Unemployment Insurance Benefit. The impression we gathered was that the Government was at last beginning to realise the seriousness of the situation, but was not prepared to undertake any heavy financial commitments, and had no plans for big schemes of reconstructive work ready to put into immediate operation, while such measures as were contemplated would not absorb very large numbers of unemployed, and could not be applied for several months at the earliest.

7. Realising that no effective action by the Government could be hoped for unless there were strong pressure put upon them by the country, the National Executive caused to be prepared a 16-page pamphlet giving the history of the Government's handling of the problem since the establishment of the Free State and showing the urgency of the matter. Copies of this pamphlet—"Unemployment, 1922-24: The Record of the Government's Failure"—to the number of 17,000 in all, were printed, and were sent out to the press of the country, while supplies were furnished free of charge to affiliated organisations, accompanied by a request that they should be utilised as propaganda material for an energetic campaign on Unemployment. We have little information as to the steps taken by local organisations, but it is evident that the general campaign for which we had asked was not instituted.

8. Notwithstanding this lack of support, pressure on the Government was kept up by the Labour Party in the Dáil, particularly when the expiry of the special arrangements in regard to Unemployment Insurance, made by the second Unemployment Insurance Act of 1924, left large numbers of unemployed workers without benefit. A demand was made for the introduction of further Unemployment Insurance legislation, and in order to overcome the Government's opposition a fresh attempt was made to organise support in the country. A strong resolution by the National Executive was sent to the Press in June, and affiliated organisations were asked, by a circular dated 17th June, to pass similar resolutions and send them to the Government in the hope of securing a new Unemployment Insurance Act before the Dáil adjourned in July. The response on this occasion was better, but still left much to be desired.

9. The National Executive feels that, whatever may be the explanation, the chronic unemployment which has afflicted the workers of the country for so long has not aroused the conscience of the general public, and has not provoked the indignant protest which might have been expected from the unemployed, and that consequently some share of the responsibility for the Government's inaction in the matter must be borne by the workers themselves.

10. The lengthy discussion on Unemployment initiated by the Labour Party in the Dáil on June 30th, on the Estimates for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, served to bring some realisation of the seriousness of the matter. During the debate a suggestion was put forward for the holding of a conference of employers and employed to consider the problem. This suggestion was endorsed by President Cosgrave, who stated that though he felt the initiative in summoning the conference should not come from the Government, they would facilitate it in every way.

#### IV.—UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

##### Free State Legislation.

11. The Unemployment Insurance Act, 1924, which was summarised in last year's Report, proved as was expected, to be inadequate, and a further Act had to be passed in December last. This Act continued the revival of exhausted contributions for the purpose of calculating the amount of benefit payable, but this revival applied only to contributions exhausted by benefit drawn before the 30th October, 1924. The Act also made temporary provision for benefit for ex-soldiers who, because of insufficient contributions or because they were not in an insurable occupation before joining the Army, were excluded from the arrangements made for ex-soldiers under the Act of 1923 and the first Act of 1924.

12. The effect of this last Act (No. 2 of 1924) was to ease the situation in regard to benefit during the Fourth Benefit Year (from



30th October, 1924, to 25th March, 1925). But as the revival arrangement was not continued, every day's benefit drawn in that period exhausted one contribution, so that many thousands of workers who had suffered prolonged unemployment and had no large reserve of contributions to their credit rapidly ran out of benefit after 25th March. By the middle of June only about 23,000 claims for benefit were current, while the number of unemployed registered at the Exchanges (which is, of course, less than the actual number of unemployed) was about 30,000.

13. As there has been no amending legislation since last December, the situation in regard to benefit will continue to grow worse, and when the sixth benefit year commences on October 15th next, and particularly during the next winter, the number of workers unemployed and without benefit will reach alarming proportions.

14. As usual, a large number of individual cases have been reported to the Office, and in many cases representations have been made to the Department. But as a rule the difficulty met with has been due not to any misunderstanding or delay by the Department, but to the inadequacy of the legislation, and no remedy has therefore been possible.

15. Unions and branch officials are strongly recommended to impress upon their members the extreme importance of ensuring that their employers stamp their Unemployment Cards, no matter how short the period of employment may be. When benefit is so restricted, every stamp is of great value, and the need for full compliance with the Act, always important, becomes very urgent.

### **Reciprocal Arrangements for Benefit between the Saorstát, Northern Ireland and Great Britain.**

16. The conditions created by the severance of the Unemployment Funds in the areas of Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Free State, and the absence of reciprocal arrangements for the payment of benefit in one area in respect of contributions paid in another, have been repeatedly under consideration by the National Executive since May of last year. The matter has been very fully discussed with the Saorstát Ministry of Industry and Commerce, and the Belfast Trades Council, with whom we communicated, have also discussed it with the Minister for Labour for Northern Ireland; but up to the present no solution of the problem has been reached. The position at present, therefore, is that contributions paid up to July, 1923, no matter in what area they were paid, are recognised for benefit purposes by the Unemployment Insurance authorities of each area, but contributions paid since then are valid for benefit purposes only in the area for which they are paid, and not outside. Consequently a worker who comes from Belfast to Dublin and pays Unemployment Insurance contributions in Dublin, or *vice-versa*,

finds on his return home that he is unable to draw benefit against those contributions. A more obvious hardship is inflicted on workers living near the Border and working on the other side of the Border, who, because the boundary line runs between their place of residence and their place of employment, are practically deprived of Unemployment Insurance. The case is the same as between the Saorstát area and Great Britain, and a special difficulty arises here in regard to seamen with homes in Ireland and working on British ships.

17. We regret that there seems to be no prospect of an early settlement of this difficulty, but think it desirable that the facts of the situation should be clearly understood, so that local pressure upon both Governments in this country may be maintained.

18. The difficulty is very largely due to the fact that, though the rates of contribution payable by the employers, employees and the State have remained the same in all three areas, benefit is not being paid solely out of contributions, but largely out of advances to the Unemployment Funds made by way of loan by the various Exchequers. Since the advances are by way of loan, no Government is willing to pay at its own expense benefit to workers in respect of whom contributions have not been paid into its Unemployment Fund and in respect of whom also there is no certainty that there will be eventual repayment of an appropriate share of the money advanced by the Exchequer. If there is to be any reciprocal arrangement either the payments out of the various Funds must approximately balance, or there must be some financial adjustment between the Funds. As between Great Britain and the Saorstát, the flow of labour is nearly all in one direction, and the payments under a reciprocal arrangement would, therefore, not nearly balance, so that the financial adjustment would have to be substantial. As between the Saorstát and Northern Ireland the disparity would probably not be very great, and the financial adjustment would, therefore, probably not be a serious matter on either side, though the other difficulties might be by no means inconsiderable. But in this case it is impossible to ascertain the facts or to find a basis for any accounting system necessary for adjustment, so long as it is impossible to ascertain whether a worker claiming benefit has been paying contributions into the Northern Fund or into the British Fund. If the Northern Government used its own special stamps, or overprinted British stamps, or adopted some other method of distinguishing between contributions paid into the two Funds, the foundation would have been laid for some separate reciprocal arrangement as between the Saorstát and Northern Ireland, whatever difficulty might exist as between the Saorstát and Great Britain. This is assuming that both Governments were willing to enter into an arrangement of the kind. The Saorstát Minister has expressed his willingness to come to an arrangement with Northern Ireland, but the Northern Minister insists that any arrangement with Northern Ireland must be part of an arrangement including Great Britain.



## V.—EDUCATION.

### National Executive Committee on Education.

19. This Committee, which was set up, as reported to last year's Congress (see p. 81 of the 30th Annual Report), to consider the aim of a national system of education, and to suggest how that aim may best be realised, has continued to meet during the year, and has now presented its report, which is printed as Appendix I. to this Report. We have not been able, in the time available, to give the report the full consideration it undoubtedly calls for, and we commend it to the careful examination of Congress and of the incoming National Executive. We desire to place on record our very high appreciation of the work done by the members of the Committee, and of the service they have rendered to the Labour Movement and to the country by their painstaking and thoughtful labours.

### National Programme Conference.

20. The Minister for Education having re-convened the National Programme Conference to review the programme of primary instruction in National Schools, the National Executive agreed that Mr. T. Farren, who served on the original Conference, should again represent them. The Conference is constituted, as before, of representatives of the following bodies, besides the National Executive :—Ministry of Education, General Council of County Councils, Gaelic League, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, and the Association of Secondary Teachers.

### Summer Schools.

21. Early this Summer the National Executive brought to the notice of the affiliated organisations the Summer Schools organised by the National Council of Labour Colleges at Rothesay and in London, and by the International Federation of Trade Unions at Brunnsvig, near Stockholm, Sweden, and at Prague, Czecho-Slovakia. The National Executive itself decided to set an example and to send Mr. T. Irwin to the Summer School at Rothesay in June, and Mr. Johnson to the School at Prague in August. A report by Mr. Irwin on the Rothesay School is printed as Appendix II. to this Report. We are glad to be able to say that the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, and the Irish Women Workers' Union, all sent students to the schools of the National Council of Labour Colleges, and the first two bodies have decided to send students to Prague. We believe these schools to be of very great value, both in a directly educational way and as a means of

broadening the outlook of the students by travel and contact with workers in other countries, and we trust that next year a larger number of Irish students will be enabled to take advantage of them.

### **Congress Summer School.**

22. By way of experiment in the possibilities of a Summer School for Irish workers, the National Executive decided to arrange for the holding of a Week-end School in Newry immediately prior to Congress, on August 1st and 2nd. If this should prove successful—and by the time Congress assembles the results will be known—it should pave the way for educational work on a more ambitious scale. The National Executive feels very keenly that this is a department of Labour activity which demands close attention.

### **National Council of Labour Colleges.**

23. In November, 1924, Mr. J. P. M. Millar, General Secretary of the National Council of Labour Colleges, visited Dublin, and interviewed the National Executive on the possibilities of educational work in Ireland. He explained that his Council was under an obligation to provide educational facilities for Irish members, mostly in Belfast, of Unions affiliated to the Council, and was contemplating the appointment of a full-time Organiser-Tutor, and that the Council desired to discuss whether and in what way co-operation might be possible between the National Executive and the Council. No decision was come to by the National Executive, which felt that the possibility of a distinctively Irish workers' educational organisation ought to be fully examined. A Labour College has since been established under the auspices of the Council in Belfast, and the National Executive are glad to learn that it is well attended, and is meeting with a good response from Belfast workers.

### **Educational Work by Local Organizations.**

24. In October last the National Executive circularised local organisations urging the desirability of instituting regular series of educational lectures, suggesting possible subjects, and intimating that the National Executive would be prepared to give some help in finding speakers. There appears to have been no appreciable response to this circular.

## **VI.—HEALTH INSURANCE AND MEDICAL SERVICES.**

25. In October, 1924, Messrs. Irwin and Mortished gave evidence on behalf of the National Executive to the Committee on Health Insurance and Medical Services set up by the Government. The evidence was directed towards the nationalisation of Health



Insurance as part of a comprehensive organisation for social insurance generally. Evidence was also given by the Association of Trade Union Approved Societies.

26. The Committee has published an Interim Report recommending the fusion of all the existing Approved Societies into a single Approved Society, but it has not yet dealt with the question of the re-organisation of public medical services.

## **VII.—WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.**

27. During the year the National Executive appointed a Sub-Committee to consider the amendment of the law relating to Workmen's Compensation, together with the questionnaire on this subject issued by the International Labour Office in connection with the Convention discussed in Geneva in May last. The Sub-Committee was also later instructed to prepare a Bill to re-organise the system of Workmen's Compensation on the basis of a State insurance institution. It has not been possible to proceed with the drafting of a Bill, but the position has since been altered by the adoption of a Convention by the Geneva International Labour Conference this year (instead of in 1927, as was anticipated), and by the setting up of a Departmental Committee by the Free State Government. The following were nominated by the National Executive to act on this Committee :—

Senator T. Foran, I.T.G.W. Union and National Executive.

T. Irwin, Dublin Operative Plasterers' Society and National Executive.

J. H. Bennett, National Sailors' and Firemen's Union.

R. J. P. Mortished, Assistant Secretary, Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress.

The Committee has held a few preliminary meetings and is expected to sit to take evidence from September onwards.

## **VIII.—FACTORY AND SHOPS ACTS.**

28. The question of observance of the Factories and Workshops Acts and the Shops Acts was considered at an early meeting of the National Executive during the year, and a memorandum summarising the provisions of these Acts was circulated to affiliated Unions and Councils in October in order to obtain adequate information for the purpose of an interview with the Minister for Industry and Commerce. The response to the request was singularly disappointing, replies being received only from the Women Workers' Union and the Ballinasloe Trades' Council. A certain amount of information has, however, been obtained subsequently from various sources, and the Ministry has published reports for the years 1922 and 1923 under the Factory and Workshops Acts. In April a deputation was appointed to discuss the subject with the Ministry. Up to the



present, owing to the absence of some members of the deputation, it has not been practicable to arrange for the interview to take place, and it may not be possible to do so until the new Executive takes office.

## **IX.—GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS.**

### **10d Age Pensions Commission.**

29. In December, 1924, the Minister for Finance appointed a Committee to inquire into the administration of the Old Age Pensions and Blind Persons Acts, with the following terms of reference :—

“To consider and report what alterations, if any, should be made in the provisions of the Acts (including regulations made thereunder) relating to Old Age Pensions and Pensions for the Blind respecting the machinery for the determination of claims, questions and appeals, regard being had especially to the just and expeditious treatment of all applications.”

Deputy Morrissey was nominated as Labour Representative on the Commission, and Mr. E. Mansfield (I.N.T.O.), Tipperary, gave evidence before it at our request.

### **Commission on the Poor Law.**

30. On this Commission, which is making a general inquiry into the provision of Poor Relief and Medical Services under the Medical Charities Act, the Labour representative is Deputy Corish. It is intended that evidence should be tendered to the Commission on behalf of the National Executive.

## **X.—RAILWAY AMALGAMATION.**

31. The amalgamation of all the railways wholly within the twenty-six counties under the Railways Act, 1924, took effect from January 1st, 1925. In view of the serious effect which this amalgamation might have upon the position of many thousands of railway workers, the National Executive published a handbook giving a full statement of the provisions of the Act affecting employees of the railway companies. This booklet has had an extensive sale, though not perhaps as large as might have been hoped for, and is believed to have been found of value.

32. The Railways Act provides for the appointment of two Labour representatives on a General Panel, from which, in certain circumstances, additional members of the Railway Tribunal are selected for the purpose of hearing claims in regard to revision of rates and fares, etc. On the nomination of the National Executive, Messrs. L. J. Duffy and R. J. P. Mortished were appointed as members of this panel. No occasion has yet arisen for either of them to serve on the tribunal.

## XI.—INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

### **International Labour Organization, Geneva.**

33. Ireland was, of course, again represented at the 1925 Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in May and June. The National Executive nominated Mr. Denis Cullen as Workers' Delegate, and Mr. R. J. P. Mortished as adviser.

34. Close relations have been maintained with the International Labour Office during the year, and much valuable information has been obtained therefrom. Particular mention may be made of an extremely useful series of memoranda on school attendance legislation in various countries which was obtained for the information of the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the National Executive Committee on Education.

### **"British Commonwealth of Nations" Labour Conference.**

35. This Conference, to which reference was made in last year's Report (see pp. 84 and 150 of the 30th Annual Report) was convened by the Joint International Department of the British Labour Party and Trade Union Congress to meet in London on July 27th and following days. As the Conference is not confined to representatives of the States which are constitutionally independent, it was thought desirable that arrangements should be made for representatives of the Labour Party (Northern Ireland) to attend. After consultation between representatives of the National Executive and the Northern Ireland Labour Party, the following delegates were appointed as representing the Irish Labour Movement as a whole:—

T. JOHNSON, T.D., Dublin.

L. J. DUFFY, Dublin.

W. McMULLEN, M.P., Belfast.

W. BOYD, Belfast.

### **Scottish Trade Union Congress.**

36. Messrs. Cullen and Morrissey, T.D., the delegates elected by last year's Congress, attended the Scottish Trade Union Congress at Dumfries on April 15th-18th, and conveyed our fraternal greetings. The delegates' Report is printed as Appendix III. to this Report.

## XII.—LABOUR DAY.

37. On March 31st the National Executive reminded local Organisations of the 1923 Congress decision on the subject of Labour Day, and suggested that arrangements should be made at once for the celebration of the Day. Stress was laid on the



desirability of giving expression to the full significance of the Day as a Festival by holding a sports meeting, open-air gala, or ramble to some neighbouring beauty spot, or an indoor concert, dance or social, as the weather and local conditions permitted. At the same time, it was suggested, the opportunity might be availed of for holding propaganda meetings in respect of Unemployment and the Local Authority Elections. Apart from Dublin, Belfast, Bray and Sligo, we have no definite information as to the extent to which this circular was acted upon. We believe, however, that the importance of a proper celebration of the Day is being increasingly recognised, and we urge very strongly that in the next and succeeding years local organisations throughout the country should not fail to utilise this opportunity of demonstrating the international solidarity of the working-class.

### **XIII.—POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.**

#### **A.—ELECTIONS.**

##### **1.—Dail Bye-Elections.**

##### **Cork City Bye-Election.**

38. The vacancy in the representation of Cork City caused by the resignation of Professor O'Rahilly was considered by the National Executive in September last, and it was decided that a Constituency Conference should be summoned. This decision was conveyed to the Cork Workers' Council on September 22nd. The Council, however, having circularised its affiliated organisations and received replies unfavourable to a contest, did not summon the Constituency Conference for which the Executive had asked. Eventually Mr. Michael Egan, a Cork Trade Unionist who held the Office of President of Congress in 1909, was nominated and secured election as a Cumann na nGaedheal candidate.

##### **East Cork Bye-Election.**

39. At the beginning of November the National Executive considered an intimation from the Cobh Workers' Council that it proposed to put forward, for the bye-election then pending, a Mr. Downing, a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, stating that the necessary funds could be obtained locally. The expected funds were not forthcoming, no Constituency Conference was held, and no candidate was nominated.

##### **The March Bye-Elections.**

40. The Bye-Elections consequent on the resignation of Mr. Sean Milroy and the Deputies associated with him at the end of October, 1924, did not take place until March, 1925. The constituencies affected were Dublin City North (2 vacancies), Dublin City South,

Carlow-Kilkenny, Cavan, Leitrim-Sligo (2 vacancies), Mayo North and Roscommon—9 vacancies in all. The question of contesting Carlow-Kilkenny was considered at a Constituency Conference held in Bagenalstown on January 11th, but it was found impossible, mainly because of financial difficulties, to put forward a candidate. The National Executive felt it to be essential that some at least of the vacancies at this "miniature General Election" should be contested, and a conference convened by the Dublin Workers' Council decided to put forward a candidate in each of the Dublin constituencies. The candidates selected were Denis Cullen, General Secretary of the Bakers' Union, for Dublin North, and Thomas Lawlor, Secretary of the Irish Municipal Employees' Trade Union, for Dublin South. The elections took place on March 11th, and the results fully justified the contest, though neither candidate was elected, as they gave an appreciable fillip to the Labour Movement in the City, and proved that, with good organisation, it will easily be possible at the next General Election to secure the election of certainly one, probably two, and perhaps three Labour Deputies for the capital. The voting figures, compared with those of the General Election in 1923, were as follows:—

#### DUBLIN NORTH CITY.

*General Election, 1923 :*

Total poll, 55,320. Labour First Preferences, 1,655. Quota, 6,137

*Bye Election, 1925 :*

Total poll, 49,831.       "       "       "       8,422.       "       16,611

#### DUBLIN SOUTH CITY.

*General Election, 1923 :*

Total poll, 46,163. Labour First Preferences, 933. Quota, 5,771

*Bye Election, 1925 :*

Total poll, 42,212.       "       "       "       4,237       "       21,107

### 2.—Seanad Elections.

41. The first triennial election for the Seanad falls this year, the term of office of one-fourth of the members of the Seanad, together with those co-opted to fill casual vacancies, expiring in November next. The total number of vacancies to be filled is nineteen, and these are to be selected from a panel of candidates formed as follows:—

Nominated by the Dáil—Twice as many persons as vacancies (i.e., 38).



Nominated by the Seanad—As many persons as vacancies (*i.e.*, 19).

Automatically placed on the panel—Ex-Senators who seek re-election (on this occasion all the retiring Senators, *i.e.*, 19).

The panel on this occasion, therefore, consists of 76 candidates for the 19 vacancies, and the result will be determined by the Seanad electors (Dáil electors of 30 years and over), voting by "P.R." with the whole twenty-six counties as one electoral area.

42. The selection of candidates for the panel by the Dáil and Seanad is effected by a preliminary "P.R." election by the members of each House separately. The question of the selection of Labour candidates was carefully considered by the National Executive, and it was decided that, having regard to the voting strength of the Labour members in each House and the number of vacancies to be filled, it would not be expedient to try to secure the nomination of more than eight Labour candidates. Accordingly, the three retiring Labour Senators—Messrs. O'Farrell, Cummins and Foran—being prepared to stand for re-election, there remained five candidates to be selected. The Labour members in each House were asked to propose names of suitable persons, and from the list of those so proposed, the National Executive selected five names. Two of these five—Messrs. Owen Hynes, Ancient Guild of Brick and Stonelayers, Dublin, and Edward Fitzgerald, Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Cork, were nominated and placed on the panel in the Seanad. The other three—Messrs. Denis Houston and Thomas Ryan, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, and L. P. Byrne, Dublin Labour Party—were nominated in the Dáil.

43. The election will take place about the middle of September, and it is of great importance, in view of the unusual nature of the election, that delegates should help to keep prominently before the country the names of the eight Labour candidates:—

J. T. O'Farrell.

W. Cummins.

T. Foran.

E. Fitzgerald.

O. Hynes.

D. Houston.

L. P. Byrne.

T. Ryan.

This is, of course, the first occasion on which candidates for the Seanad have had to be selected under the permanent provisions of the Saorstát Constitution. The procedure for selection was discussed at a joint meeting of Labour Deputies and members of the National Executive in July, and there was general agreement that in future, instead of nomination by Labour Deputies and Senators and selection by the National Executive, the selections should be made by the two groups jointly.

### 3.—Elections to the Belfast Parliament.

44. Although the General Election for the Belfast Parliament in March, 1925, was contested by the Labour Party (Northern Ireland), and not by us, we wish to record here our gratification at the excellent results achieved. Three members were returned to the Northern House of Commons—Messrs. Beattie, Kyle, and McMullen—one in each of three out of the four Belfast constituencies. The National Executive made a grant of fifty pounds to the Belfast Election Fund.

45. The total first preferences received numbered 18,114, out of a total poll of 144,765, or  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. This may perhaps be compared, though of course conditions were very different in many respects, with the poll at the Bye-Elections in Dublin a little earlier, where the Labour percentage of the total poll was  $13\frac{3}{4}$  per cent.

### 4.—Local Authority Elections.

46. The long-delayed elections to local authorities in the Saorstát area took place in June, and resulted in substantial successes for Labour candidates. Among the County Councils, in Kildare, Labour has now 13 seats out of 29; in Wexford, 12 out of 27; and in Wicklow, 9 out of 30. Among the Town and City Councils, pride of place must be given to Wexford, which has a Labour majority. The results generally show a very gratifying revival of Labour enthusiasm. This is particularly noticeable in places such as the Dublin suburbs, where the Movement has in the past been very weak. Rathmines Council now has three Labour members, Blackrock six, and Pembroke three.

47. These successes in the local elections indicate that the time is ripe for taking in hand the effective organisation of the political side of our Movement. It must also be borne in mind that the election of Labour Councillors in such large numbers throws a heavy responsibility upon us, and attention must be given as soon as possible to the possibility of co-ordinating and stimulating the work of Labour representatives on local authorities.

### B.—THE WORK OF THE LABOUR PARTY IN THE OIREACHTAS.

48. There has been no change in the membership of the Labour Party in the Oireachtas during the year.

49. The output of legislation has been somewhat different in character from previous years, some Bills of considerable social and economic importance finding a place in a stream of other measures of a more purely administrative character. Among measures of this new character may be mentioned:—

Agricultural Produce (Eggs) Act, 1924.

Dairy Produce Act, 1925.



Live Stock (Breeding) Act, 1925.

Housing Act, 1925.

Shannon Electricity Act, 1925.

Beet Sugar (Subsidy) Act, 1925.

Shop Hours (Drapery Trades, Dublin and Districts) Act, 1925.

50. **The Agricultural Produce, Dairy Produce and Live Stock Acts** provide machinery for the control and improvement of our production of and export trade in milk, butter and cream, eggs and live stock, and may be expected eventually to ensure a valuable raising of the level of our agriculture. They were all supported by the Labour Party.

51. **The Beet Sugar (Subsidy) Act**, passed at the close of the session in July, is intended to establish a new agricultural industry by the granting of subsidies to persons manufacturing sugar from beet grown in the Saorstát. The Labour Party supported the Bill, but endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to ensure that the payment of the subsidies would give the State a share in the ownership of the Sugar Factories. The Bill provided for the payment of a guaranteed price to beet growers for a period of years, and the Party secured the insertion of a "Fair Wages Clause" for the benefit of the factory employees.

52. **The Shannon Electricity Act** is the first of the measures which the electrification of the Shannon will necessitate, and since it deals only with the actual production of power from the Shannon is perhaps the least controversial. The Party strongly supported the Shannon scheme at every stage, being convinced that it is of fundamental, and perhaps epoch-making, importance to the economic and social future of the country.

53. **The Housing Act** was a repetition, with some modifications, of the Housing Act of the previous year. The Labour Party protested against the piecemeal method of dealing with the national housing problem, and in particular opposed, unsuccessfully, the removal of all restrictions upon the selling-price or rent of houses built with the aid of the State subsidy.

54. **The Shop Hours (Drapery Trades, Dublin and Districts) Act, 1925**, makes a new departure in shops legislation, as it fixes, without the procedure of a plebiscite of traders prescribed by previous legislation, the closing hour on Saturday night for certain classes of shops in Dublin City and the adjoining Urban Districts. It was a private member's measure introduced in the Seanad, and was warmly supported by the Labour Party in both Houses.

55. **The Local Government Act, 1925**, which occupied both Houses for an exceptionally long period, was strongly contested, both in principle and in detail, by the Labour Party. The principal effect of the Act is to abolish Rural District Councils, to transfer all Public Health and Poor Law functions of County and Rural District Councils and of the old Boards of Guardians to a small Board of Health elected by but largely independent of the County Council, and to facilitate the abolition of Boards of Town Commissioners and Urban District Councils and their supersession by paid Commissioners appointed by the Ministry, or their merging with the County Council and Board of Health. The Act thus gives expression to the policy of bureaucratic centralisation which has characterised the Ministry of Local Government since its establishment. Certain features of the Act are useful, notably those making certain Public Health Acts mandatory instead of adoptive, as hitherto, and those giving local authorities and the Minister enlarged powers in regard to roads. The Act consolidates and amends the previous legislation in regard to the superannuation of officers of local authorities; the Party secured some improvements in this part of the Act, and though the advantages and disadvantages of the new scheme are difficult to balance, it is probable that, on the whole, the new scheme is an improvement. The Party endeavoured without success to secure provision for pensions for wage-earning employees as well as officials of local authorities; on this point the Minister foreshadowed the possible institution of a contributory system of pensions for employees. The Party also secured a useful extension of the powers of library authorities. The Act, however, deals mainly with the machinery of local government, and does not materially extend the powers of local authorities or enlarge their initiative.

56. **The Intoxicating Liquor Act, 1924**, raised a number of questions which gave rise to differences of opinion in the Party, and upon which Congress had not pronounced, and the members of the Party, therefore, acted according to their individual judgment.

57. **The Treaty (Confirmation of Supplemental Agreement) Act, 1925**, implemented the agreement between President Cosgrave and the British Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, which was discussed at last Congress. It provided for the appointment of the third member of the Boundary Commission by the British Government instead of the Government of Northern Ireland. On the Second Stage of the Bill on October 15th, 1924, Deputy Johnson moved: "That the Dáil declines to give the Bill a Second Reading, because in the opinion of the Dáil the non-appointment of the Commission provided for by Article 12 of the Treaty of December 6th, 1921, in the manner required by the Treaty invalidates any action taken by the Northern Parliament under the same Article, and



therefore Articles 14 and 15 automatically become operative; and the Dáil is further of opinion that the Executive Council should forthwith take whatever course they deem to be necessary to give effect to the Treaty in respect to the Government of Northern Ireland." The motion was defeated by 65 votes to 14.

58. **The Treason Act, 1925**, was vigorously denounced by the Party as unnecessary, ill-advised and reactionary. The opposition was so strong as to compel the Government to re-consider its position, and large parts of the Bill were abandoned, and the Act, as finally passed, though still objectionable, is, in general, of such a character that it may be doubted whether it will ever be applied.

59. **The Finance Act, 1925**, was distinguished by a further extension of protective tariffs to wearing apparel, blankets, bedsteads, furniture, empty glass bottles, and toilet soaps. These new taxes were accompanied by the abolition of the taxes on tea, coffee and cocoa, a reduction in the tax on sugar, and a reduction of Income Tax from 5/- to 4/- in the pound, and a raising of the exemption limit for Corporation Profits Tax from £500 to £1,000, together with an increase of the Agricultural Grant in relief of local taxation on agricultural land. It was stated that the new protective tariffs were the last that would be proposed by the present Government until after the next General Election. The Labour Party endeavoured, but failed, to secure the repeal of Section 6 of the Finance Act, 1923 (by which employers are required to deduct arrears of Income Tax from wages), the abolition of the stamp duty on wage receipts, and the increase of the allowances in respect of earned income and children. The Party also advocated the appointment of a standing Tariff Commission to examine into claims for the imposition of tariffs, and to watch over their effects.

60. **The Estimates** have, as usual, been made the occasion of searching criticism of the work of the various Ministries. Particular attention has been directed to the work of the Ministry of Education and to the prolonged absence of the Minister responsible for this vitally important service.

61. **Unemployment** was dealt with in the Unemployment Insurance (No. 2) Act, 1924, passed on December 20th. The effect of this Act has already been explained elsewhere. But the gravity of the Unemployment situation and the inadequacy of the Unemployment Insurance legislation was continually pressed upon the Government throughout the year. Two occasions in particular may be mentioned. On October 30th, 1924, the Party in the Dáil moved the following motion:—"That the Dáil views with apprehension the state of the country owing to the long-continued unemployment of many thousands of men and women, and the

failure of the Government to adopt effective means of finding useful work at a living wage for willing workers." The motion was defeated by 39 votes to 17, the only non-Labour Deputies voting with the Party being Messrs. Figgis, James Cosgrave and A. Byrne. The full division lists on this motion, together with the names of those Deputies who did not vote, were published in the pamphlet, "Unemployment, 1922-1924." Before the adjournment, when it was clear that the Government did not propose to introduce any further Unemployment Insurance legislation, the Party moved that the Estimates for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce be referred back for reconsideration. The division, which took place on July 1st, resulted in the defeat of the motion by 45 votes to 18, the only non-Labour Deputies voting with the Party being Messrs. Daly, James Cosgrave, Myles Keogh, A. Byrne and D. Vaughan. During the debate Deputy Good suggested a conference of employers and employed to consider the problem of Unemployment, and this suggestion is dealt with in the section of the National Executive's Report dealing with the Industrial Situation and Unemployment.

62. An **Allotments and Common Pasture Bill** introduced by the Labour Party was debated on Second Stage on June 9th, but was defeated by 31 votes to 11. This Bill, which was prepared in conjunction with Miss S. C. Harrison and the Irish Plottolders' Association, would have imposed on the local authorities the duty of acquiring land for allotments and common pasture wherever there was a need, and land could be acquired on suitable conditions. Ministers and many Deputies declared in favour of the general principle of allotments, but criticised the detailed provisions, and foreshadowed somewhat hazily the introduction of a Government Bill on the subject. A comparison of our Bill with the Government Bill when introduced should be instructive, and Labour members of local authorities, whom the subject closely concerns, would be well advised to study the Labour Party's Bill.

63. Two joint meetings of the Labour Party in the Oireachtas and members of the National Executive were held during the year, in February and in July. The first meeting, owing to an unexpected change in the date of the re-assembly of the Dáil, was attended by only a few Deputies. At the meeting on July 1st Deputy Johnson intimated that he was resigning the Chairmanship of the Party and would no longer sit in his accustomed place as leader on the Front Opposition Bench. Every effort was made by Deputies and members of the Executive to dissuade Mr. Johnson from taking this course, but without avail.



## C.—POLITICAL ORGANIZATION.

64. Although a number of local Labour Clubs of individual subscribing members of the Party have been formed from time to time, the number of Clubs actually in effective existence is very few.

65. The carrying on of a Club, particularly in rural areas, presents considerable difficulties, and it can hardly be hoped that these will be overcome until the Party has available the services of an Organiser who can travel frequently from Club to Club. The work is naturally somewhat easier in the vicinity of the Metropolis, and the experience of two Clubs in the Dublin suburbs, Rathmines and Pembroke, has shown the value of this form of organisation. Both these Clubs are quite small, but they have managed to keep their members together by holding lectures and by other activities, and there can be no doubt that they formed an indispensable rallying point and basis of organisation for the elections to the local authorities, in which they scored remarkable successes. Pembroke Club made a new departure by establishing a Labour Athletic Club, which has attracted many young men in the district and proved very successful. The red jerseys of the only Labour Athletic Club in Ireland have been seen at several of the ordinary athletic contests near Dublin, and the Pembroke entrants have, for a new Club, acquitted themselves very creditably. The National Executive regard this as an extremely valuable development of Labour activity, and would be glad to see the example of Pembroke copied elsewhere.

66. The elections to Local Authorities showed a very welcome revival of Labour enthusiasm throughout the country, and the time would seem to be ripe for a definite attempt to build up a really effective political organisation. The Party cannot rely in the future, as it has had to do in the past, merely upon the machinery of the Trade Union branches for political purposes. The work is of a special kind, and if it is to be properly carried out special machinery must be used for it. The presence of Labour members on local authorities in large numbers indicates a need for some local political organisation to keep in touch with the work of the authorities, and to strengthen the hands of the Labour members by propaganda and educational work, and at the same time creates a favourable occasion for the establishment of such organisations.

67. The National Executive accordingly proposes to convene at an early date a conference of Labour members of local authorities for the double purpose of considering the possibilities of stimulating and co-ordinating Labour activities on these bodies and of initiating local organising work and the establishment of Labour Clubs on a permanent basis throughout the country.

68. It must, however, be realised that the extension of our political activities raises the question whether our present Constitution

makes sufficient provision for this side of our work. The sections of the Constitution, as adopted in 1918, relating to political activities, have been rendered somewhat out-of-date by the changes in the government of the country, the size of constituencies, etc., that have taken place since then, and moreover the Constitution, as a whole, hardly gives sufficient prominence to the political side of the movement. In addition, the position of Trades' and Workers' Councils requires to be re-considered, and a special problem is presented by the situation in the area of the Northern Parliament. It is accordingly suggested that the incoming National Executive should be specially charged by Congress to review the whole situation in regard to political work, and to prepare such amendments to the Constitution and make such other proposals as it considers expedient, for consideration by the next Annual Congress or by a Special Congress summoned for the purpose.

#### **XIV.—NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS.**

69. The attendances of members of the National Executive are shown in the statement which will be circulated to delegates in the usual way. The exigencies of Union business, ill-health and similar causes will naturally operate to prevent attendance at Executive meetings occasionally, but it will be noticed that some members of the Executive have attended considerably less than half the meetings. Making every allowance for the difficulties, we feel that the figures of attendance show that members are nominated for and elected to membership of the National Executive who are not able to give to the work the amount of time and attention it requires, and we trust that Congress will bear this in mind at the elections this year. The effect of the poor attendance in the past year has been to nullify the increase of three in the number of members of the Executive.

70. At the meeting of the Executive held on September 19th and 20th, it was decided to appoint a standing sub-committee to deal with the question of political organisation and propaganda remitted to it by the full Executive. The following members were appointed on this Sub-Committee:—W. O'Brien, T. Johnson, L. J. Duffy, T. Farren, A. Heron, T. J. O'Connell, and J. T. O'Farrell.

71. Last year's Congress instructed the National Executive "to make such arrangements as may seem meet to relieve the Secretary of as much of his work as possible" (see pp. 140-144 of the 30th Annual Report). The matter was examined by a sub-committee of the Executive and by the full Executive in September last. A satisfactory distribution of responsibility and organisation of the work to be done would entail the appointment of extra staff and a consequent heavy financial liability which could not readily be met. The



solution adopted was to impose a more definite responsibility upon Mr. Mortished than had hitherto been the case, appointing him Assistant Secretary, and requiring him to attend Executive meetings and generally to act as an officer of the Executive, so as to relieve the Secretary. At the same time the Secretary was given to understand that he was not expected to undertake full responsibility for any but the more serious matters. The Executive also appointed a Finance Committee to exercise supervision over the financial side of the work of the office and the organisation generally. No other changes in the office arrangements have been made during the year.

72. It should be made clear, however, that the Executive do not regard these changes as being adequate for a permanent arrangement. The whole staff, from the Secretary to the stenographers, are compelled to work continuously under extreme pressure; yet much work that should be undertaken, particularly in regard to political organisation, propaganda and education, has to be left almost untouched. The work to be done might be allocated to at least four offices, thus—

Leader of Labour Party in the Oireachtas;

Parliamentary Secretary;

Industrial and Organising Secretary;

Political Organiser and Propagandist (for outside work).

73. Organisation on this basis would entail the addition of two highly-qualified officers to the staff, and an increase also in the clerical staff. Some change of this sort is clearly desirable, but while the effective organisation of the political side of the Movement would eventually bring an appreciable revenue, the initial expense would be severe. The National Executive are unable to make any recommendations on the subject, particularly in view of the present financial position, but desire to bring the facts to the notice of Congress, so that the incoming Executive may be acquainted with the views of Congress, and may be in a position to consider, in the light of these views, what improvements in organisation are practicable.

## **XV.—THE ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT THE IRISH LABOUR MOVEMENT.**

74. The position created by the attack on the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union led by Mr. James Larkin, together with other minor, irresponsible attempts to form new Unions, was fully considered by the National Executive at its meeting in September, and it was decided to issue a general warning to Trade Unionists. The following manifesto was therefore issued on September 26th, 1924, and given publicity through the Press and by distribution to affiliated organisations:—

## A CALL FOR UNITY.

The National Executive of the Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, elected at the Annual Congress in August, views with anxiety recent developments in the Labour ranks, more especially in respect of the ruinous disputes in Dublin, which have caused grievous loss and distress, not only to the workers directly concerned, but to many others who had no direct part in the conflict.

Strikes such as those at Marino and Inchicore, even if successful, could not have brought any benefit to the workers, either materially or morally. Workmen lost wages, businesses were dislocated; the erection of houses, for which the workers have such crying need, was held up; tradesmen not connected with the dispute were disemployed, and no material advantage was even hoped for—certainly was not attained—while the moral damage to trade unionism in loss of strength and prestige is incalculable. No good cause was served by these disastrous strikes, their only use seems to have been to pander to the vainglory of individuals desirous of making a show of power.

Being anxious for the welfare of the organised Labour movement, upon which we believe depends to a high degree the salvation of the country as a whole, we feel compelled to issue this warning to trade unionists generally against being led into a course of action which, if followed, will certainly lead to disaster to their unions and cause irremediable damage to the country.

### Wrecking Tactics.

In the work of reconstructing the national life the trade unions, if they are to rise to their responsibilities, ought to take a dominating part. This cannot be done if unions are to be weakened by internal dissension, where jealousy and envy take the place of good-will and helpful criticism. Nor can it be accomplished by organisations which emanate from a craving for notoriety in any individual, whether he has attained international renown as a disruptionist, or merely enjoys local fame as a shallow but shrewd "chancer," lacking any knowledge of what is meant by trade unionism.

The history and achievements of the Irish Labour movement in the last ten years should be sufficient guarantee that the interests of the workers and the country will be safeguarded by the unions, whose members and leaders have borne the burden of that trying, but in many respects inspiring, decade.

Rates of wages and conditions of labour have been improved and the improvements maintained, in face of a general failure to do the same in other countries; the unions, if wisely led, can hold that advantageous position if the members stand firm to their unions and refuse to adopt the tactics of the wrecker.

In the bitter struggle for national independence the generous



enthusiasm, unbreakable determination, and self-imposed discipline of the organised workers were admittedly of the greatest value in the struggle. In the awful orgy of civil strife which followed the operating of the Treaty, organised labour preserved its sanity in an atmosphere of hate and alarms.

### **Trade Unions' Purpose.**

When the storm clouds are gathered once more on the political horizon it would be calamitous if the steadying influence of organised trade unionism were weakened or destroyed by suicidal tendencies on the part of even a small proportion of its membership. We do not pretend that our unions are faultless in construction or that the officials have always been sound in their judgments; but we claim that in general they have served well and successfully the interests of their members, and deservedly won a commanding influence in the sphere of negotiation with employers or in the wide life of the community.

The primary purpose of trade unions is to protect the workers by collective action from the ever-present downward pressure upon wages which employers in a competitive world are driven to exert. If there were no trade unions each workman would have to make a separate bargain with his employer, and the man out of work would compete with the man in work for his job by offering to work for lower wages. Trade Unions have introduced the system of collective bargaining, and have thereby averted many of the evils of unmitigated competition in the labour market.

### **Need for Unity.**

But the trade unions, having established their position as protectors of the workers' wages and conditions by collective bargaining, have developed their powers, evolved new functions and assumed greater responsibilities. It is not enough in these days for trade unions simply to resist reductions in wages or fight for higher rates for their own members. Solidarity and loyalty are essential, even if those primary purposes are to be fulfilled; but when organised Labour essays to play its greater part in the general social, economic and political life of the community, there is even greater need for unity of purpose and responsible leadership.

These considerations apply with doubled force in Ireland to-day, when we are faced with problems which, if they are to be solved, will require that all the powers—moral, intellectual, economic—which make for a healthy national life shall be utilised and directed to the task of finding and working out their solution. There are the problems especially affecting the workers, and there are, in addition, the problems affecting the nation as a whole.

It is the task of the trade unions to protect the standard of life

of the workers, and at the same time to have regard to the well-being of their fellow-workmen and the prosperity of the nation. We hold that these objects are not incompatible, but rather that the true prosperity of the nation will be achieved through the practical recognition of the truth that the workers, by hand and brain, constitute the only vital factors in the nation, and, therefore, the well-being of the workers means the prosperity of the nation.

If we allow personal jealousies, sectional envy, partisan hatreds to inspire our actions, leading to dissensions and ruptures in the ranks, then the power of the unions, either to protect their members or to influence beneficially the national life, will be utterly dispelled.

We ask the workers to recognise that at the present time there are many powerful factors operating which tend towards the disintegration of the nation.

### **Decline of Production.**

Chef amongst these is the serious decline in wealth production, in what is almost our only source of wealth—viz., agriculture. Arising partly through political troubles, partly through the fall in prices in England, partly through bad weather conditions, the total wealth production, upon which practically all our industrial operations ultimately depend, has seriously declined in the past two or three years. This is a fact of gravest import which organised labour is bound to take into account.

One of its consequences is that enterprise is limited; new projects are held up, and commercial depression is prevalent. To adopt tactics of a kind which merely deepen and extend the area of depression is to deprive the workers of employment and weaken their powers of resistance against the day when all their strength will be needed to resist an attack on wages. The resources of the country are ample to provide health-giving sustenance and comfort for all our people. It is imperative that the country shall apply itself earnestly to the work of supplying these needs and stimulating economic activities, especially those which are directly productive, so as to add to the nation's strength.

### **More Work Wanted.**

More employment is necessary, but more employment at directly productive work is required if the country is to grow strong.

The times demand immediate attention to the crying evils of unemployment and the poverty resulting therefrom. These evils are deep-rooted and are not to be easily eradicated. The ultimate solution, we believe, will not be found without a radical change in social relations and a new spirit and purpose to direct the economic activities of our people.

But these changes are not to be wrought without long-sustained endeavour in the fields of education and public discussion. In the



meantime some temporary remedies must be applied to save the present generation, and make possible the enjoyment of a better life by the next. All genuine efforts to promote employment and increase production under fair conditions ought to receive the support of organised labour. But it should be apparent that spasmodic strikes and stoppages of work without valid reasons (*i.e.*, reasons which will stand the test of trade union scrutiny) will only result in retarding, perhaps utterly destroying, industrial development or prospect of increased employment.

Trade unions will need to be stronger, not weaker, in the future, if a fair standard of living is to be maintained; they will need to be directed with foresight and discretion, and a lively regard for the common welfare if they are to retain any power of influencing, beneficially, the current of the nation's life.

### **The Volunteer Spirit.**

A voice has been heard from one of the political camps calling for a revival of the spirit which inspired the Volunteers. We would most heartily endorse that appeal in its application to social and economic endeavour. The Volunteer spirit, as we understand it, led to the subordination of the individual to the nation; the acceptance of a strict discipline; enthusiastic work for an unselfish purpose, devotion of personal energies and material resources to the common weal.

If this true Volunteer spirit could be revived, and find expression in the field of industry, the salvation of the country would be assured. We feel that the dangerous state of the country, owing to the failure of agricultural production and other causes, will only be overcome when a new spirit takes possession of our people, inspiring us all to active work for the common good.

Political change of whatsoever character is of small account in comparison with the necessity for saving the economic life of the nation, and setting the men who comprise the nation at useful work. Is it too great a thing to ask that the forces which, however divergent they may be as to means, all aim at re-building the nation on a secure foundation, shall seek to find agreement as to the best means of reaching economic safety?

We deplore the disunity in the ranks of Labour, and warn the workers of the danger; we do so the more earnestly because we are convinced that it is but a symptom of a disorder that is permeating all phases of the national life. It can be overcome by a united expression of the "will-to-live," and the revival of the "spirit of the Volunteers."

*Issued by the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and Trades Union Congress.*

**THOMAS JOHNSON**, *Secretary.*

26th September, 1924.

32 Lr. Abbey St., Dublin.

75. We believe that the issue of this manifesto had a steadying effect, and, in conjunction with the firm stand taken by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and other Unions affected against the disruptive tactics of Mr. Larkin's "Workers' Union of Ireland" in endeavouring to seduce members from their allegiance to their Unions and to bring about needless and futile strikes, contributed to a better realisation of the fundamental importance of clear thinking and restraint upon the part of Trade Unionists in times rendered difficult by acute industrial depression.

76. A further attempt to foster disunity was made by the Dundalk Trades Council. This Council, which had declined to undertake locally the Unemployment agitation called for by the National Executive, demanded instead the calling of a Special Congress on the subject. In the view of the National Executive a Special Congress would have been of value, if at all, only as the culmination of a national campaign, and the Dundalk Council was so informed. This Council then approached the Dublin Trades Council, and the latter body issued a circular, dated March 16th, 1925, calling "an All-Ireland Labour Conference" for Easter Sunday, April 12th. We are glad to say that the Trades' and Workers' Councils throughout the country appreciated the fact that the Dublin Trades' Council is an entirely unrepresentative and discredited body and ignored this invitation.

77. It will be appropriate here to refer to the activities in Ireland of the British Section of the Workers' International Relief, since that body, though constituted simply as a humanitarian organisation for the purpose of providing relief by workers for workers in cases of distress from famine, lock-out or strike, etc., and including on its Executive many well-known British Labour leaders whose names command respect, intervened in Ireland in such a way as to give some colour to the belief, current outside this country, that it is used as a medium of Communist propaganda. Early in February, Mrs. Helen Crawford, Secretary of the British Section of the Workers' International Relief, called at the Office of the National Executive, and suggested that the Executive should participate in the establishment of an Irish Committee for the distribution of relief, supplied by the Workers' International Relief, to people in the districts along the Western sea-board, where distress was acute. No information was given as to the manner in which the proposed local committee was to be constituted or the powers it was to exercise, but it was ascertained that steps had been taken to set up the Committee before any approach was made to the Executive, and that it was to be directly associated with persons such as Messrs. Larkin and Daly, who had not the confidence of Trade Unionists. The extremely unsatisfactory nature of these proceedings was pointed out to Mrs. Crawford, and it was suggested that, if the British Section of the Workers' International Relief



were anxious to assist in relieving distress in Ireland by providing funds for the purpose, they should approach the Irish Trade Unions and leave them to appoint a Committee to organise the distribution of the funds. It was also pointed out that assistance supplementary to the Governmental action which had been secured by the representations made by the Labour Party and others in the Dáil would be more beneficially used if the various efforts were co-ordinated to prevent over-lapping. No response to these suggestions was received from the Workers' International Relief, and the Irish Committee, which had removed its office from "Unity Hall" to 47 Parnell Square, continued its work on its own.

## **XVI.—THE SITUATION IN THE SIX COUNTIES.**

78. At its meeting on September 19th the National Executive decided that the Secretary should make a tour in Northern Ireland for the purpose of consulting representative Trade Unionists in Belfast, Derry and Newry respecting a proposal to call a Labour Conference in Belfast to discuss the Labour attitude on the Boundary and the relations between the Congress and the Labour Party (Northern Ireland). This visit was made, the Secretary visiting Belfast, Derry, Newry, Strabane, Enniskillen and Clones, and Mr. Johnson subsequently submitted proposals for consideration as a basis of a friendly solution of the Boundary problem, with a view to their submission first to representatives of the Labour Party (Northern Ireland), and later, if there were general agreement, to a larger Conference, from which a public statement would be issued.

79. The draft proposals submitted by the Secretary were considered on October 13th, and the following statement was adopted as suitable as a basis for discussion with the Northern Ireland representatives :—

1. We adhere to the democratic declaration contained in Article 2 of the Constitution of the Free State that "All powers of Government and all authority, legislative, executive and judicial in Ireland are derived from the people of Ireland." These powers are exercisable through political institutions, which are liable to changes in form and structure and in the extent of their authority. These changes may be either freely determined by the people or accepted under pressure.
2. In the exercise of their powers the people are agreed upon the establishment of a separate Parliament and Government for Northern Ireland—subject to a delimitation of the area of jurisdiction and without prejudice to the question of what authority they shall exercise.

3. We hold that the complete political unity of Ireland ought to be aimed at, and that in determining the powers and area of jurisdiction of the Northern Parliament and Government, provision must be made for maintaining the National authority in respect of certain functions of Government with a view to the eventual growth and development of such unitary authority.
4. In accord with this view we recommend that the provisions of the Treaty regarding the establishment of a Council of Ireland should be given effect to, *i.e.*, That the Council provided for in Article 12 of the Treaty should be appointed with authority in respect to railways, fisheries and contagious diseases of animals in the Northern area, thus establishing an All-Ireland Government for these services; but that an agreement between the various parties and interests, North and South, should be striven for in regard to the future powers and constitution of the Council of Ireland.
5. We believe that the most satisfactory method of dealing with the problem will be to set up a Council representative rather of economic interests, which do not divide according to geographical areas, than of territorial constituencies. Such a Council should be genuinely representative of the people engaged in the various industries, and should have power to promote legislation affecting agriculture, commerce and industry in either Parliament, and the right to exercise a suspensory veto over all such legislation emanating from either Parliament.
6. Within the jurisdiction of the respective Parliaments, the protection of minorities—political and religious—must be guaranteed, and with this in view the system of Elections by Proportional Representation (single transferable vote) should be re-enacted and maintained.
7. The Special Constabulary in the North should be disarmed and all political prisoners released.

80. These proposals were communicated to the Secretary of the Northern Ireland Labour Party, who was invited to arrange for two or three members of his organisation to come to Dublin to discuss the matter. About this time, however, the Party in the North was engaged with matters affecting its own organisation, and at later dates it was occupied with municipal and parliamentary elections, while the Boundary Commission had commenced its work. The



proposed consultation between the two organisations has thus not taken place.

81. Consideration of the Boundary problem will only become urgent again when the Boundary Commission has ceased its labours. But it was intended that the consultation should cover also the question of the relative positions of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party (Northern Ireland), and the welcome entry of three Labour members into the Northern Parliament gives an additional urgency to this matter. As this year's Congress will be held within the jurisdiction of the Northern Parliament, the occasion will be opportune for an exchange of views between delegates on the matter.

For the National Executive,

WM. O'BRIEN, *Chairman.*

THOS. JOHNSON, *Secretary.*

July 25th, 1925.

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#### ERRATUM.

The composition of the National Programme Conference is not accurately given in paragraph 20 of the Report of the National Executive. The Conference was composed of representatives of School Managers, the Irish National Teachers' Organization, the General Council of County Councils, and the Gaelic League, with nominees of the Minister for Education, among whom was Mr. Farren.

## APPENDIX I.

## COISTE UM OIDEACHAS.

To

The Chairman and Members,  
National Executive,  
Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress.

A CHAIRDE,

By minute dated the 21st May, 1924, we were appointed by you to discuss and report on:—

- (1) The Aim of a National System of Education.
- (2) How this Aim may best be realised.

We were asked to make suggestions on:

- (a) The organization of the Ministry of Education and the co-ordination of its different departments.
- (b) The financing of educational services.
- (c) Types of schools—their distribution.
- (d) School buildings—their heating, lighting and sanitation.
- (e) The management, staffing and inspection of schools.
- (f) The training, remuneration and status of teachers.
- (g) The medical care, feeding and attendance of pupils.
- (h) School Programmes—vocational training.
- (i) Secondary Education—continuation classes in Agriculture, Commerce and Technology.
- (j) Adult Education—The Universities.

The first meeting of our Committee was held on Saturday, May 24th, 1924, and since that date twenty other meetings have been held. Mr. McNamara, finding that he was unable to attend our meetings, resigned, and at the fourteenth meeting he was replaced by Dr. Macdonald, Principal, Dunlaoghaire Technical Institute.

We desire to pay a special tribute to the manner in which our Honorary Secretary, Mr. M. P. O'Luinneachain, has performed the very onerous duties which have devolved upon him in connection with the work of the Committee.

Attached is a copy of our Report.

Sinne le meas,

THOS. JOHNSON,

*Cathaoirleach.*

TOMAS O CONAILL,

*Leas-chathaoirleach.*

Ar son an Coisde Um Oideachas.

TIGH LAIGHEAN,

BAILE ATHA CLIATH,

26adh Meitheamh, 1925.



# CUALLACHT OIBRE EIREANN is COMHAIRLE na gCEARD.

## TUARASGABHAIL ON COISDE UM OIDEACHAS.

### SECTION I.—HISTORICAL.

#### National Education in Ireland.

As the matters referred to us for investigation involve a consideration of the whole system of public education in Ireland, we deem it necessary at the outset of our report to give a short account of the history of public education in Ireland, and to trace in detail the principal developments in the different systems since they were inaugurated.

#### (A) Primary.

A National system of education supported by State funds was unknown in Ireland previous to 1831. Before that year an annual grant had been made by Parliament to the Kildare Place Society. This Society exercised in some degree a supervision over various parochial schools, and established a Training College and Book Depot. Its primary object was the promotion of elementary education generally throughout the country, but it required as a condition of aid to schools that the Bible should be read by all pupils in attendance. Yielding to the remonstrances of those who complained of its constitution and activities in this respect, a Committee of the House of Commons was set up by the British Cabinet in 1828 to consider reports on the state of education in Ireland, and to make observations and give opinions on them.

This Committee recommended the setting up of a system which would afford combined literary and separate religious education, and which would be capable of being so far adapted to the view of the religious persuasions which prevail in Ireland as to render it in truth "a system of National Education for the poorer classes of the community." The phrase, "A System of National Education for the poorer classes of the community," is worthy of note, and will be referred to again in this report.

The recommendations of the House of Commons Committee were acted upon with little delay. Earl Grey, the then Prime Minister, wrote the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Stanley, on the 9th September, 1831, instructing him to set up such a system and suggesting that it should be under the control of a Board composed of three representatives of the Church of Ireland, two Roman Catholics, and two Protestant Dissenters. The method by which the

system was to be organised is described in a letter from the Chief Secretary to the Duke of Leinster, who was President of the first National Board. Applications were to be invited from Ministers of religion or representative laymen for grants. The applicants, who were originally called "patrons," were expected to provide sites for schools, and were to be responsible for the salary of the master, for repairs to the school buildings, and for half the cost of school requisites. The Board's funds were to be used to aid in the building of schools, to pay inspectors, to pay gratuities of limited amounts to teachers, to print books of both moral and literary types to be used in the schools, and to defray contingent expenses. Applicants for grants had the power of appointing their own teachers, provided such teachers had the necessary qualifications, but the Board had power to suspend or dismiss these teachers. Books to be used in the schools, whether such were of a literary or religious type, should be sanctioned by the Board. The schools were to be opened for a number of hours on four or five days of the week for giving the combined literary and moral education; on one other day they were to be opened so that the pupils could get separate religious instruction from their respective clergy, and such clergy could also give instruction each day after the ordinary school hours. It was not proposed that the separate religious instruction should be given by the lay teachers. A register of the pupils' attendance at Divine Worship on Sundays was to be kept. The letter containing these instructions is dated October, 1831, and National Education in Ireland may be said to start from that date.

In 1832 schools taught by Religious Orders were sanctioned and grants were made to them under the same conditions and on the same basis as to schools taught by laymen, but in 1836 the Irish Christian Brothers severed their connection with the National Board, and since that date the primary departments of their schools have not come under the authority of the State.

About this time (1832) the Board appointed one of its members, a Presbyterian Minister named Rev. J. Carlile, to act as a whole-time Commissioner. This Commissioner, with the assistance of another, Archbishop Whately, prepared a series of books which were supplied first at half price and afterwards free to the schools. These books contained religious instruction of a type unacceptable to Roman Catholics, and were condemned by the Synod of Thurles in 1850. The following extract from one of the poems contained in these books is interesting, particularly when it is coupled with the phrase in the House of Commons Committee's Report already referred to :—

"I thank the Goodness and the Grace  
Which on my birth has smiled,  
And made me in those later days  
A happy English child."



From the very start it was definitely stated that Commissioners would not be responsible for the teachers' salaries. The local patron was to be responsible for them, and anything the Commissioners gave was only in the nature of a grant in aid. In 1834 there were 789 schools receiving grants from the Board, and there were 107,042 children in attendance. In those days many complaints were received from the Board's Inspectors *re* the want of proper accommodation. Examinations for teachers were inaugurated in 1835, and in 1849 Model Schools for the training of teachers were opened. The Central Model School had, however, been in operation since 1835. The Commissioners, in their Annual Report for 1837, recommend that a "better knowledge of agriculture should be promoted, and that the National Schools should tend as far as is practicable to bring forward an intelligent class of farm labourers and servants." In 1838 Glasnevin Model Farm was opened under the exclusive control of the Commissioners. It is worthy of note that the Commissioners, according to their reports, meant gradually to divide their schools into two classes, primary and secondary—the primary to afford elementary instruction; the secondary, instruction in science, and also manual occupations. The Board of Works accepted responsibility for School Buildings and Teachers' Residences in 1857. In 1840 the teachers were classified, and the monitorial system was established in 1843. The Commissioners of National Education were given a Royal Charter in 1845 "in order to promote the welfare by providing for the education of the poor in Ireland." A Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education, known as the Powis Commission, issued its report in 1870, and as a consequence of this a system of payment of teachers by results was established. That system continued in force up to 1900. Pensions for teachers were provided for under the National Teachers' Act of 1879. In 1892 an Act was passed by the British Parliament which practically abolished school fees, and made arrangements under which local authorities could make attendance at National Schools compulsory. A Vice-Regal Commission which met in 1897-98 was responsible for the abolition of the system of payment by results, and the inauguration of what came to be known as the New Programme. This Programme endeavoured to provide for a more thorough cultivation of Kindergarten, Manual Instruction, Drawing, Elementary Science, Cookery and Laundry Work, Singing, Drill and Needlework. The history of Irish educational activity since 1900 relates the endeavour to force the British Treasury to give more generous and more satisfactory financial treatment to the educational services. This endeavour was the *raison d'être* of two Commissions, as a result of whose findings a Bill was introduced in the British House of Commons in 1919. This Bill had certain defects which could easily have been remedied on the establishment of Home Government, but it never got even to the Second

Reading stage. In February, 1922, the National Board was abolished, and national primary education is now controlled by a branch of the Department of Education under a Chief Executive Officer.

### (B) Secondary Education.

The giving of State assistance to Secondary education in Ireland dates from the passing of the Intermediate Education (Ireland) Act, 1878. Under this Act a Board was set up whose duty it was to promote intermediate secular education in Ireland (a) by instituting and carrying on a system of public examination of students, (b) by providing for the payment of prizes and exhibitions and the giving of certificates to students, (c) by providing for the payment to managers of schools of fees dependent on the results of public examinations of students. The Board at first consisted of seven unpaid members (the number was increased to twelve by the Act of 1900), nominated by the Lord Lieutenant. The chief function of this Board may be described as that of distributing public money on the results of written examinations. The money originally placed at its disposal consisted of the interest on one million pounds. A further sum was placed at its disposal by the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act of 1890. Up to 1902 grants were made to schools only on the results of the Annual Examinations. In 1902 arrangements were made for the giving of grants for the purpose of providing laboratories and proper equipment for the practical teaching of elementary science. In 1900 an Act was passed empowering the Board to appoint Inspectors, and from that date until 1924 grants to schools became dependent not alone on examination results, but also on the reports of Inspectors. (*Vide* Report, Moloney Commission, Page 8, Section II., Pars. 12 and 13). Examinations for the lower classes in secondary schools were abolished in 1913 (*Vide idem.*, Page 9, Section 11, Par. 21), and grants for such students were paid on the reports of inspectors. An Act passed in 1914 provided for the setting up of a register of intermediate school teachers, and for the payment of a grant which was to be devoted solely in aid of the provision of teachers' salaries. The Registration Council was set up in 1916, and there are at present 3,000 teachers on the register. On the taking of office by the Provisional Government in 1922, the Intermediate Education Board was abolished, and under the Ministers' and Secretaries' Act of 1923 the Intermediate Education Department became a Branch of the Department of Education, with the two Assistant Commissioners still in charge. A new Programme for secondary schools was put into operation in the Summer of 1924, reducing the number of public examinations in a student's career from three to two, and making grants to schools largely independent of examination results, and calculated mainly on capitation. In the



Spring of 1925 a Salary Scheme for Secondary Teachers was introduced with the expressed intention of recognising and stabilising the position of the teachers, but this Scheme has been severely criticised as lacking in generosity.

### **(C) Technical Education.**

One of the duties laid upon the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, established in 1900, was the organization of a system of technical instruction suited to the conditions of the country. Previous to the setting up of this Department, grants for Science and Art in Ireland had been administered for many years by the Department of Science and Art, South Kensington, and later by the English Board of Education. The Act setting up the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction provided for the establishment of a Consultative Committee for the purpose of co-ordinating educational administration consisting of representatives of the National Board, the Intermediate Board, the Agricultural Board, and the Technical Instruction Board, but the influence of this Consultative Committee on co-ordination and education generally was negligible. The Department controlled generally the working of the Technical Instruction Acts, but the local management and administration of Technical Instruction was and is in the hands of Committees of the Local Councils, County and Urban. The funds that were available for Technical Instruction under the 1889 and 1899 Acts were an endowment fund, a local rate of not more than 2d. in the £, and an attendance grant. Technical Instruction as a State service is now administered by the Technical Instruction Branch of the Department of Education.

### **(D) Northern Ireland.**

One of the first Acts of the Parliament of Northern Ireland set up under the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, was to introduce and pass into law a most comprehensive measure dealing with education. Under this Act education in Northern Ireland is under the control of a Minister for Education. The Act was in many ways a revolutionary measure, but our experience of its working is not yet sufficient to allow us to comment on it. It will be understood, therefore, that the recommendations referred to in this report refer mainly to Education in the Saorstát.

## **SECTION II.—ORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.**

### **(A) Present Position.**

From this historical survey it can be seen that during the British regime the Irish educational services were controlled by three semi-independent Boards, the members of which were nominated by the

Lord Lieutenant. They were not responsible to Parliament, were intensely bureaucratic, and were completely out of touch with the needs of the country. With the coming of the Free State the Boards were abolished. There is now only one Department of Education with three Branches—the Office of National Education, the Intermediate Education Branch, and the Technical Education Branch. The head of the Department is the Minister for Education, who is responsible to the Dail for its working. The present Minister is a member of the Executive Council of the State. To appoint as Minister for Education one who is also a member of the Executive Council of the State is doubtful wisdom. The Free State Constitution provides for the appointment of Extern Ministers, *i.e.*, Ministers not members of the Executive Council, who are nominated by the Dail, and are individually responsible to the Dail alone for the administration of their Departments. The Department of Education of all Departments should most appropriately be presided over by a Minister in this category.

### (B) Recommendations.

With a view to remedying the present unsatisfactory condition of affairs, and to placing the Organisation of the educational services on a democratic basis, we submit the following recommendations for your consideration:—

(1) That the Department of Education should be in charge of a Minister who should not be a member of the Executive Council.

(2) The Minister should be assisted by a Council of Education, of which Council the Minister would be *ex-officio* the President.

(3) The Council of Education should consist, in respect of, say, two-thirds, of persons elected by all those engaged in the work of education in all its branches, and in respect of one-third, of nominees of the Dail and Seanad in such proportions as may be agreed upon.

(4) The Council should be consulted on all the major questions of educational policy and on all legislative proposals affecting education proposed by the Minister, and should have the right to initiate proposals of an administrative or legislative character for submission to the Minister.

(5) The functions of the Council should include the issue of diplomas and certificates to those engaged, or wishing to be engaged, in educational services, and generally to control the entrance to such service.

(6) The Council should have the right to recommend to the Dail a suitable person to act as Minister.

(7) That an educational authority should be set up in each county and county borough, this authority to be a Committee of the County or County Borough Council and to be composed, in respect of at least one-half, of members of that body, and in respect of



the remainder, of representatives of the educational interests in the county, including the Technical Instruction Committees of the Urban District Councils.

(8) That such County Education Authority should be responsible for providing for, among other matters :—

- (a) Sufficiency of school accommodation, books, apparatus and equipment.
- (b) The repairing, enlargement, or alterations of existing schools.
- (c) The conveyance of children to school.
- (d) In conjunction with the Health Authority the provision of school meals, medical and dental treatment of school children, and the care of afflicted children.
- (e) University and other Scholarships.
- (f) The taking over of the powers and duties of the present County Technical Committee and the co-ordinating, as far as possible, of all the educational services of the county.

(9) That the County Education Authority should be assisted and advised by a School Committee for each school or group of schools.

(10) No change is recommended in the present system of appointment and dismissal of teachers. From the information at our disposal we are satisfied that the system now in operation has worked as satisfactorily in practice as any that could be substituted for it.

### **SECTION III.—THE FINANCING OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.**

#### **(A).**

It has been already remarked that the State grants in support of education were originally intended only to be supplemental to funds raised locally. The amounts raised in this latter fashion became so negligible as time went on that it was found that the Parliamentary vote had to be increased from year to year until to-day practically all the expense of primary education has to be borne by the State. The amount raised locally is infinitesimal, and such as is raised is collected unsystematically and in a haphazard fashion. Portion of the cost of the upkeep of school buildings, teachers' residences, of the heating and cleaning of the schools, is supposed to be borne by the residents in the school area. The present method of collection consists in the opening of a subscription list, but very often the private purse of the manager or teacher has to be called on to supply the money required. This state of affairs cannot be otherwise than unsatisfactory, and calls urgently for remedy. The estimated cost of the educational services in Saorstát Éireann for the financial year 1925-26 is £4,348,531. This includes all the expenditure which is to be accounted for by the three branches of the Department of

Education. The population of the Free State amounts to 3,139,688, so that the cost of education per head of the population equals £1 7s. 8d. Scotland, with a population of 4,882,497, expends £10,867,035, *i.e.*, £2 4s. 6d. per head of the population. Of this amount £4,442,322 came from local rates. Education costs Northern Ireland £1 14s. 11d. per head.

### **(B) Recommendations.**

Taking these figures into account, we are of opinion that any further attempt at curtailment of State expenditure on educational services should be resisted. Rather do we think that a necessity exists for increased expenditure in this direction. We recommend that the expenses incurred by the proposed local education authorities beyond those for which grants from the State are already available should be borne by the rates.

## **SECTION IV.—TYPES OF SCHOOLS.**

### **(A).**

There are at present seven different types of schools receiving aid from the State, *viz.* :—Infant National Schools; National Schools with an Infant Department; National Schools without an Infant Department; privately-owned Secondary Schools where the education given is of a professional nature; privately-owned Secondary Schools where, in addition to a professional education, training is given in science, technology, commerce, agriculture and/or domestic economy; Technical Schools, which are really Secondary Schools, which specialise in technical training; and Technical Schools, which, in addition, organise continuation classes and classes for adults. There are no well-defined limits within which these schools should operate; there is considerable overlapping and consequent waste of teaching energy, and very little attempt at co-ordination. Considerable portion of our time was occupied with endeavouring to plan out a scheme which would systematise and link up these different schools, and which would provide a broad highway of education.

### **(B) Recommendations.**

Our suggestions on the matter are as follows :—

**NURSERY SCHOOLS.**—There should be provided in large urban areas Nursery Schools staffed with specially trained teachers. Children ought not be admitted to Nursery Schools before three and not after four years of age. They should be transferred to Infant Schools at the beginning of the Autumn term following their fourth birthday.



**INFANT SCHOOLS.**—Pupils should not be admitted to Infant Schools nor to the Infant Department of Primary Schools before they reach their fourth birthday, and should not be retained beyond the termination of the school year in which they reach their eighth birthday.

**SCHOOLS FOR THE MENTALLY DEFICIENT.**—Children who, whilst at the Infant School, are found to be mentally deficient, should be transferred from Infant Schools to schools for the Mentally Deficient.

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**—Pupils should be transferred from Infant Schools to Primary Schools at the beginning of the Autumn term following their eighth birthday. Education in Primary Schools should be confined to tuition of an elementary or preparatory nature, and the programmes should not include subjects of a technical nature. Definite periods of admission to schools ought to be fixed. The first week of the Autumn, Christmas, and Easter terms is, in our opinion, the most suitable, special arrangements being provided for families transferring to a different district during the course of a term.

**SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**—Within this category we include any school where education is given to students between the ages of twelve and sixteen. We deem it essential that arrangements be made for the obligatory attendance at some type of secondary school of all children between those ages. For purposes of simplicity we suggest the following classification of secondary schools:—

- (a) Higher Primary Schools, to which children above the age of twelve would normally be transferred, and continue to attend until fifteen. The difficulty of providing such schools in rural areas may be got over at the outset by having Higher Primary Departments in the ordinary Primary Schools.
- (b) Professional Secondary Schools, where the training would be such as would lead to the taking up of a professional career.
- (c) Technical Secondary Schools, where education would be given in agriculture, commerce, technology, science, art and domestic economy.

The education given in (a) should be of a general nature. Vocational or directional training should be begun when the pupils pass from (a) to either (b) or (c). Special arrangements should be made for certain pupils resident in rural areas. These are referred to more particularly in the paragraph *re* obligatory attendance. Maintenance allowances should be made to working-class parents to enable them to keep their children at school up to the age suggested, *i.e.*, up to at least one year beyond the obligatory attendance limit.

Education in all types of schools should be free, and a broad high-

way should be provided for all children so desiring and having the ability to benefit by a University Course to pass right through to the University without disability or hindrance. We feel that the proper aim of Secondary Education is the training and preparation of efficient citizens, and that the undue stressing of professional careers is likely to lead to waste and inefficiency.

## SECTION V.—SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

From the latest returns available we found that there were 5,696 primary schools in operation in Saorstát Éireann, and that the average number of pupils on rolls was 495,836, thus giving an average of 87 pupils per school. The number of teachers' residences were 1,550. We believe that more adequate accommodation should be provided for the housing of the teaching staffs, especially in the rural areas. We further believe that a necessity exists for making increased provision for school buildings properly equipped and furnished, and are of opinion that the setting up of County Education Authorities would go far to solve the problems connected with this aspect of educational needs.

## SECTION VI.—THE STAFFING AND INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.

The teachers employed in Primary Schools under State control at present number 11,165. The average daily attendance of pupils equals 356,115. Roughly, therefore, there is on average one teacher for every 32 pupils in average attendance. With the introduction of a measure of compulsory attendance it is expected that the average daily attendance of pupils would be very much increased. We recommend that in this eventuality occurring, the present ratio between teaching staffs and attendance of pupils should be maintained, and that the regulations of the Department should be altered to allow for this. We are of opinion, too, that much teaching energy would be economised and education generally would be improved by a well-thought-out system of amalgamation of adjoining boys' and girls' schools.

The method of inspection prevailing in National Schools during the regime of the National Board was the cause of much trouble, and was a constant source of irritation to the teachers. The inspectors were led to believe that their chief duty was to spy on the teachers, and to report their shortcomings. Since the agitation which led to the Dill Commission there has been improvement, which has been more marked since the advent of the Free State Government, but it still leaves much to be desired. The custom of labelling the progress made in each particular subject seems to us antiquated. We believe that the inspector ought to be more of a Director of Education than a Departmental Detective. His main object ought



to be to act as a co-worker with the teacher, and to use his wider knowledge, his wider experience and higher scholarship to advise and direct the teachers.

## **SECTION VII.—THE TRAINING, REMUNERATION, SUPER- ANNUATION AND STATUS OF TEACHERS.**

### **(A).**

In the introduction to this report we have referred to the first steps that were taken to provide specially qualified persons to act as teachers in National Schools. As time went on the National Board discovered that its methods of training were becoming antiquated, and that something more was needed than a three or five years' apprenticeship in a National School. From 1834 a perfunctory course of training had been given in Marlborough Street Training College, but it was not until 1883 that the training of teachers became general. The course originally was for six months. Later it was increased to one year, and later still to two years. From 1900 the trained teacher became the rule rather than the exception. In 1905 training became compulsory for principals, and no appointment of an untrained assistant master was allowed without the special sanction of the Commissioners after 1912. In 1913, arrangements were made with the National University for third-year courses for teachers giving efficient service. No special arrangements were made for the training of secondary or technical teachers, except by means of Summer courses, though the teachers in secondary schools are now often graduates of a University who have taken the Higher Diploma in Education.

### **(B) Recommendations.**

The system of training at present in force is very much behind that of neighbouring countries. We believe that all teachers should have a University training, and should be eligible for appointment in any type of school. The powers suggested for the proposed Council of Education foreshadows a joint or combined teaching body. Such a teaching body connotes a course of training in which all teachers should travel on common ground until a certain stage is reached. At this stage they might branch off in various specialised directions according to taste, aptitude, and general suitability, not according to that branch of teaching—primary, secondary, or technical—which the teacher student has in view as his ultimate goal. This teaching body also connotes a common scale of salaries for all teachers, and a common system of superannuation. We recommend the establishment of such a teaching body with such conditions as to training, remuneration, and superannuation. The salaries of teachers should be put on a more satisfactory basis; all teachers should have a system of superannuation such as exists in the Civil Service, and security of office should be guaranteed to all appointed teachers.

## SECTION VIII.—THE MEDICAL CARE, FEEDING AND ATTENDANCE OF PUPILS.

### (A).

Under the Public Health (Medical Treatment of Children) (Ireland) Act, 1919, County and Borough Councils were required to provide for the medical inspection of children immediately before or at the time of their admission to a school, or as soon as possible afterwards and might make arrangements for attending to the health and physical condition of children attending school. The regulations governing the carrying out of these portions of the Act were never made, and these provisions of the Act were never, therefore, put in force. The Education (Provision of Meals) (Ireland) Acts, 1914-'18 made it optional for Urban District and County Borough Councils to take such steps as they think fit to provide meals for children attending any national school. Rates have been struck by some councils for the provision of such meals. The only legislative attempt ever made at securing proper attendance at schools was that embodied in the Irish Education Act, 1892. This Act applied to every Borough, Urban District, or Township, and a County Council could apply the Act either to the whole county or to any part of it. The administering of the Act was in the hands of a School Attendance Committee for the area. The fines allowed for non-observance of the regulations made under the Act were very small. It worked well in the larger cities, but owing to maladministration and mismanagement the attempt at carrying out the Act in the smaller towns and in rural areas was farcical in the extreme. The most serious disability under which education in this country suffers at the moment is, undoubtedly, the unsatisfactory attendance of children at school. In the year 1922, the latest year for which figures are available, the average number of children on the rolls of National Schools in Saorstát Éireann was 495,836; the average daily attendance for the same period was 356,115; the percentage of average daily attendance to average number on rolls being 71.8. Comparable figure for England and Scotland is 90. For some Counties in the Saorstát the percentage is between 50 and 60. This, we hold, is a disgraceful state of affairs, and calls for immediate remedy. We have given the matter a great deal of consideration, and suggest:—

### (B).

- (a) That the minimum age for compulsory attendance should be six years, the pupil to be compelled to attend school from the first admission period after it had reached its sixth year.



- (b) That the powers of enforcing obligatory attendance in all areas outside the County Boroughs of Dublin and Cork should be invested in the Garda Síochána.
- (c) That the minimum leaving age for all children should be not less than fifteen years.
- (d) That exemptions from attendance at the Ordinary Primary School might be given between 14 and 15 years in rural areas, where it could be shown that the pupil was engaged in agricultural operations with his parents and guardians, and was attending an approved course of instruction for a certain specified number of school hours in the year. Before, however, such exemptions would be granted, a child should possess a certificate showing a specified standard of proficiency had been reached.
- (e) That all children between the ages of 15 and 16 should be obliged to attend an approved course of instruction for a certain number of hours per week, or in rural areas an equivalent number of hours per year.
- (f) That in order to facilitate the attendance of children at school, arrangements where necessary should be made to provide vehicles for the conveyance of children to school.
- (g) That a census of children between the ages of 4 and 16 be taken every second year, and that proper transfer machinery be provided for in cities.
- (h) That the normal leaving days be the last day of the Autumn, Christmas and Easter terms.

### (C).

From the opening statements in this section of the report it can be seen that though legislation has been enacted providing for the medical care and feeding of school children, this legislation has never been enforced to any considerable extent. The importance of this side of our educational activity seems to have been lost sight of by our administration. If education is to assist growth, whether mental or physical, its first care must be the physical well-being of the children. There are no statistics available to show us how great is the need for such care, but we cannot expect that in this respect the Saorstát is luckier than any of the neighbouring countries. Sir George Newman, in the report of the Chief Medical Officer for the British Board of Education for 1921, tells us that of the children who enter school at five years of age, 35 per cent. bring with them physical defects and the seeds of disease which give them a very bad start in their school life. The following report as to the con-

dition of children attending English schools is interesting:— 2 per cent have a serious visual defect; 12 per cent. suffer from diseases of the nose and throat; dental decay is present in 60 per cent. to 70 per cent.; 2 per cent. suffer from deafness; 2 per cent. from heart disease; 3 per cent. from anæmia; 5 per cent. from glandular enlargement; 2 per cent. from malnutrition. It would be interesting to know what are the comparative figures for Irish children. We believe that there is a crying need for having greater attention paid to the health of our children. Any person who has had any intercourse with school children must be aware of the numbers of them that suffer from bad teeth, from diseases of the nose and throat, from tuberculosis, from malnutrition and anæmia. We urge that a branch of the Department of Local Government and Public Health for the purpose of dealing specially with the health of school children should be set up without delay, and that the Department should take in hands the putting in force of the terms of the Act of 1919. We further urge that a dental clinic, and a refectory where all children could have their meals at a small cost (or in the case of poorer children free) should be attached to each school. Ample playgrounds, hygienic school buildings and open-air schools should also be provided.

## SECTION IX.—SCHOOL PROGRAMMES.

### (A).

The programmes at present in operation in the Schools in Saorstát Éireann are the results of conferences on which your Executive had representation. We have already given it as our opinion that the subjects taught in Primary Schools should be of an elementary or preparatory type. While not suggesting that agriculture or rural science should be an obligatory subject in these schools in rural areas, we do urge that all the teaching in such schools should have regard to the industry in which most of those attending the schools will be engaged. We believe that the subjects taught in all schools should be such as would lead the pupils to engage in vocations of a productive nature rather than in a professional or distributive calling. All education for years in this country has tended to lead away from the land and productive work. The results are a glut of distributive workers, consequent large numbers of unemployed, increased emigration and waste of teaching energy. We further urge that all girls should get a course of training in domestic economy, and all pupils a course in "citizenship."

### (B).

The place that the Irish language should hold in such programmes was a matter to which we have given a great deal of consideration. We agreed that a bilingual people should be our



objective, and that Irish should be stressed in our School Programme (because at the moment Irish required an artificial stimulus), with the ultimate idea of Irish being the dominant language of the country.

## SECTION X.—ADULT EDUCATION.

In the next paragraph of this report we deal at some length with the aim of education.

To foreshadow our conclusions on this question we may state that one aim of education must of necessity be to fit a citizen for his or her place in a civilised community. The family, the school, the trade union or profession, the local town or district, all are phases of communal life, and the process of education must be a process of development of the individual in his relation to the community. Democracy fails if it does not call forth the active as well as passive participation by all in citizenship, and education is useless in a democratic country unless it aims at fitting each individual, not alone for his personal, domestic and vocational duties, but above all for his duties as a citizen. Thus to fit the individual it is essential that his or her education should aim at (a) the development in the individual of an open habit of mind—clear-sighted and truth-loving—proof against sophisms, shibboleths, clap-trap phrases and cant; (b) the imparting to the individual of information which will enable him to form a sound judgment on the many questions that may arise in a civil social state. We deem it necessary to stress this aspect of the educational aim at this point, because it is the aspect with which adult education has to deal. In Ireland up to the present there has been no adult education for the majority of our people. We have for generations looked on such education as a luxury for the children of the rich, which concerned only a short span of early manhood. That there is a demand for such education among the poorest of our people we are certain, and even if there were no such demand we feel it is the duty of the State, the citizens, the political parties and the educationists, to stimulate, foster and organise such a demand. We would like to pay a tribute here to the efforts of the Gaelic League towards interesting the adult population in the study of the language, literature, history, and music of the nation. The aim of the League might seem to some a trifle narrow, and the work of the League might seem to others not so beneficial as it would have been had it included the study of economics and social questions in its programme, but the success that has attended its efforts to revivify the national life would lead one to hope that an adult education movement wider in its scope and having a more general appeal would do a great deal to create a new social spirit and a higher social consciousness in the minds of our people. No system of education would be truly national if it did not include adult education within its purview, and we deem it to

be the duty of the proposed Department of Education to take cognisance of this need. As a first step towards organising a satisfactory scheme of Adult Education, the Department should summon a conference of representatives of the various bodies interested in this branch of educational activity with a view to co-ordinating their efforts and to gradually bringing the existing agencies supplying higher education into harmony with the demands for such education. The Universities and the County Education Authorities could be got to act together to provide lecturers and facilities for lectures. Folk schools of the Danish type, tutorial classes, University extension lectures, could all be organised. Granted a demand for such education, granted a willingness on the part of the Department to assist in catering for such a demand, the means of meeting the demand would be easily found. We are of opinion that it is essentially a duty of the Labour Party to do its own special work in respect of this phase of educational development. We believe that adult education is a permanent national necessity, that the economic recovery of the nation depends to a great extent on it, that it is a chief means of creating an intelligent public opinion, that opportunities for it should be spread uniformly and systematically over the whole community, and that every possible assistance and encouragement should be given by the State to voluntary efforts to provide it. We do not deem it advisable to make any beyond a passing reference to education of a definitely propagandist nature. It would be difficult to fit such education into a national system, and it can hardly be said to come within our terms of reference. We are of opinion that the citizen who has passed through a series of schools such as we have outlined, who has been trained in a system permeated by the aim described in the succeeding section, and who has opportunities for further study provided on the lines herein laid down will be equipped with the means of arriving at sound judgments and of discerning between the merits of conflicting appeals.

## SECTION XI.—THE AIM OF A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

In our remarks up to the present we have been engaged in formulating a scheme of National Education, but outlining such a scheme without describing the aim which should inspire the scheme would be like setting up a soulless machine. We believe that Irish education has suffered in the past through the want of a worthy aim. We have seen that national education was originally intended "for the poorer classes of the community to make them happy English children" and "intelligent farm labourers and servants." Intermediate education was intended for the sons and daughters of the wealthier classes. If Irish education could, therefore, be said to



have any aim, it was the killing of nationality and the perpetuation of class distinction. Modern theorists differentiate between the "humanistic" or "cultural" aim and the "utilitarian" or "economic" aim. The first has for its end better human beings, the second better competitive instruments. As a labour body we believe that the competitive and acquisitive spirit is the chief cause of a great deal of the unhappiness which at present exists, and that until a spirit of co-operation and of willing social service takes the place of competition and greed, no permanent cure can be found for our present social evils. Our schools and our systems of education are the means by which this spirit has been conveyed to the minds of each new generation, and any change in the outlook of life must be largely effected through the schools. We are not inclined to suggest that education should be solely cultural, that learning should be solely for its own sake; equally are we opposed to agree that men should learn simply to make themselves more efficient machines. The aim of any national system of education should, in our opinion, be to produce men and women who are governors of themselves; whose object in life will be to become civilised Christian human beings, to be healthy, clean, alert and responsible citizens of an Irish commonwealth; who will be efficient wealth producers, not because, as the prevailing school of economists would have us believe, that the production of wealth is the essential object of all human endeavours, but because the production of more wealth will increase the comfort of all of the people.

We commend as an ideal to be aimed at P. H. Pearse's dream of Education in a free Ireland—"Well-trained and well-paid teachers; well-equipped and beautiful schools, and a fund at the disposal of each school to enable it to award prizes on its own tests, based on its own programme—these would be among the characteristics of a new system. Manual work, both indoor and outdoor, would, I hope, be part of the programme of every school. And the internal Organisation might well follow the models of the little child republics I have elsewhere described, with their own laws and leaders, their fostering of individualities, yet never at the expense of the commonwealth, their care for the body as well as the mind, their nobly ordered games, their spacious outdoor life, their intercourse with the wild things of the woods and the wastes, their daily adventure face to face with elemental Life and Force, with its moral discipline, with its physical hardening.

"And then, vivifying the whole, we need the divine breath that moves through free peoples, the breath that no man in Ireland has felt in his nostrils for so many centuries, the breath that once blew through the streets of Athens, and that kindled, as wine kindles, the hearts of those who taught and learned in Clonmacnoise."

## SECTION XII.—CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY..

In conclusion, let us say that we feel that we have barely touched the fringe of this whole problem. Presented with such a wide field for discussion, we might well have profitably spent a much longer time exploring the ground. However, we are presenting you with a skeleton which this or some other Committee may take up at some future date and surround with a living body. We might offer as a final suggestion that the Irish Labour Party might, as the English Labour Party has done, set up a permanent Advisory Committee on Education, who would be in a position to discuss and report to you on the different educational proposals which might be introduced from time to time.

The following is a summary of our suggestions :—

(1) The setting up of a National Council of Education and County Education Authorities with the powers and duties outlined in Section 2 of this Report.

(2) That the expenses of carrying out the duties devolved on County Education Authorities be borne by the rates where grants are not already available for meeting those expenses.

(3) That all children should receive education up to the age of sixteen in schools of the type outlined in Section 4 of the Report; that a broad highway should be provided for all children right through to the University; and no child should be prevented from taking the fullest advantage of the education provided by the State by the social standing or wealth of his parents.

(4) That hygienic school buildings should be provided with teachers' residences attached to each.

(5) That the ratio of teachers to pupils be as 1 is to 32, that a well-thought-out scheme of amalgamation of adjoining boys' and girls' schools be put into force, and that the system of inspection be modernised.

(6) That a scheme for the training of teachers be organised in connection with the Universities, such scheme to be intended for teachers in all types of schools; that the salaries of all classes of teachers be put on a satisfactory basis; that a pensions' scheme on the lines of that obtaining in the Civil Service be put into force; and that teachers, once appointed, be guaranteed security of tenure.

(7) That all children between the ages of six and sixteen be obliged by law to attend school, and legislation embodying the suggestions contained in Section 7 be enacted.

(8) That a branch of the Local Government and Public Health Department be set up to deal with the health of school children, with a view to the terms of the Public Health (Medical Treatment of Children) (Ireland) Act, 1919, and the Education (Provision of Meals) (Ireland), Act, 1914-'18, being put in operation through the



Saorstat at once. That ample playgrounds, hygienic school-buildings and open-air schools be provided.

(9) That the programme of all schools be bilingual, and that in rural areas they be given a rural bias.

(10) That the courses of the University be brought into closer touch with the life of the nation, and that opportunities be provided for working people and their children to take advantage of these courses.

Signithe,

THOS. JOHNSON,

*Cathaoirleach.*

TOMAS O CONAILL,

*Leas-chathaoirleach.*

TOMAS DE BÚRC.

THOMAS FARREN.

SEAN C. MACGUAIGÍN.

FRANCES A. H. HEAGAN.

CORMAC BREATHNÁC.

M. P. O'LUINNEACHAIN,

*Runaidhe.*

TIGH LAIGHEAN,

BAILE ATHA CLIATH,

26adh Meitheamh, 1925.

## MINORITY REPORT.

As I have no first-hand knowledge of Primary or Secondary Schools in the Irish Free State, I must confine my report to Technical Schools. It would be quite wrong to say of Technical School Inspectors during the past 24 years that they had acted as Departmental detectives or spies, so that in the case of this branch of education, of which I have experience, an evil tradition has been broken.

Technical Instruction must be based on a sound elementary education, which should properly be given in the Primary and Secondary Schools, before the student presents himself at the Technical School. The failure of the Primary Schools hitherto to furnish students prepared to profit by a Course of Technical Instruction has been due to the low average of attendance of pupils; the average for Ireland being approximately 70 per cent.; that in England and Scotland is nearly 90 per cent. This slackness is the result of the weakness of the law, the fines on parents for non-attendance of their children at school being farcical. The law should be amended in this particular, and the punishment of Employers and Parents of Children under age who do not attend school should be severe. Children who are habitual absentees should be placed in Industrial Schools.

Compulsory attendance at one or other form of school—primary, secondary or technical—should be imposed on all young folks up to 16 years of age. The co-ordination of Education—primary, secondary and technical—should be an easier problem, now that these branches are under one Ministry. What is next required is that these branches should be under one local administration. But I do not agree that a County Education Committee would in all cases be the best local administration. Urban District Committees of Technical Instruction have done relatively better work than the County Committees of Technical Instruction during the past twenty-four years because of their better facilities for superintendence of pupils and concentration of population. These Urban Committees should, therefore, not be allowed to disappear; the local interest in the Technical Schools should rather be strengthened by permitting special groups of citizens to nominate members to serve thereon—representing employers, workmen's clubs, parents, teachers, etc., as well as representatives of ratepayers and of the Central Authority.

The Technical Instruction of children—from 14 years to 16 years—who are not in employment, should be conducted in Day Schools rather than in Evening Classes.

(Signed) ROBERT MACDONALD.

MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE,  
DUN LAOGHAIRE, CO. DUBLIN,  
2nd July, 1925.



## APPENDIX II.

### REPORT ON ROTHESAY SUMMER SCHOOL.

I arrived in Rothesay on Saturday forenoon, May 30th. Formal business began on that day with the opening of the Annual Conference of the National Council of Labour Colleges, concluding on the Sunday.

The Conference was presided over by Jack Hamilton, Liverpool, and was attended by delegates from the affiliated organisations from different parts of England, Scotland, Wales and Belfast—Labour Colleges, The Plebs League, and the Trade Unions which have affiliated to the Council, or have made arrangements with it for educational schemes for their members, including the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, the (English) N.U. of Agricultural Workers, N.A. Furnishing Trades' Association, National Union of Textile Workers, A.S.L.E. and F., A.E.U., Tailors and Garment Workers, National Association of Plasterers, Granolithic and Cement Workers, etc., etc. Affiliated organisations have direct representation on the Council.

Students, other than delegates, were invited to the Conference as visitors, and in this way I was able, with the other students from Ireland, to hear the discussions. The Irish group comprised, besides the representative of the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party, thirteen members of the I.T. & G.W.U., four members of the Irish Women Workers' Union, and three members of the Belfast Labour College (two of whom were delegates).

In his opening address the Chairman paid complimentary reference to the late James Connolly, regretted the causes for the closing of the Connolly Labour College, and heartily welcomed the students from Ireland.

Much of the business at the Conference was formal and of technical interest. Discussions on three matters aroused the particular interest of the Irish group:—

#### 1. Slides for Lantern Lectures.

Hamilton has prepared several sets of slides which have been extensively used in Great Britain. These are no longer lent to classes owing to the number of breakages, etc. They are, however, for sale at 1s. 6d. per slide. It occurred to me that a set or some sets of these slides would be well worth purchasing either by the National Executive or by Trade Unions for use in Ireland. Broken slides can be replaced at 1s. 6d. each.

The Lantern Lectures include :—

"Primitive Man" (with comparison with Modern Races)—40 slides—£3 1s. 6d., including postage.

"The Co-operative Movement"—46 slides—£3 10s. 6d. (including C.W.S. ships at Dublin, 1913).

"The Paris Commune"—55 slides—£4 4s. 6d.

"Modern Imperialism"—52 slides—£4 2s. 6d.

"The Russian Revolution"—53 slides—£4 1s. 0d.

I have not been able to attend any lantern lectures, but I am informed that the slides shown in Hamilton's lecture on "Buildings and Builders" from the earliest times to the Weir houses, given after my departure, were excellent and most interesting.

## **2. Assistance for the Educational Movement in Great Britain.**

In the course of the discussion it was found that from the Conference of 1924 to the Conference of 1925 some £20,000 were spent on Colleges and Classes run under the auspices of the N.C.L.C., and directly paid by the affiliated Unions. Some of the bigger Unions contributed sums running into four figures on classes and schemes conducted by the N.C.L.C. Notwithstanding this, the rapid extension of the movement, and particularly the need for more full-time organiser-tutors, and the increased number of specially prepared text-books required, make a heavy drain on the funds. It is suggested that Unions in Ireland might be in a position to help by donations for publication purposes especially. The Plebs League, a purely voluntary body of propagandists, undertakes the preparation of the text-books and is turning out an excellent series.

## **3. The British Trade Union Educational Scheme.**

This provided the star discussion of the Conference. The T.U.C. Scheme was agreed upon in March, after protracted negotiations, by a sub-committee of representatives of the National Council of Labour Colleges, the Workers' Educational Association, the Labour College (London), and Ruskin College, on the T.U.C. General Council Education Advisory Committee.

In brief the Scheme is :

"Objects—To provide working-class education in order to enable the workers to develop their capacities, and to equip them for their Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative activities generally, in the work of securing social and industrial emancipation."

The machinery includes a National Committee of Educational Bodies, accepting the above objects, approved by the T.U.C. General Council, formed on the same basis as the sub-committee, but including a Chairman and two other members appointed by the General Coun-



cil of the T.U.C. Such bodies and their work shall be controlled by *bona-fide* Trade Union, Labour and Coperative Organisations.

Amongst other duties the Divisional Committees are to be charged with that of avoiding "conflict between the various bodies in giving effect to the educational policy of Congress." The rights of criticism or propaganda of the separate organisations is not abolished "provided that there shall be mutual abstention from criticism of the good faith of any educational body recognised by the T.U.C. and forming part of the Joint Committee."

Unions can arrange schemes direct with the educational bodies, if the objects and policy are in line with those of the Scheme. These special schemes may be made either direct or through the T.U.C. National Committee, with any, or all, of the bodies represented on the Committee; but in any general Congress scheme "the governing principle shall be that of freedom for the individual Trade Unionist to choose between the facilities offered by the various bodies recognised by the T.U.C."

The Committee recommended that there shall be residential colleges—at present London Labour College and Ruskin College—for training and general purposes, under the National Education Committee, and, in addition, there shall be recognised any special training institution of any of the bodies represented on the National Committee.

Students to be admitted to these training centres shall, in the main, be drawn from classes and shall have had experience in industry as Trade Unionists.

Proper provision for training and qualifying tutors and organisers shall be made, and their membership of their appropriate Trade Union or professional association, and their qualifications for teaching, shall be supervised.

The General Council of the T.U.C. shall be represented on the Governing Councils of the N.C.L.C., the Labour College, Ruskin College, and the W.E.A., and "any question of interpretation arising out of the above agreed scheme of educational work shall be referred to the General Council of the Trade Union Congress for a ruling thereon."

At the Conference the Executive of the N.C.L.C. recommended the acceptance of the Scheme. In submitting it, Chairman Hamilton stated that when the negotiations began three years ago some members of the General Council of the T.U.C. wanted to make the W.E.A.'s Workers' Education Trade Union Committee the official educational machine of the T.U.C., but the great growth of the N.C.L.C. since then had made that impossible. In the Scheme as finally agreed upon the N.C.L.C. had won large concessions. At one point the W.E.A. had refused to accept that part of the objects referring to education, declaring for the social and industrial emancipation of the workers, but in the end the W.E.A. accepted that.

Under the Scheme the N.C.L.C. is to remain intact in curriculum, administration and work, while it is free to carry on its usual propaganda, and Unions are free to arrange educational schemes directly with it. By some delegates the T.U.C. Scheme was opposed mainly on the ground that it would mean sacrificing the principle upon which the N.C.L.C. was founded, namely, independent working-class education recognising the class struggle. The Scheme was agreed to by a large majority of the delegates.

After the Conference the following lectured on the subjects indicated :—

A. J. Cook, Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain :—  
"Mining Unions and the Mining Industry."

W. Coxon, Secretary, North-Eastern Labour College :—  
"Teaching Methods and Workers' Classes."

Ellen Wilkinson, M.P. :—"Parliament To-Day."

Dr. J. Johnstone, D.Sc., Liverpool University and Liverpool Labour College :—"Economic and Biological Inequalities."

J. Jagger, President, National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers :—"The Distributive Trade Unions."

A. A. Purcell, Vice-Chairman, British Trade Union Congress, and Chairman, International Federation of Trade Unions :—  
"International Trade Union Unity."

George Hicks, General Secretary, Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers :—"Building Trade Unions and the Building Industry."

J. F. Horrabin, Editor, "The Plebs" :—"The Workers' Educational Movement in the United States."

M. Philips Price :—"The Outlook for Capitalism."

Jack Hamilton, Liverpool Labour College :—"Buildings and Builders."

Cathal O'Shannon, Political Secretary, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union :—"The Trade Union and Labour Movement in Ireland."

Owing to the departure of the Irish group on Saturday, June 6th, I was unable to attend the lectures by Hamilton and O'Shannon; but I found the other lectures, without exception, both interesting and informative. Each lecture was followed by questions and discussions, and these, no less than the lectures themselves, gave much benefit to us all.

The formal lectures and discussions did not include all the value provided. After each lecture and throughout the week there were many opportunities for informal discussions with the lecturers, and with other prominent leaders and rank-and-filers. In this way much valuable information was secured on the industrial and political movement in Great Britain, the international movement, and the international political situation, the working-class educational move-



ment generally, trade unionist problems, methods and policy, etc., etc. In the lectures by Ellen Wilkinson, A. J. Cook, A. A. Purcell, George Hicks and M. Philips Price, much valuable light was thrown upon industrial and political events in the Labour Movement in Great Britain and the Continent during the last two years, and new revelations were made upon events that have now passed into Labour history.

Appropriate arrangements were made for social intercourse, indoor and outdoor amusements, excursions, etc. These helped to create an excellent atmosphere, resulting in a splendid comradeship among those attending from the four countries represented, and for this in itself, not to speak of the formal educational work, I consider the Rothesay School most successful. It has not only made us many friends amongst the workers in Great Britain, but it has also made a real alliance between us.

I had many opportunities of discussing and explaining the position of our own movement in Ireland, and the general situation here with men like Purcell, Hicks, Coxon, Mark Starr and Mrs. Starr, Wini-fred and J. F. Horrabin, Telling, etc., etc., and this, I believe, will be useful to the movement in Ireland as well as in Great Britain. The contact established with the Belfast representatives should also prove of much value.

The lecture on the Trade Union and Labour Movement in Ireland given to students, most of whom were not in attendance during the whole week, was followed, I understand, by a great number of questions upon various aspects of the situation here.

On the Thursday the Chairman and Secretary of the N.C.L.C., Messrs. J. Hamilton and J. P. M. Millar, held a conference with the whole Irish group for the purpose of discussing working-class education in Ireland. As the National Executive is aware, the only existing Labour College in Ireland is that conducted by the N.C.L.C. in Belfast.

After an exchange of views, the following Sub-Committee was appointed to confer in detail with Messrs. Hamilton and Millar; Irwin, Irish Labour Party and T.U.C.; Sullivan and O'Shannon, I.T. & G.W.U.; Misses O'Connor and Chenevix, Irish Women Workers' Union, and Ennis and McAllister, Belfast Labour College.

In the conferences the Irish group expressed itself strongly in favour of the extension of the working-class educational movement in all parts of Ireland, and its admiration for the work of the N.C.L.C. as seen and discussed at Rothesay. Most of the discussion on both sides centred upon ways and means. Amongst the questions put forward on one side or the other were:—(1) The affiliation of Unions in Ireland to the N.C.L.C.; (2) the forming of classes under the auspices and control of the Irish Trade Union Congress, and the establishment of fraternal relations between these

classes and the N.C.L.C.; (3) the foundation of classes, or of an Irish Labour College by Unions in Ireland, on the same basis as with the N.C.L.C. and under Union control, but not directly under the Irish T.U.C.; (4) the arranging of schemes under the N.C.L.C. by Unions or groups of Unions in Ireland; (5) the training and supplying of properly qualified teachers for classes in Ireland; (6) the extension of the work of the Belfast Labour College to branches of Amalgamated Unions in Ireland whose head offices have affiliated to, or have educational schemes with, the N.C.L.C.; (7) the propagation of the idea of independent working-class education in this country; (8) an International Labour Council of Labour Colleges.

No formal decisions were come to on any of these questions, as none of the Irish groups were in the position of plenipotentiaries. But on the Irish side it was generally agreed that these questions should be raised and discussed in Ireland, and that the opening of classes here would result in very substantial benefits to the Labour Movement in Ireland.

The N.C.L.C. representatives made it clear that their suggestions were only tentative, and that they recognised the national and other difficulties confronting the movement in Ireland. They did not press for direct affiliation from the Irish Congress or Irish Unions, though to them that would be the best form of co-operation. But they believed the N.C.L.C. was prepared to help the educational movement in Ireland in whatever manner would prove most beneficial. They urged as close fraternal relationship as would be possible, and made the valuable suggestion that if a working-class educational scheme were operated independently in Ireland and affiliated with the N.C.L.C. in Great Britain, there would be in that combination a good basis for an International Working-class Educational Conference, and a real International Council of Labour Colleges—and they are already in touch with educational movements in Canada and Australia.

The Irish group made it clear on their part that they were as individuals in close sympathy with the N.C.L.C. movement, and some went so far as to favour direct affiliation with the N.C.L.C. But it was recognised that further discussion in Ireland was necessary, as well as consultations with the Unions and Congress at home. The importance of the British T.U.C. Scheme, its acceptance by the N.C.L.C., and its probable bearing upon an educational movement in Ireland, were realised by the Irish side.

To sum up, I would draw the attention of the National Executive, of Congress itself, and the Unions affiliated to Congress, to the following points:—

(a) The needs of the movement here demand the early forming of working-class educational classes under *bona-fide* Trade Union control.



(b) Owing to the expense involved and the greater efficiency and better control and closer co-ordination that would result, a Labour College or Colleges under the direct control of the N.E. or of Congress, with due representation of Unions interested, would be the best machinery.

(c) Failing this, groups of Unions might undertake the work, and in this case I would recommend the work to the generous support of Congress.

(d) In either case, affiliation in some form or another should be made with the N.C.L.C. with a view to a real International of Labour Colleges.

(e) In case no concrete result comes before the winter from either of these suggestions, I would recommend Irish Unions to arrange educational schemes with the N.C.L.C., and in particular I would urge Irish branches of Amalgamated Unions to inquire whether their Unions have schemes with the N.C.L.C., and, if so, that they should press for classes or correspondence courses in Ireland under these schemes.

(f) Special attention ought to be drawn to the N.C.L.C.'s Centre for Training Tutors to be held in the London Labour College for the first three weeks of August. Mr. W. T. Goode, M.A., who is an expert, will deal especially with Teaching Methods, the Psychology of Teaching, etc., etc. Other teachers are likely to be:—W. Coxon, Teaching Methods in Workers' Classes; T. Ashcroft and Maurice Dobb, Economics; J. F. Horrabin, Economic Geography; Mark Starr and R. W. Postgate, History. Accommodation is provided at the College, and the rates are:—Students with scholarships from Unions, etc., £2 16s. 0d. per week; Students paying their own expenses training as tutors and undertaking to tutor at least one class during next winter, £2 10s. for one week, or £2 5s. per week for two or three weeks.

Messrs. Millar and Hamilton suggested that if there were a class of students from Ireland, even if its members had little training beforehand, special arrangements as to subjects, etc., to suit the class would be made. I would recommend that Unions affiliated to us should take advantage of this arrangement.

In conclusion, I desire to state that your delegate was made quite at home by the officials and staff of the School, and that we are much indebted to the courtesy and kindly help of Messrs. Millar, Hamilton, Starr, Mrs. Millar, Mrs. Starr, etc.

(Signed) T. IRWIN.

## APPENDIX III.

### REPORT OF FRATERNAL DELEGATES TO SCOTTISH TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

We have pleasure in reporting that we had the privilege of attending as fraternal delegates the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Trade Union Congress held at Dumfries on April 15th and three succeeding days, 1925. The Congress was presided over by Mr. W. Leonard (Furnishing Trades), and there were 191 Delegates present, representing 327,805 members.

We were very heartily received, and had the opportunity on the afternoon of the second day of addressing the Delegates. We conveyed to them the greetings of our Irish Movement, and, in referring to its activities, indicated the difficulties confronting it, and also the courage, spirit and confidence with which they were being faced. The Delegates appeared to understand our position more than might be expected, and keen inquiries were made as to the possibilities and developments of our movement, and there were many renewed assurances and messages of goodwill, of which we expressed our appreciation.

The widespread unemployment has undoubtedly affected the movement considerably, and a good deal of discussion took place on a motion by the Glasgow Trades and Labour Council to permit the affiliation of the National Unemployed Works Committee Movement to the Congress. This, however, was rejected by 115 votes to 36, though two representatives of the Committee were allowed to address the Congress.

The principal discussion arose on a Report by the General Council on the structure and extent of the Scottish Trade Union Movement. This Report contained much valuable information, carefully compiled, relating to the organised movement, and estimates as to the number of unorganised workers in different industries. It showed the number of existing Unions to be 227, with a total membership of 536,432, though this appears to be only about half the eligible membership. There was general agreement that this revealed a very unsatisfactory state of organisation, and was a source of weakness to the workers, especially in those industries in which the employers were highly organised. After a very lengthy debate a proposal by the General Council to remit the report back to them, with instructions to prepare a plan for developing and co-ordinating the organising activities of the Union, was agreed to.

Considerable spirited discussion took place on the question of working-class education. The relative merits of the two organisa-



tions, the National Council of Labour Colleges and the Workers' Educational Association, were keenly debated, and by a very close vote Congress agreed to support both.

We noted that a representative of the International Labour Office, Geneva (Mr. Parlett) was in attendance.

On the third day Mr. R. Smillie, M.P., attended and had a rousing reception, and we highly appreciate the compliment paid us in asking him to present to us as a souvenir on behalf of Congress, bound volumes of Burns's Works. In making the presentation the respected Labour veteran made some extremely kindly and flattering references to our country and our movement, which, if not perhaps fully deserved, were nevertheless deeply appreciated.

(Signed) DENIS CULLEN.

(Signed) DANIEL MORRISSEY.

# INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30th JUNE

— 1925 —



# INCOME and EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the Year Ending 30th June, 1925.

## INCOME.

### BALANCE FROM LAST YEAR'S ACCOUNTS:—

Cash at National Land Bank on	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Deposit ...	1,071	8 4		
Less Debit Balance, Current A/c. ...	131	11 2		
			939	17 2
CASH ON HANDS ...			67	11 2
Election Deposits (1923). Loans outstanding ...	350	0 0		
Less Repaid during year ...	10	0 0		
			340	0 0
AFFILIATION FEES RECEIVED ...			2,047	14 5
DELEGATION FEES:—				
Account, 1924 Congress ...	180	0 0		
" 1925 "	44	0 0		
			224	0 0
SALE OF REPORTS AND PAMPHLETS ...			68	8 1
DONATIONS TO POLITICAL FUND ...			780	5 3
LABOUR CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS ...			5	19 6
Compensation for Duplicator stolen			47	0 0
Part Repayment of Election Loan			10	0 0
BANK INTEREST ...			27	7 11

£4,558 3 6

## EXPENDITURE.

£ s. d.    £ s. d.

### CONGRESS EXPENSES:—

Reporting 1924 Congress ...	25	0 0		
Travelling Expenses, etc., Cork	10	18 1		
Hotel Expenses, Cork ...	10	17 9		
Fees:—Standing Orders Committee, Tellers, Stewards, Auditors, etc. ...	33	0 0		
			79	15 10

### OFFICE EXPENSES:—

Rent ...	128	0 0		
Lighting, Heating and Cleaning	48	0 1		
Books and Newspapers ...	16	7 5		
Furniture and Repairs ...	12	9 9		
Telephones, Telegrams and Insurance ...	31	9 3		
Postage ...	47	10 7		
Sundries ...	1	18 4		
			285	15 5

### SALARIES:—

Secretary ...	240	0 0		
Assistant Secretary ...	439	0 10		
Office Staff ...	548	0 0		
			1,227	0 10

### SUNDRY EXPENSES:—

International Labour Office Publications ...	5	6 8		
Labour Research Department—Affiliation ...	10	0 0		
Amal. Union of Building Trade Workers' Refund of Delegation Fee overpaid ...	1	0 0		
Scottish T.U.C.—Delegation ...	19	15 0		
Delegation to Educational Conferences and Summer Schools at Rothesay and Oxford ...	21	8 8		

Advance on a/c. of Expenses to Geneva Conference (to be repaid) ...

10 0 0    67 10 4

### ELECTION EXPENSES:—

Dublin (N. City) Bye-Election, March, 1925 ...	344	0 1		
Dublin (S. City) Bye-Election, March, 1925 ...	500	0 0		
Northern Ireland Labour Party Donation to Election Fund ...	50	0 0		
Election Competition Prizes ...	25	0 0		
			919	0 1

### PRINTING, STATIONERY & ADVERTISING

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE EXPENSES:—				
Meetings ...			57	14 10
CONFERENCES, ORGANISING MEETINGS, ETC. ...			51	5 5
CHEQUE BOOKS AND BANK CHARGES			3	5 5

2,967 19 2

Election Deposits (1923) Loans Outstanding ...

340 0 0

CASH ON NATIONAL LAND BANK ON DEPOSIT (Receipt No. E. 2252)

1,098 16 3

CASH AT NAT. LAND BANK—CURRENT A/c ...

201 8 2

Less Cheques issued but not cashed ...

50 7 8

151 0 6

Cash on hands ...

0 7 7

£4,558 3 6

We have examined and checked the books and vouchers of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, and also the Bank Accounts, Deposit Receipts and Cash on Hands, for the year ending 30th June, 1925, and certify that the above is a correct statement of same.

27th July, 1925.

PATRICK DORAN }  
SEUMAS BYRNE } Auditors.



# IRISH LABOUR PARTY AND TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETINGS, ATTENDANCES AND EXPENSES SINCE 1924 CONGRESS.

(Excluding full National Executive Meeting held on 1st August, 1925).

Name.	Full N.E. Meetings—5. Present at	Resident Committee Meetings—37. Present at	Total Expenses as per scale.
			£ s. d.
T. JOHNSON	5	32	—
W. O'BRIEN	5	31	3 15 0
T. FARREN	1	31	3 7 6
L. J. DUFFY	3	29	3 10 0
T. IRWIN	4	29	3 7 6
A. HERON	5	26	3 7 6
MISS E. O'CONNOR	5	23	2 15 0
J. T. O'FARRELL	4	22	2 17 6
D. CULLEN	2	22	2 10 0
T. J. O'CONNELL	3	16	1 15 0
T. KENNEDY	2	7	1 2 6
L. KEEGAN	2	6	1 0 0
O. HYNES	4	5	1 0 0
T. FORAN	1	5	0 2 6
T. CASSIDY	5	—	9 19 7
M. J. MacGOWAN	5	—	9 14 0
R. S. ANTHONY	3	—	7 11 3
Total,			£57 14 10



REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
Irish Labour Party & Trade Union Congress  
HELD IN THE  
TOWN HALL, NEWRY  
ON  
AUGUST 3rd. 4th, 5th and 6th, 1925





# REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

## OF THE

# THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

## HELD IN THE

# TOWN HALL, NEWRY

## ON

AUGUST 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th, 1925.

*First Day—Monday, August, 5th, 1925.*

The Chair was taken at 11.15 a.m. by Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN, Chairman of the National Executive.

Mr. RICHARD O'HAGAN, Chairman of the Newry Urban District Council, who was accompanied by the Vice-Chairman and several other members and officials, welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Council and the citizens of Newry.

Mr. W. F. CUNNINGHAM, U.D.C., P.L.G., Chairman of the Newry United Trades and Labour Council, extended a welcome to the town on behalf of the Trades Council.

The CHAIRMAN returned thanks on behalf of Congress for the kindly welcome accorded to them.

### APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS.

The election of Tellers resulted as follows:—

	No. of votes received.
MICHAEL O'MAHONY, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork ... ..	64
JOSEPH O'NEILL, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin ... ..	75
MICHAEL LENNON, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Clonmel ... ..	50
LUKE J. LARKIN, Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford ... ..	63
P. McGOWAN, Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union, Derry ... ..	52

JAMES BROPHY (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Dublin), who was also nominated, withdrew his name.

MESSRS. O'NEILL, O'MAHONY and LARKIN were declared elected.

## APPOINTMENT OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

The election of the Standing Orders Committee resulted as follows :—

	No. of votes received.
MICHAEL SOMERVILLE, Amalgamated Society of Wood- workers, Dublin ... ..	90
D. R. CAMPBELL, Trades Council, Belfast ... ..	129
G. BRADSHAW, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin ... ..	71
T. WARD, National Union of Railwaymen, Belfast ... ..	60
J. COLLINS, National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades' Association, Dublin ... ..	60
R. J. MOORE, Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast ... ..	44
T. HARRINGTON, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork ... ..	97

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) and Mr. HORGAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Limerick), who were also nominated, withdrew their names. On a second poll, Mr. COLLINS received 74 votes, and Mr. WARD 56.

Messrs. CAMPBELL, HARRINGTON, SOMERVILLE, BRADSHAW and COLLINS were declared elected.

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN delivered his Presidential Address as follows :—

COMRADES,—This is the third occasion on which Congress has honoured me by putting me in the chair at its annual meeting of delegates. I appreciate the honour deeply, particularly because it has so happened that each Congress over which I have presided has marked some new and great step forward in the onward march of Irish Labour.

This year's Congress here in Newry, I am convinced, will record another important advance. It is significant that we are meeting in Newry, within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of the Six Counties, the Frontier Town in the Gap of the North which has been the cockpit of almost every war between the peoples of the North and the peoples of the South from prehistoric times to our own days. Speaking in your name and in your behalf, I am proud to be able to assert that



## The Working-class in Ireland recognises no Political or Geographical Border.

As workers, we men and women of the North and South have had a common history of struggle against the oppression of the employing and governing class. We have the same interests and the same desires and hopes of emancipation. Despite the artificial and unnatural boundary imposed upon this country against the wishes of the working-class, we in the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, politically and industrially, are one class, one movement, and one united All-Ireland organisation. Against every influence, in defiance of every pressure, we have preserved our movement as a united national body entitled to speak on behalf of the organised workers of all parts of Ireland, without distinction of creed or occupation. It is a proud boast which can be made by no other movement in Ireland. Here in Newry we proudly proclaim the unity of the workers of Ireland.

It is now just twenty-two years since Congress last met in Newry. At that time Congress was small and weak, confined to a limited number of urban centres, with a restricted and uncertain income. It was a very loose federation with indefinite aims, groping hesitatingly after a policy, and concerning itself mainly with the adoption of "hardy annual" resolutions of a sectional character, with little or no relation to the greater and wider needs of our class. In time the pressure of economic circumstances, the influence of the rising movement of Labour abroad, and the teachings of men like James Connolly, changed the whole structure and outlook of Congress. Our meetings at Waterford and Dublin in 1918 marked a great new departure. There we blossomed forth into the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, a great organ of the working-class on the political and industrial fields, knowing its past, conscious of its present status, ambitious in its outlook for the future.

The lessons and the effects of the world-war, the rise in the cost of living, the inexorable logic of events and the inevitable economic pressure, led to the rapid spread of organisation amongst all sections of wage-earners. Trade Unionism extended rapidly throughout the whole country, not only in the towns, but in the agricultural districts as well. Tens of thousands of workers who had never before been organised in Trade Unions—farm workers, clerical workers, teachers who had never been associated with organised Labour—were enrolled in our organisation and swelled our ranks until Congress came to represent the overwhelming majority of the wage-earners of Ireland. They have lost nothing, but gained much, from their association with us. Congress, too, has gained, for since I had the pleasure of bidding all these newcomers welcome at Waterford, Congress has taken more and greater strides forward than in the whole twenty-four years of its previous existence.

The growth of the Labour Movement in Ireland went on side by side with that of the political revolutionary movement from the Easter of 1916. Through Connolly and others a common bond in

### **The Common Struggle against Imperialism and Militarism**

had been established. In the circumstances of the time it was inevitable that there should be fairly close co-operation between the two movements from 1916 to 1921. There was no organic connection, but a mutual association dictated by certain common interests and the hard and stern realities of the situation. Where Labour, without sacrificing any of its essential principles or doctrines, could help usefully, it did so consciously and heartily. I recall to your mind the magnificent stand Irish Labour took against conscription, the general downing of tools for the release of the hunger-strikers, the protests against military permits, the long strike against the transport of munitions, the attempt to establish a real league of nations which would be a genuine League of Peoples. All these and other events gave both movements an appearance of greater strength than either of them actually had. That was seen and understood by some of us at the time, but by many it was not realised until the parting of the ways came in 1921.

Many were deceived by the greatness and strength of the elements which carried on the resistance of 1918-1921. They were shocked and hurt when the Truce and the Peace Negotiations of 1921 did not produce greater fruits. But for the manner in which those fruits were gathered Labour had no responsibility. Labour had contributed its share and given of its best from 1916 to 1921. It had often refrained from pressing its own particular claims when to do so might have weakened the national resistance and endangered the forces entrusted with the political and military conduct of affairs and thus nullified the common efforts towards a common objective.

But it was neither invited nor allowed to share in the gathering of the fruits. By that time, while Labour had been recognised as a very useful ally by both sections of the Irish negotiators, it was made plain that it was

### **Not Entitled to Independent Judgment or Action.**

Perhaps that was not altogether to our disadvantage. At all events, it meant that in the actual making of the Treaty of 1921 the Irish Labour Party had no part either in what was discreditable or what was creditable. If those who, on one side or the other, have since thrown their bitterest taunts at us would once and for all get these facts clearly and firmly into their heads, there would be less accidental and deliberate misunderstanding and misrepresentation of our position.



In 1922 the Labour movement was confronted with the most difficult situation in its history. A few false steps and we might have sundered our ranks irretrievably, as other movements did on issues which were not essentially working-class interests. It was a trying and a terrible time, which called for cool judgment, clear thinking, and the keenest realism. Whatever we did, or did not do then,

### **We did not Throw our Unions into the Vortex of Civil War**

or surrender the absolutely necessary independence and separate identity of Labour.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and we all could now correct our past and recent history—especially if we were not in the thick of things when that history was in the making. But looking back upon the events of the last three years and a half, and examining them critically in the light of our present knowledge, there is little to regret in the action of the National Executive and much to be proud of—much from which our movement will benefit and for which the workers in the coming years will be grateful. I have reviewed carefully every action, every document, and every discussion. Naturally, I find that in some details we had our own differences. But as to our action and attitude as a whole, I am more than ever convinced now that, taking it all in all, we acted strictly correctly as the Labour Movement should do. Now that the storm and stress are over, we can hand on here at Newry to those who come after us the independence and the separate identity, cleansed and purified, of Irish Labour. What other party in Ireland in this year, 1925, can say as much with equal truth? Despite all the differences amongst individual members of the Unions—and they were many and deep—the organisation continued as one, whole, united and indivisible, and it continues so still.

Having regard to all the facts, it is not surprising that the events of 1922 and 1923 should bring about a condition of affairs in our Labour world favourable to the campaign of disruption which for the past two years has been waged against the largest of our affiliated organisations, and which has undoubtedly adversely affected the whole movement. In addition to these military and political events, we have also to take into account the unprecedented unemployment and industrial and agricultural depression. After three wars and revolutions within a period of less than ten years, it is but natural that Ireland should be struck by a backwash of reaction similar to what has struck every country in Europe, and that

### **Charlatans and Discredited and Disappointed Office-seekers**

should make trouble for others, and hay for themselves, while the trouble-sun shines. That has happened and it has done harm. But at its worst it has emanated, as the National Executive's manifesto of

September last pointed out, mostly from envy and jealousy, the vain-glory of individuals desirous of making a show of power, a craving for notoriety in individuals, some of them with an international reputation as disruptionists, others enjoying local fame as shallow but shrewd "chancers," lacking all knowledge of what is meant by Trade Unionism.

If that phase has not entirely passed just yet, we still can say with truth that it is rapidly passing. On all sides we have plenty of evidence that the workers who were misled are being disillusioned. They are learning wisdom—as, alas, most of our class sooner or later are forced to do—in the hard and bitter school of experience and adversity, want and privation, and broken hopes and promises. As a result, I have no hesitation in saying, we will have

### **A Labour Movement Stronger and More Efficient**

because it will be composed of men and women who understand the basic principles upon which it is built. Occasional purging does every organism good.

After the confusion of the civil war period and the first—and to many people—startling success of the Irish Labour Party in the elections that preceded the civil war, there was a great deal of uncertainty, and in 1923 what appeared as a sharp reverse on the political field. Too much importance must not be attributed to that, because in all these things we have got to keep a sense of proportion, and what seems a big event at one moment may be comparatively small in relation to the general march of things. But during the past year there have been many signs that Labour in Ireland is becoming more and more conscious of its strength and purpose. I instance a few which must have struck most of you. Not the least of them has been the very gratifying success of our comrades in Belfast in the recent general elections for members of the Northern Parliament. It affords me very sincere pleasure, on behalf of this Congress, to

### **Congratulate our Belfast Fellow-workers**

on their handsome victories. We quite realise that the economic situation there has been the big factor in this achievement. But had it not been for persistent and skilful propaganda and organisation we should not have sitting amongst us to-day, cheek by jowl, with Labour T.D.'s and Senators from the Free State Parliament, a Labour M.P. from the Northern Parliament.

The two bye-elections fought by Labour candidates a few months ago in Dublin showed a very encouraging increase in the Labour vote. Proportionately, indeed, our unsuccessful candidates in Dublin polled a higher percentage than their successful colleagues in Belfast. Equally encouraging and significant was the rally of the



Dublin workers to the help of our candidates. We had a splendid response to the call we sent out. This was most notable in the younger workers. We had a larger number of working-class youth on our side in the campaign than ever before, and it certainly seemed as if we were weaning them away from the more spectacular ranks of other parties. Still more recently the elections for the local government bodies in the Free State have been held, and Labour's successes in all parts of the country are a striking indication that the workers are coming to realise ever more clearly the need and use of a Labour Party.

But it would be foolish in the extreme if we were to imagine that we possess a political organisation adequate to our needs. We do not, and one of our most urgent tasks is to tackle the job of providing

### **An Adequate and Efficient Political Organization.**

The task has its difficulties, but they are not insurmountable. The question is being brought forward by the National Executive in its Annual Report, and I hope Congress, when it comes to discuss it, will give it much and earnest and fruitful consideration.

Other pressing and important questions are being brought forward either by the National Executive or by way of resolution from the affiliated organisations. They include housing, unemployment, new tariffs, the reduction in old-age pensions under the Free State administration, Unemployment Insurance Acts, workmen's compensation, education, the peculiarly modern problem of the roads, industrial development, the position of our representatives in Parliament, the boundary between the two States into which the political government of the country is now divided, and so forth. Most of these are referred to at length in the Annual Report you have before you. But I should like to deal briefly with a few of them before we proceed to take them up for regular discussion.

One of the most pressing and vital problems confronting us is that of housing. In the years before the world war the housing conditions of the workers in our cities and towns attracted widespread attention, and following the exposure of Dublin's housing conditions during the lock-out of 1913 the "Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes" reported that a population of twenty-eight thousand people lived in dwellings unfit for human habitation. If that was the position in 1913, what is it to-day, having regard to the fact that it is only in the last few years that any serious attempt has been made to cope with the evil and that admittedly building has not kept pace with the decay and ruin of the old houses? "To condemn a young child to an upbringing in the Dublin slums," said the "Irish Times," commenting on the Report referred to above, "is to condemn it to physical degradation and to an appalling precocity in vice." In the early years

of the war, when we had become familiar with the wholesale slaughter in France and elsewhere, a recruiting poster displayed throughout this country stated that

**The Dublin Slums were More Unhealthy than the Trenches  
in France!**

To cope with this widespread evil the resources of the local authorities are hopelessly inadequate, and we must insistently press that the financial help of the State shall be forthcoming to wipe out this plague of the slums and to provide decent housing for the wealth producers.

Another question demanding attention is that the reconstruction of our roads consequent on the great and growing development of motor transport. The doing of this very necessary work, which would stimulate industrial activity throughout the whole country and well repay the necessarily large expenditure involved, would give remunerative work to a very considerable number of our unemployed.

But the most serious question of all with which the Labour movement is faced is that of unemployment. Throughout the length and breadth of the country tens of thousands of our class are sunk in the depths of despair because of their inability to find anyone to employ them, while all around us we see unproductive land and machinery idle and rusting. What a condemnation of our boasted civilization! One of the saddest features of our country from the years of the Famine down to recent times was the tide of emigration which flowed steadily for 60 years, bearing away to distant lands the young and vigorous of our race to build up the greatness and wealth of other countries. The necessities of England in the world-war stopped the flow, but, alas! only for a time, for the emigrant ship once again has its full complement, leaving behind the old, the weak, and the less efficient.

**There can be no Future for our Country if that Life Blood  
is Permitted to Flow.**

But it cannot be done by mere appeals to patriotism. Stern economic necessity is the driving force, and we must be in a position to offer at home the future looked for in distant lands before we can retain them here. We are not unmindful of the difficulties in setting on foot the schemes of development we advocate, particularly in view of what this country has experienced in the past eight or ten years, but if we are to visualise the future Ireland as anything but a grazing ranch and kitchen garden for Great Britain, we must plan and work to make it more and more self-supporting, and so retain our people at home.



The scheme for the electrification of the Shannon is a bold and far-reaching one which, we all confidently hope, will do much to stimulate development and brighten the lives of the whole population. I am glad that the whole-hearted support of the Labour Party in the Oireachtas helped materially in having the proposal adopted and preparations made for an early commencement of the work.

The decision to encourage the establishment of the beet-sugar industry is a desirable step which we welcome and we hope for its success. The extensive drainage schemes announced will give considerable employment, but very much more requires to be done, and we must be insistent in pressing our demands on behalf of the huge army of unemployed. In the meantime, we must protest with all our strength against the unemployed being deprived of insurance benefit and make it impossible for the State to evade its obvious responsibility to the workless.

The unemployment question is not peculiar to Ireland. It is affecting almost every country in Europe, and we know the reasons. Partly it is one of the legacies that have come to civilisation out of the aftermath of the world war. Remedies may be suggested here and there, and tinkering with it now and again may be attempted. But

### **While the present Capitalist System prevails no Permanent Cure can be Effected.**

All the remedies put forward can be nothing more than palliatives, plasters or bandages put on to ease the sores, but insufficient to cure the disease. A reserve of unemployment is a necessity of the capitalist system, and under capitalism that reserve will remain. In Great Britain they are finding out that there can be no solution of the problem of the coal mines under capitalism. It is the same everywhere, in Ireland as well as everywhere else. We shall not abolish unemployment, or absorb all our available labour, until the capitalist system is replaced by a system based upon production—and distribution—not for profit but for use. "It is more work, and harder work, Ireland needs," say the capitalists, the bankers, the newspapers, the big farmers, the manufacturers, the railway owners, the distributing agents, all in one voice. We may agree that we need more work—but it must be work for more workers, and work done for the general good, work done in the spirit and in the interest of the community, not in the spirit and the interest of private profit-making, individual gain, and the financial aggrandisement of the possessing class. The kind of thing I mean is excellently illustrated in the statement of the Chairman of the Munster and Leinster Bank, when he said a couple of weeks ago :

### **"The People Would Have to Work Harder."**

... They felt the shareholders should enjoy a larger share of the earnings, and the dividend now recommended, viz., 18 per cent. free of income tax, as against the previous 20 per cent. less tax, meant over 3 per cent. increase in the distribution."

One of the cures for unemployment, we are sometimes told, is to put tariffs on articles imported into Ireland. Now, we know that the political movement which resulted in the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty was largely found upon the principle of protection, and for over twenty years we have been listening to the disciples of one of the arch-priests of the protectionist gospel, Frederick List. Having secured the power to impose tariffs the new State is urged to apply the principle wholesale, and we are assured that if it does, all the blessings we were promised from independence and protection will be showered upon us. Frankly, I doubt it, and I have always doubted it. I never believed that, necessary and desirable as I recognised it was, political freedom would turn Ireland into a little heaven-on-earth. I never believed that the imposition of tariffs would give all Irish wage-earners work and houses and comfort, good wages, good food, and a good time. Heavens-on-earth and all these fine things are not got by such a simple single process. Nor by the contrary process either. I have not been, and I am not

### **\* A Free Trader or a Protectionist on Principle.**

I do not see in either a panacea for all our economic or political ills. I am prepared to recognise the new tariffs as useful tests, but no more. They ought to be experimental, and we ought to be able to learn from them at first hand. But I would not have us commit ourselves blindly, or without experimenting, to the principle of either Free Trade or Protection.

A big question that has been engaging the attention of some of the Unions and of the National Executive is the system of education, both education in the broad sense as it affects the school-going children, and in the narrower sense as it affects the particular needs of the Labour Movement. You will find it gets much space on the agenda of Congress, and I hope you will give it the time and the care it so badly needs. At this stage I will only urge that

### **We feel the Need now more than ever for Working-class Education,**

for the training in the principles of the movement of the many thousands who have joined our ranks since we became an All-Ireland organisation. Many of them came in with a rush and did not get the opportunities we got over long years of a sound and solid



grounding in the elements of Labour principles. The movement here has suffered accordingly, and it will continue to be backward until we have supplied the requisite education and the machinery for imparting that education. If we don't build on the right foundation we might as well not build at all. Nothing would strengthen the movement more now than if this Congress at Newry equipped it with a new arm and added to its political and industrial activities the indispensable working-class educational weapon.

Finally, before we part, I hope we shall have come nearer to a solution of the great problem facing all the people of this island, the political and parliamentary boundary separating the legislatures of the Six Counties and the Twenty-six Counties. I have said "the legislatures" deliberately. For it is to be noted that outside of politics and geography there is no partition of this people worth talking about. It is a remarkable thing that outside of these there is practically no boundary in any other sphere. There is practically none in educational affairs, except what is due to the separateness of the two jurisdictions. There is none in the congregation of any of the particular churches. It is the same with sport, with art, with learning and scholarship. It is the same with agriculture and industry, except for the political separation, and the differences which are normal in every country in these spheres. There is most emphatically none in so far as the organisation of trade unionism is concerned—most of the Unions, certainly the larger and more important Unions, are represented here by delegates from both the Free State and the Six Counties. Partition, the boundary, separation, prevail almost exclusively in the political sphere, scarcely at all in the cultural, and only through politics in the economic sphere. We who are not tied to geographical boundaries or to old political associations know that in the modern world the machinery of government should be based, not upon geography or politics, but upon economics, industry, occupation. Ultimately, government and politics will be so based and organised. It will be our task to hasten that day in Ireland.

In the Irish Labour Party we have always held that

**Political Freedom was a Means to an End, not an End in Itself.**

And we always will. To us the objective is social and economic freedom. And it always shall. There are differences of opinion—and it is right and natural that there should be—as to the extent of the measure of political freedom we have secured or may secure. There should be, and there can be, no difference amongst us in our determination that whatever political freedom we have, both in Belfast and in Dublin, should be used to the full to seize and make secure that social and economic freedom without which "political rights," as Fintan Lalor said, "are but paper and parchment."

## **The Unity of Ireland Will Come.**

I believe firmly it will come in our time, and it will come through the pressure of economic circumstances acting upon politics. A politically united Ireland, with due freedom and full rights for every section of the people, will come. It will come when Labour is established in power both in Belfast and in Dublin, but not till then.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman for his address was moved by T. WARD (National Union of Railwaymen, Belfast), seconded by E. FITZGERALD (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Cork), and carried by acclamation.

## **BRITISH MINERS' VICTORY.**

W. NORTON (Irish Post Office Workers' Union, Dublin) asked for permission to move a resolution congratulating the British Miners on the success just achieved by them, and was referred to the Standing Orders Committee.

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## REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE FOR THE YEAR 1924-25.

The CHAIRMAN, seconded by Mr. L. J. DUFFY (National Executive and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks), formally moved the adoption of the Report of the National Executive for 1924-25. Congress proceeded to consider the Report Section by Section.

### **I.—Affiliations.**

No discussion took place on this section.

### **II.—Relations between Affiliated Organizations.**

#### **II.—Relations between Affiliated Organizations—Balbriggan Building Trade Dispute.**

Mr. R. G. CORCORAN (National Amalgamated Society of Operative House and Ship Painters, Belfast) expressed strong disapproval of the inactivity of the National Executive in this matter. He thought it amounted practically to the encouragement of black-legging, and would create a dangerous precedent.

Mr. P. CURRAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Balbriggan), said that the complainants had worked with the man alleged to be a non-Unionist for seven weeks before making any complaint. It had been discovered that he was not even a painter, having been working for six months as a plasterer before coming on to the job as a painter. The National Executive could not be expected to take action when things like that happened.

### **III.—The Industrial Situation and Unemployment.**

Miss L. BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin), referring to the suggested conference with employers, said it would be necessary first to have preliminary conferences with the various Unions with a view to formulating a programme of practical proposals to deal with unemployment. The programme drawn up in 1921 needed revision to bring it up to date. They had been throwing the onus too much on the Government, which certainly could do a great deal, but could not do everything; the employers and manufacturers themselves had not been "pulling their weight." The workers in many industries could give their employers useful "tips" about their business, but generally they were not allowed to do so. There ought, therefore, to be a series of conferences to get suggestions from the workers in each industry, as was being done in the woollen industry. These suggestions could then be put to the employers at the conference with them, and the employers and the

public made to realize what must be done to make their business efficient. They would have to follow the example of the British miners and educate public opinion.

CATHAL O'SHANNON (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) said that there had been and would be an outcry in the Press over the need for Labour and Capital to get together to stop strikes. As the National Executive Report showed, nothing had come of the earlier proposals for a conference, and nothing so far had come of the proposal last made in the Dail. He hoped Congress would approve of the National Executive's attitude in the matter—that if Labour was to go into conference with the employers they must have some guarantee that something practical would come out of it. Since 1921 the National Executive had shown itself quite willing to meet the employers, but the employers had so far shown not the least willingness to sacrifice any of their profits to ensure industrial peace. Employers demanded that workers should not strike; the workers did not want strikes, but Congress could never ask workers to abandon the right to use their last weapon of withholding their labour until employers were prepared to forego at least some of their profits.

SEAMUS BYRNE (National Union of Life Assurance Workers, Dublin) declared that at no conference could the right to strike be given away. Before entering any conference they ought to have their programme ready, and to do that they would themselves have to get down to bedrock and themselves show what could be done. Illustrating the difficulties, he said that though Guinness's were prepared to take all the Irish barley they could get, the supply was not nearly sufficient for their brewery; yet there was a constant complaint of lack of tillage. He knew of a case of a leather worker of wide experience in Britain who made a suggestion to an Irish employer, only to be sacked as his reward. Farmers would have to be included in any conference. They seemed at present to want to get as much as possible with as little trouble as possible. The collecting of suggestions for the improvement of each industry from the workers in it would be a long job, but would be very useful; but past experience showed it was not easy to get information from the Unions. Reductions in wages had not reduced prices; the extra percentage added to the price by the employer when wages were raised had remained, even though wages had been reduced. He hoped the suggested series of preliminary conferences would be held.

Senator J. T. O'FARRELL (National Executive and Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) pointed out that unemployment was an international malady. The unemployment of a million and a quarter British workers was profoundly affecting this country by reducing their purchases of Irish agricultural produce, and the depression in the main industry of the country meant the pulling down of



all industries. It was folly to try to put a wall round the country; they must buy from abroad as well as sell. But Ireland was nevertheless better placed for finding a solution for unemployment than other countries which were more highly developed industrially and had fewer new ways of providing employment left open to them. Ireland was still largely undeveloped, even in agriculture and kindred industries. The Free State Government had failed to meet the situation. Everybody agreed that work was better than Unemployment Benefit, and the Labour Party in the Oireachtas had fully supported every measure calculated to give employment. But the Government had either done nothing or done too little, and done it too late. Instances of what might be done were the enforcement of rebuilding conditions in compensation awards, where the owners were still waiting for a fall in wages, and thus trying to make a miserable profit out of the needs of the nation. A speedy division of the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million acres of grazing ranches would improve the position of the 80,000 "congests," where miserable conditions inevitably reacted on the rest of the nation; yet in two years only 10,000 acres had been distributed, and at that rate the work would take several generations. A Drainage Act had been passed, but it had come too late, and no work on drainage schemes could be expected before the winter. The Shannon Electrification Scheme was the one right line taken by the Government, and for that the Labour Party had given them full credit and full support.

Labour was quite prepared to meet the employers of Ireland in a national capacity if that could be arranged. But they must first know what was to be the purpose of the conference. Statements had been made which suggested that a condition of the conference was the acceptance by the workers of lower wages or longer hours. If that was to be a condition, there could be no conference. A good deal of unemployment was due to the employers' failure to keep up with modern developments in industry; the workers were quite prepared to meet employers and give what they believed to be valuable hints in this respect. High wages were not the cause of unemployment. The wages of British miners had been brought down to starvation point, and yet the industry was in a worse state than ever. On the contrary, low wages meant less purchasing power and a consequent reduction of trade. They would oppose sweated labour, and would not give up the right to strike against sweating. They had good authority for declaring that a strike was justifiable in the statement of the Bishop of Galway, in the case of the Ennistymon Hospital—that if the hospital was to be maintained, it would not be maintained by the sweated labour of the Nuns. The Congress would welcome the Bishop of Galway as the latest organiser of a strike, and would commend his statement to the employers generally. The first charge on any industry would have to be a living wage.

Whatever might eventually be done, some time would have to

elapse, and provision would have to be made for the unemployed in the meantime. As the Government had failed to expedite schemes of work, it was its duty to extend the Unemployment Insurance Acts. The workers themselves were largely to blame for their failure to force the Government to action. But the Government should not mistake sullen silence on the part of the unemployed for acquiescence, and wait until a crisis was reached before taking action. It was rather the calm before the storm, and if provision were not made for those who had no means of existence between now and the winter, there might be an upheaval which would not be in the interests of the community as a whole, but which could not be condemned if it were the only way left for securing the means for a Christian livelihood.

At this stage the discussion of the Report of the National Executive was suspended.

### **Examination of Credentials, Etc.**

The Standing Orders Committee reported that it had examined the credentials of delegates and found them in order, except in the case of Mr. James Reade, of Kilkenny Workers' Council, whose appointment had been notified by telegram, and had not been confirmed. The number of delegates was therefore 171, of whom 150 had attended the opening session. The aggregate number of members represented was 252,300. The nominations for Officers and Members of the National Executive were all in order, with the exception of those of Mr. James Reade, nominated by Kilkenny Workers' Council, and Miss M. Rodgers, nominated by Dublin Workers' Council, both of whom were ineligible, as they were not delegates.

### **British Mining Dispute.**

W. NORTON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the following resolution :—

"That this Congress tenders its warmest congratulations to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain on its successful fight for the maintenance of their standard of living, and rejoices at the creation of the formidable alliance of workers to combat the attempts of the capitalist class to worsen the condition of the workers."

Mr. NORTON said that they were all delighted with the magnificent success the British miners had secured. Though not immediately affected in the dispute, they were deeply concerned by reason of their proximity, the nature of the industry, the large numbers involved, and the beneficial reaction the miners' success was bound to have on the working-class in Ireland. They had often been lectured on their greed in seeking higher wages than were paid in Great Britain, but though highly-organised capital in Britain had been able to enforce



reductions in wages there, the British miners had been able to call a halt to this attack on the workers' standard of living. Their victory was a clarion call to the workers of the world to unite, and illustrated what Trade Union unity could accomplish. This was an epoch-making event, and it was proper that the Congress, representing the Irish working-class, should send its congratulations.

A. HERON (Treasurer, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin), seconding the motion, said that they should take note of the solidarity shown by the British workers. Although the miners controlled a big industry, it was doubtful if they could have achieved victory alone; but by their definite alliance with transport workers of all kinds, they had been able to defeat the power of the mine-owners and of a most reactionary Tory Government. That was an important lesson for Congress. They must devise means for closer relations between their own Unions. Personally, he believed in One Big Union, but they would all agree that there was need for a closer alliance and a more definite understanding between their Unions. The result of the mining dispute showed that the Trade Unions possessed a power that, if wisely and properly used, was greater than the power of Governments.

J. BROPHY (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Dublin) pointed out that all sections of the British movement had been behind the miners, and as Irish representative on the General Council of his Union he had been proud to participate in its offer of financial and other support to the Miners' Federation.

G. MOORE (Associated Society of Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen, London), speaking as one of the inner circle of those concerned in the dispute, said that the events of the previous week showed that, however they might differ as to methods of organisation, there was a necessity for one General Council to direct the functions of each Union in a big dispute. The last week had been most critical; it meant the rise or the fall of the Trade Union Movement in Britain. The Prime Minister had stated definitely that not only the miners but every worker in the country had got to have a lower wage. But all the workers had said that the miners' wages should not be depressed any more, and that if anything was to be given up, it must be by the employers. They had shown that the power of Trade Unions was above that of governments. He hoped that Ireland would take the object lesson. They seemed in Ireland to have changed their governors rather than the government. The workers were still far from their real objective, which was that every worker should produce wealth, and then be entitled to share in all the wealth produced.

The resolution was adopted, amid applause.

The meeting adjourned at 1.30 p.m.

*Second Day—Tuesday, August, 4th, 1925.*

The Chair was taken by Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN at 9.45 a.m., and consideration of the National Executive Report was resumed.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT.

### III.—The Industrial Situation and Unemployment (*resumed*).

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) said that Miss Bennett's suggestion to have preliminary conferences for particular industries might be very valuable, but the conference that had been proposed contemplated something different. The National Executive, in supporting the proposal, had in mind an inquiry into the whole industrial situation without reservations. He was still of opinion that such an open conference would be good for the Labour Movement and the country. But they were not going into any conference on the assumption that wages must be lowered or hours lengthened, or that the employers' position in industry and social life, not as managers, but as takers of interest and profit, must be maintained unaltered and permanently. Everything must be open for discussion, so that they might even get a survey of the whole economic life of the nation such as the Government should have undertaken—the total potential production of wealth, its distribution and the means of distribution, how best the production could be increased and the distribution improved. They could not assent to the assumption that employers would enter such a conference as owners with a right to the first call on the product of industry. If the two sides met as active participators in industrial activity, they might possibly hope on that basis to arrive at a better understanding of each other's position and some sort of mutual co-operation for the better conduct of industry and the better distribution of the produce of industry. A parallel might be drawn with the mining situation in Britain, where the miners had stood and won upon their character as human beings rather than a factor in industry—as human beings requiring food, clothing, shelter and decency of life. Industry and society must adjust themselves to the demands of the human being, and not *vice-versa*.

The same principle must apply to the serious problem of unemployment in Ireland, north and south. Comparing the Irish Governments with other Governments, longer established and with better opportunities, he was not disposed to lay excessive blame on them for not having found a cure for unemployment in three years. But they had a right to expect that the Free State Government would at least have maintained the heritage of social legislation secured by the workers before the change of government took place. The laws



relating to property had been maintained, but the laws relating to the welfare of the people had not been maintained. In the fundamental matter of Unemployment Insurance, they had lost a position to retain which they would be justified in fighting to the utmost. The one solid success that the workers had gained as a result of the European War was the community's acknowledgment of responsibility for the unemployed worker, beyond the mere insurance that had been contracted for. They had reached bed-rock, just as the British miners had.

Many times during the last few years the National Executive had been called upon, by resolutions, contemptuous references in newspapers, slighting references to the work of the Labour Party and its officials, to organise mass strikes in favour of some trifling affair. Many people, unfortunately, had been led to believe that a general strike was a simple, trifling matter. The National Executive realised already that big efforts of that kind should not be undertaken lightly, or for small matters of only sectional concern. But this fundamental question of unemployment was a case, if ever there was one, which would justify mass action. The speaker did not suggest that delegates should go back to their Unions and organise an immediate "down tools" until the Government dealt with Unemployment. But he did suggest that Unions and Branches ought to consider the matter not as affecting only their own members, but as affecting the working-class of the whole country. He knew that a general strike, even if they only thought of it six or twelve months hence, might intensify unemployment, and lessen the willingness of capitalists to expend money in development. But if they allowed the present Government's repudiation of all responsibility to pass unchallenged, then the whole movement might be, and would deserve to be, destroyed. The conscience of the community must be roused. Employers claimed that they were the owners of land and capital, and as such they were entrusted by the community with the supplying of the means of life to the people of the country. If as a result workers without property were unable to earn a living, then the community must accept the obligation of maintaining them in decent life. If the Congress discussed the Report and the resolution on Unemployment in that spirit, they might be able to rally to their support all the best elements in the country. If they could do that they could save the working-class and save the country.

W. McMULLEN, M.P. (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast) pointed out that, in spite of the gravity of the unemployment situation, the Northern Parliament had been prorogued from May until October. Before the Parliament was prorogued, the Northern Minister of Labour had promised to convene a conference on Unemployment. The conference met at the end of May, but not one single person had obtained a day's work as the result of it. He could not see that any good would come of a similar con-

ference in the Free State area. The Report showed that the Government were not prepared to undertake any heavy financial commitments, and the employers were disposed to claim arbitration on all questions. Neither the Government nor the employers were in the frame of mind necessary to deal with the matter properly. In November, 1923, the Northern Prime Minister, in a moment of desperation, had said that he personally would solve the unemployment problem; since then the number of unemployed had increased from 37,000 to 60,000. If a pledge on the Boundary was sacrosanct, so was a pledge on Unemployment, but he did not believe that this promise could be carried out. He saw very little hope of improvement in the near future; there were one and a quarter million unemployed in Britain, and many thought the situation there would grow worse, while he saw no hope for the linen and shipbuilding industries in the North. In the Free State area the unemployed had put up with worse conditions in regard to Benefit than obtained in Northern Ireland or in Great Britain, and there had been no agitation by the unemployed. In such circumstances the employers would simply laugh in their faces if they went to a conference, and would be justified in saying that the masses of the country were not behind the National Executive. The conference could not serve any useful purpose except, perhaps, to educate the people of the country. The Northern conference had been an absolute failure, and the workers there were now starting an agitation to force the hands of the Government. The workers in the Free State area should go and do likewise.

C. GAULE (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Arklow) said that the trouble was that goods were produced but could not be sold. They did not need to talk to employers so much as to working-class consumers. There was no guarantee that employers were prepared for a reduction of profits, and they were not in a position to dictate to employers. They could only do that when work was plentiful. He would like the National Executive to co-operate with the Industrial Development Association; the need was to get workers to encourage the existing, old industries rather than to get new industries started.

J. MCCOOKE (Railway Clerks' Association, Belfast) complained that the treatment of the matter by the National Executive had been altogether inadequate. They had said that here was a case for national action, something on which the conscience of the country could be aroused, but all they had done was to send out circulars, and then they said the response was not satisfactory. It was only partly true that Unemployment was a world-wide problem; some countries, like France, Belgium and Denmark, had very largely recovered from it. Ireland was in a peculiarly fortunate position to deal with it, for it did not suffer from the War and had no War Debt, and the matter should, therefore, be simpler than anywhere



else. He did not believe a conference on the lines suggested by Mr. Johnson would be any use; they would simply be expressing theoretical opinions as to how industry should be carried on. The mistake made in connection with the Northern conference, which had arisen out of a casual suggestion at a Belfast Corporation meeting, was that it had been held without the indispensable preliminary of discussions beforehand. Now, after vigorously doing nothing for several months, they were taking the matter up again. They should have a special conference to discuss proposals for dealing with unemployment, and after they had adopted a programme, it should be followed by a vigorous campaign. History would condemn them if they had no plan or policy to offer, and that was their position to-day.

T. IRWIN (National Executive and Operative Plasterers' Society, Dublin) said that the suggestion of a conference came from Deputy Good, who had distinguished himself by unceasingly abusing the working-class and denouncing high wages, and had recently been demanding the introduction of more apprentices in the building industry, so as to create a surplus of labour and make it easier to reduce wages. The "Irish Times" statement that a conference would not be any use unless the workers were prepared to agree to reductions in wages gave the show away. They would have no conference to discuss lower wages or longer hours, and in that respect he objected to Johnson's statement that there should be no reservations. McMullen and McCooke seemed inclined to criticise the inactivity of the National Executive, but all that they had been able to do in the North had been to get a conference called, and they could not blame the National Executive for not being able to do better.

W. DAVIN, T.D. (Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) regretted that the National Executive had not given any lead in this matter. It was clear that in Deputy Good's mind a reduction of wages or extension of hours was essential. But Mr. Good was speaking only for the Chamber of Commerce, which did not represent the majority of employers. No conference would be any use unless it included representatives of the producers in the agricultural industry. He had no faith in long-winded Commissions of Inquiry, which were used simply to kill agitation. Out of the hundred and one Bills introduced in the Dáil, not more than half a dozen would help in the slightest to relieve Unemployment. One Act that might well be availed of was the Arterial Drainage Act, which could be put into operation by petition to the County Council. If they wanted to restrict emigration and stem the flow from the land to the towns, they must provide for a growing population by making better use of the land, and the land could be made better by drainage. They would have to revert also to the war-time system of compulsory tillage, with perhaps a subsidy. The whole economic system at

present was lop-sided; far too many people were engaged in distribution. If the conference were convened, it would be essential to have the producers on the land represented, for if the farmers went bankrupt as a result of pressure from the banks, the whole country would go down with them. The banks also would have to be put into their proper place in relation to the State and the people. But the only purpose the proposed conference would serve would be to give publicity to the evidence and arouse the people of the country. A private conference might be more useful.

## RESOLUTIONS ON UNEMPLOYMENT.

A. HERON (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the following resolution:—

"That this Congress, representing the organised workers of Ireland, and recognising the misery and suffering inflicted upon the members of our class by the prevailing widespread unemployment in all parts of the country, calls upon the two Governments functioning in Ireland to promote immediately legislation which will provide either work under Trade Union conditions or maintenance at full Trade Union rates for all the workers of the country."

Mr. Heron quoted a statement by the Northern Minister of Finance in June that out of a population of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  million no less than 200,000 were dependent for their livelihood on Government grants. At the end of June over 57,000 persons were registered as unemployed at the Unemployment Exchanges, and, in addition, on June 29th, 6,436 persons, and on July 6th, 2,420 persons were working systematic short time. In the Free State area in the middle of June, about 30,000 persons were registered as unemployed, and 23,000 claims for benefit were current, but it was recognised that these figures were not a true guide to the total number of unemployed. It might be safely assumed that in the whole country the unemployed numbered at least 100,000. Congress should insist on the two Governments grappling with this enormous problem seriously. Tinkering with it would be futile. There must be an immediate start on big works of reconstruction. The Free State Government was going ahead with the Shannon Scheme; so far, good. But how long would they have had to wait for that scheme if it had been left to private enterprise? It had met, and would continue to meet, with the continued opposition of the employers and the banks. Yet the Government still talked of the employers and workers themselves solving the problem of unemployment. The present controllers of capital absolutely refused to support any scheme for the relief of unemployment, and, short of a revolution, the workers could look only to the Government. The mere passage of the resolution would be useless; every possible step would have to be taken by the



National Executive and Trade Union Branches and by individual delegates and Branch members to see that the resolution was put into effect.

SEOSAMH O hAODHA (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Kilrush), seconding the resolution, emphasized the possible effect of prolonged unemployment on women, who might be driven to far greater degradation than was possible in the case of men. Attention would have to be rivetted on this problem by every possible means, even to the point of a General Strike.

R. TYNAN (Irish Municipal Employers' Union, Dublin) formally moved the following addendum to the resolution :—

"And, further, that in all such work so provided and which has been previously carried out by Direct Labour under Public Bodies, the full conditions, such as wages, hours, etc., governing this work under public bodies, shall be the standard. Also, that it be an instruction from Congress to all Trade Union Bodies that in the interests of Direct Labour those conditions will be observed; and that no Trade Union shall permit its members to work outside of the Standard Conditions above referred to."

T. LAWLOR (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin), seconding the addendum, pointed out that under the Government schemes for unemployment, relief work usually done by the local authorities themselves had been given to contractors, who were paying wages lower than were paid by the local authorities. This was a menace to Direct Labour, and was also intended as a lever to reduce wages generally. While there were huge numbers of unemployed, they could not acquiesce in a lowering of the standard of living, and the Unions would have to show that they were behind the National Executive in opposing this policy.

A. HERON said he was quite prepared to accept the principle of the addendum, but Congress could not give "instructions" to the Unions, and the National Executive had not been given authority to enforce any orders that might be issued. He pointed out also that the situation in rural districts was not the same as in Dublin; in rural districts many hundreds of workers had been compelled to accept low rates on relief work, or starve, in spite of all the Unions could do to secure higher rates. He suggested the withdrawal of the amendment on the understanding that the principle was agreed to.

R. TYNAN (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) replied that Congress was already pledged to the principle of Direct Labour, and it was the duty of the National Executive to ensure as far as possible that Congress decisions were observed. The payment of low rates by contractors on local authority work was killing Direct Labour. He declined to withdraw the amendment.

M. USHER (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) inquired whether the Municipal Employees' Union itself was doing anything to maintain rates of wages in work of this kind.

R. J. MOORE (Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast) said that the problem of unemployment had been continuously growing more acute even before 1914. Relief work did not touch the real problem. What was wanted was more production. There seemed to be less support of Irish industries than ever before, but they could not buy Irish goods if they had no wages.

T. LAWLOR, seconder of the addendum, inquired if it was accepted.

T. JOHNSON (Secretary, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers' Clerks) pointed out that the last clause of the addendum—"and that no Trade Union shall permit its members to work outside of the Standard Conditions above referred to"—might be interpreted in a way which could not possibly be enforced and would only injure the Unions. He suggested that this clause should be dropped.

Senator T. FARREN (National Executive and Dublin Workers' Council) said that while everyone agreed with the spirit of the resolution, they had to face the facts. The Dublin Corporation had been abolished because of its refusal to reduce the minimum standard wages to be paid to men on relief works. The result was the appointment by the Government of paid Commissioners, who had fixed lower rates which numbers of workers had been compelled by starvation to accept. The Trade Unions could not enforce the suggested prohibition against their members; the most that could be done was to make every effort to see that local authorities opposed these reductions. He endorsed Johnson's suggestion.

R. TYNAN suggested an alteration of the clause to read—"Unions be asked not to permit members . . ."

J. F. GILL (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Edenderry), speaking as one coming from a rural area ruled by a paid Commissioner, said that the Union had done its best to secure the standard rate of wages, and had even held up the work for some time. But they had had to face the fact that there were large numbers of demobilized soldiers who had suffered six or eight months' unemployment, and who were prepared to accept the work as non-unionists, and the Government was glad to give it to them. The number of men prepared to accept work on these conditions might far outweigh the number of permanent road-workers, and the result of the prohibition would be to destroy Trade Unionism altogether. The most they could do would be to try to carry out the intention of the addendum as far as possible.

T. KENNEDY (National Executive and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) opposed the addendum because it could not be given effect to. His own Union in Dublin had tried to follow this policy, but the only effect was that the work was given to lapsed members and to opponents of Trade Unionism. Practically all the men working on these schemes in Dublin were unorganised, but still they were working. They had got to be practical, and face the fact that with 20,000 unemployed in Dublin the



men would refuse to cease work at low rates, on the ground that they had to earn something, even if it was only a pittance, after 18 months' or two years' unemployment. Was the Municipal Employees' Union prepared to face the responsibility of calling out its own members, the permanent employees, so long as the work was done below their rates?

T. TOBIN (National Union of Railwaymen, Dublin) moved that the addendum be accepted without the last clause, but the proposal was ruled out of order.

J. H. BENNETT (National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, Dublin) appealed to the movers of the addendum to withdraw the last clause. A hungry belly would make a man do many things he did not want to do, and a Trade Union could not enforce its orders in such a case. The effect would be to injure Trade Unionism instead of maintaining its strength.

T. JOHNSON (Secretary) suggested that the more they avowed their weakness, the more likelihood there was of its being exploited, and moved that the question be put.

The motion that the question be put was carried.

The addendum, on being put to a vote, received 21 votes, while 84 voted against. The addendum was declared lost.

The resolution was then carried, with a few dissentients.

A. HERON (Treasurer, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the following resolution:—

"That this Congress further calls upon the incoming National Executive to take immediate steps to initiate a movement throughout the whole country for the purpose of bringing pressure upon the responsible authorities to provide such work or maintenance for the unemployed, and that arrangements be made for the co-operation of the Labour members of the Oireachtas and Northern Parliament in this campaign in whatever manner is considered most effective by the National Executive."

Mr. HERON said that this resolution was the necessary complement of the one just adopted, and instructed the National Executive to take all possible steps to give effect to the earlier resolution. Hungry men were not easily enthused, but the apathy due to despair must not be mistaken for acquiescence. If they were driven eventually to physical force or other means of securing a livelihood, they could not be condemned. Their demand was for work or maintenance, and the fact would have to be faced that many of the unemployed were now not physically fit for work, even if it were provided for them. A national campaign, in which the T.D.'s and M.P.'s took part, arousing the unemployed and the employed would give some hope of securing action by the Governments.

P. DORAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) seconded the resolution.

Miss L. BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the following amendment:—

To add, in line 2 after "National Executive," the phrase "to issue a revised version of their Unemployment Programme of 1921-2," and in line 5 to delete "to provide such work or," and substitute "to carry out such programme and meantime provide."

Miss Bennett said it would be futile for them to do no more than continually call on the Governments. The Labour Party itself must put forward practical proposals. They had done that before in the programme of 1921-22 and the "Call to Action" issued at that time by the National Executive. Some of those proposals were now out of date, and needed bringing up to date. A special conference should be called by the National Executive to consider a revised programme. But while the National Executive might think out broad questions of policy, it was for the rank and file of the various Unions to think out suggestions for their own industries. Both could then be pressed on the Government, the manufacturers and the public.

Miss O'CONNOR (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) seconding the amendment, said that the suggestion of a down-tools demonstration commended itself to her, this matter being more important than others for which that weapon had been used. Those who were working were too selfish to concern themselves about the unemployed; they simply left it to the Union to find Unemployment Benefit. The "down-tools" weapon was the only one that they could use at the moment; the people had had enough of revolution. The proposed conference would be useful, for manufacturers' methods were often very old-fashioned; she knew of one firm which rejected an order by a public body for 600 pairs of children's sandals, with the simple statement that they did not make sandals, which would have to be bought from abroad.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork), supporting the resolution, expressed dissatisfaction with the action of the National Executive hitherto. They had tried to organise the unemployed in Cork, and sent on a resolution asking the National Executive to inaugurate a national campaign. The reply they got was most unsatisfactory and discouraging. What had the National Executive done to ascertain the terms of reference of the proposed conference with employers? During all the debate there had been no indication of what the National Executive's own proposals were. The matter was vitally urgent; there were men in Cork who had not been able to get work since July, 1923.

T. RYAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Waterford) thought that the Trade Unions themselves were largely to



blame for the Government's inaction in regard to Unemployment. Circulars to Workers' Councils had little result, for the delegates to Councils were usually working themselves, and not bothering about the unemployed. It was difficult to understand why the hungry unemployed should be so quiet, but, after all, what could they do except march through the streets, and even that was not easy on an empty stomach.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) saw in the movement proposed by the resolution some hope of getting local authorities to discharge their responsibilities. Use might be made of the Arterial Drainage and Housing Acts, but Labour members of local authorities were helpless in regard to these unless there was some national driving force behind them to put an end to obstruction and delay. The Minister for Agriculture had been bragging about the starting of the Waterford Meat Factory, but eighteen months later the Government denied all responsibility for what was stated to be a private concern, and the factory was still not started. Waterford had sent in a petition under the Drainage Act six weeks ago, but no reply had yet been received, and it was likely that no work would be started before the winter. The national campaign would put an end to this dilly-dallying between Dublin and the local authorities.

THOS. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) supported Miss Bennett's amendment, but pointed out that the programme of Easter, 1921, was based on the acceptance of certain principles which those claiming to rule the country at the time professed to accept. That programme and principles were still those of the Labour Party. But was the National Executive to do everything? The country was entirely too reliant upon two or three people in the headquarters in Dublin. The headquarters might issue a programme and stimulate ideas, but could not do anything more without a backing in the country. The resolution of the Cork Branch of the I.T.G.W.U., referred to by Hickey, was very emphatic in calling on the National Executive to do this, that and the other, and, to give Cork proper credit, was accompanied by an agitation in Cork itself, but it wound up by declaring that the Labour T.D.'s should call on the Government to provide work or maintenance, and if they got no immediate response they should withdraw from the Dail. He had replied that if the Labour T.D.'s had withdrawn every time they had been called upon to do so, there would have been no Labour T.D.'s in the Dail for the last two years.

Mr. HICKEY interjected that their proposal had been to withdraw from the Dail in order to organise a national campaign in the country.

Mr. JOHNSON agreed that was so. But on the other hand whenever Cork had been asked to send a Labour member to the Dail, at General Elections and Bye-Elections, it had refused to do so. But

he was not objecting to the Cork resolution. They were glad to get expression of opinion on any subject; their complaint was that they did not get nearly enough. But those who made unconsidered demands for action by the National Executive and the Labour Party must not be surprised if they provoked a retort about local inactivity.

T. H. GILL (Railway Clerks' Association, London) said that the Congress and the National Executive might be completely sincere in their support of the resolution, but unless the rank and file of the Trade Unions and the unemployed were roused, the necessary motive power would not be obtained. The great reason for the under-demand for goods was the worsening of the workers' conditions, with a consequent reduction of purchasing power, and the first essential for relief was that there should be no further worsening. He illustrated the need for a definite lead and the rousing of the rank and file by contrasting the futile Special Conference of the British T.U.C. on Unemployment with the effective Conference a week later in support of the Miners. But while a campaign for palliatives to relieve Unemployment was essential, they must realise that so long as the capitalist system existed anywhere there would be unemployment, and there would be no solution till Capitalism was driven out.

W. NORTON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dublin) suggested that the programme on Unemployment was a necessary part of the proposed agitation. Unemployment was destroying the independence, the decency, the manliness, the self-respect of the working-class, and if it was allowed to grow it would bring them down again to the slave level of 1913. The Government and employers had done absolutely nothing, and he was convinced that they regarded Unemployment as necessary to their plans to reduce wages. Labour groups on local authorities could take an effective part in the campaign; even the small group on a Council like that of Rathmines had shown that something could be done. It was no use to be continually waiting for the National Executive to take action; the really healthy condition was that the National Executive should be forced to take action by an insistent demand from the bottom. If they were serious about the matter they could sweep the country as other political movements had done.

It being one o'clock, Congress adjourned at this stage. The afternoon session commenced at 2.15 p.m.

W. DAVIN, T.D. (Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) opposed the resolution on the ground that it would be quite ineffective if carried. The fact was, as shown by the votes at the General Election and Bye-Elections in Dublin in 1923 and 1925, that the workers had not given the Labour T.D.'s a mandate to look after the



unemployed. Only when the workers realised their duty to support Labour candidates for the Dail and Seanad could the Labour Party be called upon to work for the unemployed. Nor was it much use making speeches when the local authorities already had the power to do much of what was desired. For that reason he supported the proposal to call a Conference of Labour members of local authorities. How did the mover of the resolution propose to organise the unemployed—in Trade Unions or in a political organisation? Obviously the unemployed men could not afford to pay contributions. Then how were they to be organised and controlled? They were powerless until the Movement was highly developed on the political side, and the National Executive had done nothing in that direction.

Senator T. FORAN (National Executive, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) said that Davin had suggested nothing could be done except to elect Labour members to Parliament and local authorities. Yet the Governments also professed themselves powerless. The Shannon electrification was the only decent scheme formulated in recent times to do any good for the people of the country. Senator Sir John Keane had admitted that the opposition to the scheme was based solely on the fact that it was to be a national scheme, not financed by private capital, and he was now threatening to withhold the money necessary to carry out the scheme. That was the sort of opposition they had to meet, and Labour T.D.'s and Senators would be powerless unless they were backed up by a strong movement in the country. The National Executive contained no supermen to deal with the situation; the duty devolved on every delegate and every Union official. There were signs that the electorate were beginning to realise the worthlessness of the politicians' election promises. But the National Executive's efforts so far to take advantage of the new situation had not met with any great encouragement.

A. HERON, replying as mover of the resolution, said that while they all believed that Unemployment was inherent in the capitalist system, they must yet use every means to alleviate the condition of the unemployed. He had made no reference to "organising" the unemployed; what he had suggested was leading an agitation on behalf of the unemployed. The active participation of the Cork Branch of the I.T.G.W.U. in an Unemployment agitation was an example of the kind of thing other Unions and Branches should undertake. The Newry Branch of the same Union had formed its Unemployed members into a special section, and given that section direct representation on the Branch Committee. Each Union must interest itself in its own unemployed members. Their knowledge of the folly and ignorance that had sometimes characterised Unemployment agitations was no excuse for doing nothing until the next elections. The National Executive had given and would give the matter full attention, but the Labour Movement in the country

must see what steps could be taken outside the Parliaments. He was prepared to accept the Women Workers' amendment.

The resolution as amended—

"That this Congress further calls upon the incoming National Executive to issue a revised version of their Unemployment Programme of 1921-2, and to take immediate steps to initiate a movement throughout the whole country for the purpose of bringing pressure upon the responsible authorities to carry out such programme, and meantime provide maintenance for the unemployed, and that arrangements be made for the co-operation of the Labour members of the Oireachtas and Northern Parliament in this campaign in whatever manner is considered most effective by the National Executive"—

was then put and carried *nem. con.*

The following resolution, submitted by the Sligo Trades Council, was not moved, no delegate from that body being present:—

"That this Congress instructs the Labour Party in the Dail to pursue a vigorous line of opposition, even to the extent of using obstructionist tactics against measures which are not designed in the interests of the common people, until the Government is got to provide work or maintenance for the thousands of unemployed workers of this country who are presently faced with the starvation menace."

## REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE—Resumed.

### IV.—Unemployment Insurance and Resolutions.

Resolutions 3 and 4 on the Agenda, dealing with Unemployment Insurance, were taken in conjunction with Section IV., pars. 11 to 15, of the National Executive Report.

Senator T. FARREN (Dublin Workers' Council) moved:—

"That, owing to the serious trade depression and improbability of an immediate revival, this Congress demands:—

That Unemployment Benefit be paid to all insured contributors who have exhausted their rights to such Benefit under the Act, provided that they have, during the two years immediately preceding the date of the application for Benefit, been employed in an insurable employment to such an extent as was reasonable, having regard to the opportunities for obtaining insurable employment during that period.

(a) That Clause 8 (4) of the Insurance Act, 1920, now in operation, be levelled, and all stamps to credit released.

(b) That every girl and boy become insurable for sickness and unemployment on entering industry.

(c) That women employed in industrial occupations in Military and other State Barracks be included in the Unemployment Insurance Act.

(d) That less than three days' work per week shall not disqualify a woman as her husband's dependent."



Mr. Farren said that large numbers of workers who formerly were almost never unemployed, and had therefore a substantial number of contributions paid, were now being deprived of benefit under the rule requiring the payment of twelve contributions in the insurance year. There was no need to go over the arguments in favour of the resolution. They favoured the raising of the school age to 16, but so long as boys and girls had to go to work before that age they should be brought within the Unemployment Insurance Scheme. The clauses relating to women had been inserted at the request of the Women Workers' Union. Women employed in laundries in military barracks were being deprived of the benefit of Insurance. With so much unemployment amongst men, women were being compelled to go out to work to get bread for children, and they wanted to preserve the husband's right to the extra benefit in respect of his wife so long as the wife's work was less than three days a week.

Mrs. BUCKLEY (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) seconded the resolution, and pointed out that while Unemployment Insurance Benefit was only a makeshift, still a makeshift was better than nothing. Huge numbers of workers were falling out of benefit; there had been a drop of 30,000 in the claims current in the Free State between March and July. To the numbers of unemployed who came under the Insurance system must be added agricultural workers and domestic servants, who were excluded. Mention had been made of drainage schemes; at least one form of drainage was in operation, for in the last six months 28,500 fit citizens had been exported to the U.S.A. All the reasons given by the Ministry for Industry and Commerce to justify the last extension of Unemployment Insurance Benefit still held good. There had been no appreciable lessening of the numbers of unemployed. All the relief schemes existed only on paper. The Trade Loans Guarantee Act had had an inappreciable effect; its usefulness was limited because the loans were not available for providing working capital. They had been commended for counselling moderation, but the result had been *nil*, and she questioned if anyone had the right to encourage the unemployed any longer to continue in their super-human patience. It was time something else was tried. Money could be found for everything else, particularly for destroying life instead of preserving it. Capitalists and employers were waging an offensive against the workers, forcing them back to the pre-war standard, and women and girls were being faced with unutterable things. If they were told the "Dole" could not go on for ever, the answer was that they must have work instead. As things now were, Section 8 (4) of the Act of 1920 was militating especially against the engineering and munition trades. They had paid contributions while they were working, but if they could not show one stamp for the year 1924-25, they had to get 12 stamps for 1925-26 before they

could draw benefit, no matter how many stamps they had previously.

The resolution was carried *nem. con.*

C. MATTHEWS (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Trim) moved the following resolution submitted by the Navan Trades Council :—

"That Congress condemns the present method of Unemployment Insurance administration whereby unemployed workers are kept five and six weeks waiting for Benefit, and are in some cases compelled to walk over 20 miles in order to establish their claims for benefit before Courts of Referees; and we claim workers should be allowed rail fare and some expenses for refreshment when appearing at such Courts."

Mr. Matthews said that often men who were genuinely unemployed were unable to get benefit because they were quite unable to travel long distances to attend the Courts of Referees.

J. F. GILL (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Edenderry), seconding the resolution, said that the present arrangement often inflicted the gravest hardship. He knew of men who had had to start at 6 a.m. on an eleven-mile walk to draw benefit, and then to walk home again. In some cases men who had been signing on as unemployed for 12 or 13 weeks were expected to travel 40 miles at their own expense to attend a Court of Referees in Dublin.

R. TYNAN (Irish Municipal Employees' Union) drew attention to the case of workers thrown out of employment by a dispute in which they were not participating, who were now deprived of benefit in the Free State area, though they were not in Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) suggested that if claims were dealt with by the Union officials, as they ought to be, they could represent the worker at the Court of Referees, and so remove most of the difficulty about travelling. His experience was that the Courts were in most cases favourable to the worker. But he objected to the Umpire, on cases appealed to him from the Courts, giving decisions on quite different grounds from those on which the appeal was based.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) and

Mrs. BUCKLEY (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said that fares of claimants were paid in their districts.

C. MATTHEWS said he knew that travelling vouchers used to be given, but he understood that the allowance for this purpose had been cut down in the last twelve months.

T. LAWLOR (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) referred to a dispute in the Dublin Corporation electricity works which had



resulted in the refusal of benefit to other workers unemployed in consequence of it, and suggested that the National Executive should try to get this new legislation repealed.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) pointed out that there had been no new legislation in the matter.

Miss A. HOLMES (Tailors' and Germent Workers' Union, Derry) explained the situation as it was in Northern Ireland. The Umpire had disallowed claims for benefit on the ground that the unemployment was due to a dispute, but after pressure had been brought to bear he reversed a mistaken decision, and the majority of the workers were allowed benefit. Even the Amending Act in operation in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, under which benefit was allowed if the claimant had no financial interest in the dispute, though it was an improvement, was not sufficient. There was a moral obligation on the State to provide benefit if the worker had complied with the law by paying contributions.

T. LAWLOR (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) said there has been no effort in the Free State area to have the law amended in the same way as in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

R. S. ANTHONY (National Executive, and Cork Workers' Council) suggested that this matter of benefit in cases of dispute should be added to the resolution. He cited a case in Cork where tailors had been deprived of benefit during a strike of distributive workers. If it was not possible to amend the resolution, at least it would be clear to the National Executive that in the view of Congress fresh legislation was necessary.

The resolution was then put and carried *nem. con.*

### **Unemployment Insurance—Reciprocal Arrangements between the Saorstat, Northern Ireland and Great Britain.**

In conjunction with paragraphs 16-18 of the National Executive Report, consideration was given to the following resolution:—

“That this Congress urges on the Governments of the Free State and Northern Ireland the necessity of devising reciprocal arrangements as between the two Governments for the provision of Unemployment Benefit and thus avoiding the disabilities under which workers migrating from one area to another now suffer.”

John CAMPBELL (Belfast Trades' Council), moving the resolution, said that the chief difficulty in making reciprocal arrangements appeared to be that the rates of benefit in the Free State area were different from those in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, but a further difficulty was the insistence of Mr. Andrews, Northern Minister of Labour, that any arrangement come to must be made between the *three* Governments, and not between Northern Ireland

and the Free State only. They would have to keep on pressing the matter in both areas.

Miss A. HOLMES (Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union, Derry), seconding, said that many of the members of her Union in Derry suffered acutely because of the absence of reciprocal arrangements. The Northern Minister for Labour had been personally aware of what was happening, and he had suggested that the real difficulty was with the Free State. The very clear statement in the National Executive Report threw a new light on the matter, and it was clear that the National Executive had made great efforts to get an agreement. She hoped they would continue their efforts, and suggested that the support of the British Labour Party should be enlisted. In Derry there were two or three hundred women who frequently crossed the Border and were thus deprived of benefit.

H. T. WHITLEY (Typographical Association, Belfast) reported an interview between the Belfast Trades Council and the Northern Minister for Labour, at which the Northern Minister had told them that the last letter in his correspondence with the Free State Ministry had been sent by his Department, and that it had not so far received any reply. The Northern Minister was, in fact, fighting a battle for the unemployed in the Free State area, inasmuch as he was insisting that the same rates of benefit should be paid. The stamps were the same value in all three areas, but the benefit was less in the Free State area than in Northern Ireland or Great Britain. Joint action should be taken by the National Executive and the two Labour Parties to get the two heads of Departments together and get a reciprocal arrangement established at least for Ireland. As things were, men were beginning to learn the facts and to remain unemployed and drawing benefit in Northern Ireland rather than take work in the Free State area.

J. H. BENNETT (National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, Dublin) suggested that this part of the Report be referred to the incoming Executive to take further action. The matter was of special importance to seamen, three-quarters at least of the seamen in the Free State being affected. Even seamen who signed on and were paid off in Dublin were deprived of benefit. He endorsed the proposal that the help of the British Labour Party should be sought.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) said that the matter had had the constant attention of the National Executive and the Labour Party in the Oireachtas. There seemed little hope of success, but they would continue the pressure. The difficulty as between the Free State and Great Britain was that a reciprocal arrangement might mean the depletion of the Irish Unemployment Fund, at the expense of Irish workers, for the benefit of the British Fund. But there was no such difficulty as between the Free State and Northern Ireland if the willingness to come to an agreement existed. He was not hopeful that much good would come of approaching the British Labour



Party except as regards seamen. They would continue to press the matter.

W. McMULLEN, M.P. (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast) pointed out that the British Government had nothing to do with the Northern Unemployment Fund, and the British movement could therefore act only in regard to seamen. Difficulty was created by the fact that social legislation in the Free State area was behind that of Northern Ireland. The workers in the Free State area should try to improve their legislation. But British legislation was now worsening, and it was likely that Northern Ireland would follow suit, so that the gap would be lessened. On the evidence they had it seemed difficult to apportion the responsibility between the two Ministers, but it was clear that there was a responsibility on the Labour Movement itself to try to get an agreement.

## V.—Education, and Resolutions.

Paragraphs 19 and 20 of the National Executive Report were considered in conjunction with resolutions on the Agenda dealing with educational matters.

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the following resolution:—

### School-leaving Age.

"That, having special regard to the fact that girls of 18 years of age and upwards are constantly being disemployed whilst girls of 14 are engaged in large numbers at a lower wage, this Congress urges that, for the protection of adult workers as well as in the interests of Education, the school-leaving age be raised to 15 years immediately and to 16 years after a period sufficient for the provision of increased school accommodation."

Miss Bennett pointed out that apart from the need for the raising of the school-leaving age on educational grounds, experience showed that numbers of girls were dismissed on reaching the age of 18 and 19, and their places filled by the taking on, at a lower wage, of girls, who had just left school.

Miss O'CONNOR (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said that the dismissal of older girls was particularly acute in the new industries being started in Dublin. The new tobacco factories were employing only girls of just over school age, the older girls being dismissed as soon as they reached the age when their wages would rise.

The resolution was carried *nem. con.*

W. P. WARD (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Ballinasloe) moved the following resolution :—

### **School Buildings, Care of School Children, &c.**

"That Congress again urges on the Saorstát Government the necessity for making immediate and suitable provision for the proper sanitation, equipment and maintenance of school buildings, for the medical and dental inspection and treatment of school children, for the provision of school meals and for the supply of free books and requisites to school children."

Mr. Ward said that the provision demanded in the resolution was necessary in the interests of education, apart from the physical condition of the children themselves, and the future success of the children as citizens depended on efficient education. The lack of proper provision had a serious effect on the health of the children. Incipient disease was not checked, the parents being ignorant in such matters, and developed until it was too late to cure. If there were proper medical inspection, incipient disease could be checked and cured. The danger of infection spreading would also be prevented by medical inspection. Defective eyesight and teeth were other grave evils that could be dealt with if there were proper inspection and treatment. The free supply of books and requisites was a matter particularly urgent when so many were unemployed, but it was a serious matter also for very many parents, even if employed. The same thing applied to the provision of meals at school. Many children came to school without breakfast and spent the first three hours in school fasting. Children could not possibly be educated in such circumstances.

M. STAFFORD (National Union of Vehicle Builders, Dublin) seconded the resolution, and mentioned the steps taken by the Dublin County Council to put into operation the provisions of the Act for the Medical Inspection and Treatment of School Children. The General Council of County Councils had also approved the making of such provision.

T. J. O'CONNELL, T.D. (National Executive, and Irish National Teachers' Organization, Dublin), connecting the discussion with the Report of the Advisory Committee on Education, invited expressions of opinion on the Report so that the incoming Executive would know the views of Congress. The Report made no revolutionary demands; reforms asked for in it were the accepted things in Great Britain. But there had been no such proper provision for education in the Free State area, and no new legislation at all. There had been legislation in Northern Ireland, but the Act was not yet fully in operation, and it was not yet possible to judge its results. The Committee had, therefore, confined its Report to the Free State area. One of the most serious matters was the provision of proper school buildings. In general the present buildings were not only entirely



unsuitable for their purpose, but they were very often an absolute danger to health. The cost of new buildings had to be borne, as to one-third, out of voluntary contributions. There was no machinery for raising this part of the cost, not provided by the State, except local collections; the money had to come out of the pockets of the parents, and the large ratepayer was able to escape contributing. The Committee recommended that there should be an education authority in each county and county borough, financed out of the rates, which would be responsible for the production of the local share of the cost of new buildings, the maintenance of buildings, the provision of books and the other matters referred to in Section VIII. (B) of the Report. There was urgent need for educational legislation, but the absence of it was due to the apathy of the people generally. The Government would act only when the people made it plain that they must act. Congress should take an active interest, because it represented the parents of the vast majority of the children in the schools.

J. MCCOOKE (Railway Clerks' Association, Belfast), while agreeing that school meals were necessary, urged that they must be given to *all* children. They must remember that children were severe critics of one another, and must avoid anything which would lead to the singling out of poor children. Besides, it would be good for all children to have this experience of practical Socialism.

H. O'DONNELL (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Ballymote) thought in the case of country schools perhaps the most pressing matter at the moment was the provision of proper heating. Children often had to travel two or three miles to school in the rain, and there was no way of drying their clothes. He was convinced that this sort of thing was responsible for sowing the seeds of consumption, which was so rife in the country.

L. J. DUFFY (National Executive, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) said that the preparation of this Report was a good example which should be followed in other matters. Some of the matters referred to in the Report were already provided for in some degree by legislation, but the legislation was not utilized as it should be. When Rathmines Urban District Council had endeavoured to make use of the School Meals Act, the clerical managers of the schools had frustrated the Council by refusing to give the necessary facilities. He objected strongly to the proposal to enforce school attendance by the Civic Guard, and thought other means might be found—for example, Relieving Officers of the County Boards of Health might be used. He warmly endorsed the suggestion that a permanent advisory committee on Education should be appointed by the National Executive.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) pointed out that two matters dealt with in the Report—the enforcement of school attendance and the school-leaving age—would become of immediate importance for

legislation in the next two or three months, and he hoped Congress would give due weight to the Committee's recommendations. The proposal to utilize the Civic Guard would doubtless excite some adverse criticism, and at first, perhaps, be unpopular. But it was necessary to consider whether they wanted the Civic Guard to be a real civic force intended to help the public, or whether they wanted it to be simply a repressive, police force like the old R.I.C. The teachers had considered the matter very carefully, and were almost unanimous that the Civic Guard proposal was the most likely to be successful—and it would, at least, be more popular than using the Relieving Officers. The local authorities, to whom the work had been entrusted in the past, had shown themselves to be insufficiently interested. The Report proposed that the school-leaving age should be raised to 16, with special provision in rural areas as to the nature of the instruction in the last year and as to the form of the school. Working-class parents might perhaps be inclined to criticize that proposal adversely, but he believed they would recognize that the raising of the age was essential if they were to make children worthy citizens. He hoped that Congress would support the proposals in the Report.

Mrs. BUCKLEY (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said that she would not be expected to have any great love for the police, but she had had long experience on School Attendance Committees, and supported the proposal to make use of the Civic Guard.

W. MACSWEENEY (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Killorglin) said that the teachers were anxious to stress the importance of safeguarding the health of the children, because of its bearing both on their education and their future welfare. Some school buildings were so bad as scarcely to give shelter, yet nothing was being done to repair them. The schools in the Free State not vested in the Ministry were supported by local contributions, and these were so scanty as to leave no margin for expenditure on school buildings. He had had experience of the provision of school meals by the Congested Districts Board last winter, and knew that from every point of view they had been a great boon; they had taken care that no distinctions were made between the children. As regards attendance, when an officer of the local authority had been appointed, the enforcement of attendance had been an absolute failure. The percentage of attendance given in the Report referred to the number on the rolls, but there were many children not even on the rolls, and the true percentage was more like 50. The use of the Civic Guard was the only effective means of enforcing attendance.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) urged that in considering compulsory attendance the hardship that might be inflicted on children in country districts, travelling long distances in bad weather, would have to be borne in



mind. Those hardships were often severe and only mitigated by the kindness of teachers. Some of the present schools were in such a state that the mere sight of them was revolting.

W. J. BYRNE (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin), congratulating the Committee on its Report, hoped that special attention would be given to the School Programme. The existing Programme seemed designed to encourage the drift of young people from the country to the towns. They would have to get a Programme that would encourage children to look forward to living their life on the land.

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said there were two points left not quite clear in the Report. It should be made plain that instruction given to children in the last year, from 15 to 16, should be given during ordinary working hours, and not in addition to full working time. It should be made clear also that the ratio of 1 to 32 for teachers and pupils should be a maximum, and not a mere average over the whole country as at present. In Dublin there were cases of one teacher to 70 or 80 pupils.

W. WILSON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dun Laoghaire) called attention to the need for providing some means of conveying children to school. The long distances to be travelled in many cases were one of the causes of the poor attendance.

T. LAWLOR (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) expressed anxiety about the possible consequences of police-court prosecutions by the Civic Guard for non-attendance. Special Children's Courts should be set up to deal with such cases, so as to keep the children away from the atmosphere of the ordinary courts.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that it would be the parent who would be summoned, not the child.

Mr. LAWLOR agreed, but said he understood that under the existing law the parent was summoned to attend the court and bring the child with him.

The session concluded at 5 p.m.

*Third Day—Wednesday, August 5th, 1925.*

The Chair was taken at 9.50 a.m.

### ELECTION OF SCRUTINEERS.

The election of Scrutineers resulted as follows:—

	No. of votes received.
M. KEANE, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin ... ..	56
W. J. BYRNE, Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin ... ..	39
J. HUGHES, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Kilrush ... ..	41
P. MURPHY, Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast ... ..	23
H. T. WHITLEY, Typographical Association, Belfast ...	45
Miss L. BENNETT, Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin	76

George DUNCAN, Cork Workers' Council, who was also nominated, withdrew his name.

Miss BENNETT and Messrs. WHITLEY and KEANE were declared elected.

### PRIVATE SESSION.

On the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee, Congress considered the sections of the National Executive Report dealing with Political Organization in private session, in order that there might be full freedom of discussion. The National Executive has, however, decided that the report of the Private Session should be published.

### NATIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT.

#### Secs. XIII. and XIV.—Political Activities and National Executive and Office Arrangements.

These two parts of the Report were considered in conjunction with the following special resolution submitted by the Railway Clerks' Association:—

#### Political Organization.

"That, with a view to promoting on a more ordered and vigorous basis the political organisation of Labour throughout the country a Committee of this Congress be hereby appointed

- (1) To enquire into the present system of Labour Party organisation, both local and national, and to make such recommen-



dations as may be deemed advisable for the more effective organisation of the Movement on the political side, and

- (2) To enquire into and define as far as practicable the relationship between the National Executive and the Labour Party in the Oireachtas.

"That the Committee consist of three members of the National Executive, three members of the Labour Party in the Oireachtas who are not members of the National Executive, and three of the Delegates to this Congress who are not members of the National Executive or of the Labour Party in the Oireachtas.

"That the report and recommendations of the Committee be printed and circulated to all affiliated organisations, not later than 1st January, 1926, and that the incoming National Executive consider the advisability of calling a Special Congress to deal with the recommendations. If no Special Congress is considered necessary, the report and recommendations to be dealt with at the 1926 Congress."

W. DAVIN, T.D. (Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) moved the above resolution. He said that the natural consequence to be expected from the decision to enter the Oireachtas would be a more vigorous development of the political side of the organization. At the first election to the Dail they secured 17 seats, relying on the machinery of the Trade Union Branches for political work, and in the Dail the Party worked well together, having committees on various subjects and meeting frequently. At the 1923 election, Labour did not show its real strength, many workers foolishly siding with two other political parties. Consequently they lost some seats and returned only 14 members. Since then the Party in the Dail had not been working in the way he would like. There had been no committees and there had not been enough Party meetings. There had been only three Party meetings in the last twelve months, one in October on the Licensing Bill; one in February, intended to be a joint meeting with the National Executive, but attended by only a few T.D.'s, and not all the Executive; and one in July, when they had met simply to be told by the National Executive how and for whom they should vote for the Seanad Panel. He felt that there had been poor organization and a lack of contact with the National Executive. That might be a reflex of the lack of force behind them in the country. He agreed with the statement in paragraph 66 of the N.E. Report that there was a revival of Labour enthusiasm throughout the country, but so far they had no really effective political machine behind them. He did not want at all to interfere with the effective working of the industrial side of the Movement, which he realised was the more important. Nor was he personally anxious that Labour should secure political power in the country just yet, but they must prepare for the day when they would be in political power. For that purpose they must have an effective political machine, which could be built up on the lines of the Labour Clubs already laid down by the National Executive. The Trade Union

machinery was not sufficient, and in fact the Labour members in rural constituencies were returned by the votes of the small farming class rather than by Trade Unionists. The Party in the Oireachtas did not know where they stood. There was no contact with the National Executive, and they did not know the mind of the Executive on any question. The position compared unfavourably with that in other political parties. In the case of the Seanad Panel, the National Executive had invited the T.D.'s to send in names for the Panel, but the members in the Oireachtas, who had the votes for the selection, had no say in the choice of nominees for the party. The proper course would have been to invite the affiliated Unions to send in names. The way they were travelling led to dictatorship. The National Executive had not given time to the study of the Bills that came before the Oireachtas, and the Party in the Oireachtas ought therefore to meet oftener. They had been criticized sometimes for not giving better support to Deputy Johnson. There were two reasons for that. One was that Deputy Johnson usually said all that was to be said, and left little for anybody else to say. But the main reason was that they never knew what the Party policy was until Deputy Johnson had spoken. (Deputy O'Connell interjected—"Nonsense!") This state of affairs must be remedied. They must have better machinery, better understanding, and better contact. They must also maintain contact with the Labour members of the Northern Parliament. In that respect he would like to suggest a modification of the composition of the Committee proposed in the resolution, so as to have two members of the Oireachtas and one of the Northern Parliament, and so that one of the three members to be appointed by the Congress should be a member of the Belfast Trades Council or other Northern organization.

T. H. GILL (Railway Clerks' Association, London), seconding the resolution, asked that it be considered strictly on its merits, as raising matters very well worth discussion. He was bound to say that, as far as his Association was concerned and the railwaymen of Ireland generally, they had no complaint against the National Executive, but had received all possible assistance. The details of organization were properly a matter for the proposed Committee to go into, but, speaking from his own experience, he knew that the individual members were becoming more and more the backbone of the British Labour Party, providing the real organizing force, and bringing the machinery of the Movement right down to the small villages that could not be reached without them. Nominally, every Trade Unionist was supposed to be a member of the Labour Party and to vote Labour and work for Labour, but they did not so act. It was a mistake to restrict membership to Trade Unionists only, and they would have to get local machinery much more perfect than in the past. Apparently there had not been close contact between the National Executive and the Labour members. He did not know the



facts, and was not going to attribute any blame to anybody. But it seemed that there was a case for some overhauling of the existing arrangements. The Committee, if set up, would have to consider very carefully whether there could be two controlling bodies. In his view, there should be only one, the National Executive elected by the Congress, but it should work in close contact with the Labour members in the Oireachtas, who would have the responsibility of carrying out decisions. It would be good for the Movement to have the inquiry proposed in the resolution.

T. J. O'CONNELL, T.D. (National Executive, and Irish National Teachers' Organization, Dublin) said there would be general agreement as to the grave necessity for strengthening their political organization in the country, and so far the resolution would receive general support. It had been made clear that in some of the criticisms made by Mr. Davin he was speaking for himself and not for the Railway Clerks' Association; nor was he speaking for other members of the Labour Party in the Oireachtas. Complaint had been made of the infrequency of Party meetings. But there were two Whips whose duty it was to call meetings; had Mr. Davin ever asked the Whips to call a meeting, and had they ever refused? In fact, there were more meetings than had been suggested; there had, for example, been several committee meetings to consider amendments to the Local Government Bill. It was absurd to say that Labour Deputies were ignorant of the Party line of policy until it had been defined by Congress; every T.D. was supposed to know it, and there was no need to wait till Mr. Johnson had spoken to find out what it was. As for the Seanad Panel, it was ridiculous to say that there was any dictatorship, or that the Labour members had been treated like schoolboys. This was the first occasion of its kind, and no definite procedure had been laid down. The National Executive had sent a circular to all the Labour Deputies and Senators asking for nominations. Then a meeting of the full National Executive had selected the candidates by vote from among the nominations sent in. Later at a joint meeting of the National Executive and the Labour members, the procedure had been explained and the selections announced. That might not have been the best arrangement possible, but it was a remarkable one. On the main question he agreed with Mr. Gill. The doors of the Party must be opened wider than merely to admit the Trade Unionist. The Trade Unions alone would never be able to put the Labour Party in power in Ireland. He was himself a member for a rural constituency, and had been elected by non-Trade Union votes, the votes of small farmers, shopkeepers and fishermen. Special attention would have to be given to the organization of small farmers. He supported the general principle of the resolution.

L. J. DUFFY (National Executive, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) said he had no reason to quarrel with the general tenour of the resolution, but would like to know

what was intended by Clause (2). As the position had been understood in the past, the National Executive was elected by Congress, acting as the Parliament of the organized workers of Ireland, and was therefore authorized to interpret working-class opinion in Ireland. It would seem that Mr. Davin was not prepared to accept that position. There had been a tendency for some Deputies to take a line which was not a working-class line, as when seven of them voted on the Licensing Bill in the interests of the licensed trade. The resolution itself was quite reasonable, but it had been moved in unreasonable language, unless they were to take it that Mr. Davin's view was that the National Executive should renounce its functions and allow the Party in the Oireachtas to go off on a line of its own and formulate its own policy. Congress was not inevitably the wisest body, but so long as Congress represented the organized Trade Unionists of the country, any policy it laid down must be binding on Labour representatives. Some of the Deputies seemed to think that their stewardship was rather for their constituencies than for the Trade Union Movement. Dealing with the complaint as to the fewness of meetings with the National Executive, he pointed out that it was a very difficult matter to arrange times for meetings which would suit everybody, especially as most of the Deputies only came up to Dublin when the Dail was sitting, and in any case the majority of questions to be discussed had been pronounced upon by Congress, and there would be no point in action by the National Executive unless they were to tell the members not to abide by the Congress decisions. In regard to the Seanad Elections, the National Executive had carefully considered how many candidates should be nominated, and had decided that the maximum should be eight. Each Deputy and Senator had been invited to propose names. The Trade Unions were not asked, because it was recognized that the people who had by their votes to get the names on the panel were the Deputies and Senators. Very few names were submitted, and from those the National Executive selected five, in addition to the retiring Senators.

THOS. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) pointed out that there was no reasonable ground for blaming Deputies for paying too much attention to their constituencies and approaching Ministers for grants, instead of attending to the work of legislation. On the contrary, their actions were to their credit, for when relief grants had been voted Ministers would not appreciate the needs of different localities unless representations were made to them by Deputies. Mr. Davin was entitled to great credit for the excellent work he had done for his constituency in that way. On the general question of the necessity for improved organization, the resolution merely repeated the wishes and desires of the National Executive. But they must understand the practical difficulties affecting some of the criticisms made. The Party in the Dail had made an attempt to have regular weekly



meetings; it failed because members had to attend committees, go on deputations to Ministers, and so forth, and because they had never known what the programme of work for the following week would be. The only practicable suggestion was to have meetings on Monday afternoons, when the Dail was not sitting, but that would entail heavy expense on members and compel them to leave some of their necessary work in the constituencies undone. They could not insist on that, and in any case a Party meeting was not as necessary for them as it would be if they were a large party, for they were in daily, hourly touch with one another as a group. As Chairman, he had never suppressed the expression of opinion by other members; on the contrary, he had invited it, but really there had never been any occasion for the group to submit proposals to him as Chairman. Whether their methods of working were right or wrong, the work of the Party had been satisfactory to the Movement, both in its main lines and in the close examination of Bills. They might have a more correct procedure and yet get less efficiency. If the Party were double the size, they could detail members to work on separate committees, and appoint a separate secretary to each committee—but the fact was that they had not the resources, either in men or in money, and they could not do everything even in the Labour Party Office. Mr. Davin had no particular right to complain, since he had never taken any steps to get the meetings he desired, and it must be remembered that the National Executive included two Deputies and three Senators. It was quite clear that there was need for reorganization, and the National Executive had shown the need in its Report. The work of the Labour Party was better done than that of any other Party, but they must not be satisfied with that. The members of the Labour Party had their limitations, but that was known when they were selected. They were doing well for the Movement. They would do better if they devoted more study to legislation, estimates, reports, and so forth. But that was work that required training and experience, and they were all improving as the months went by. He hoped the resolution would not be pressed to a division in its present form, for he doubted if the proposed Committee, with a rigidly fixed composition, was the best method of inquiry. The National Executive was emphatically of opinion that there must be thorough reorganization, and it should be given discretion as to the nature and scope of the inquiries it would have to make, the resolution of the Railway Clerks' Association being, of course, borne in mind. It would be better to allow the National Executive to appoint the Committee.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) thought that some of the matters discussed were proper to a meeting of the Party rather than to Congress, though Congress had, of course, the right to supervise the work of the Party, especially on the bigger questions of policy. The National Execu-

tive and the Party had not been slow to take action against offending members when it was necessary, as was shown long ago in the cases of Messrs. Phelan and Lyons. The record of the Labour Party, with all their shortcomings, due to rough and ready methods of selection and lack of training, showed much to be proud of, and nothing to be ashamed of.

Senator J. T. O'FARRELL (National Executive, and Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) said that the Labour Party had done more good for railway workers than for any other section, and railwaymen recognised the fact. The real weakness was not in Parliament at all. The record of the Party in the Dail for intelligence, devotion, regular attendance, and care for the interests of their constituents, was one that any party might be proud of. The demands of the work were extraordinarily severe. Bills were introduced by the score. Was it suggested that the National Executive should read up every Bill and give detailed instructions? That was absurd. There were certain well-known broad lines of policy, and they must leave it to the Party in the Oireachtas to act on these, and not try to treat the members in a grandmotherly fashion. There was no division and no discontent in the Party in the Dail. What they had to do was to make their Movement in the country as strong and well organized politically as it was industrially, and so take the second great step towards emancipation.

Senator W. CUMMINS (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Droichead Nua) said there was no room for doubt as to the necessity for political organization, and the purpose of the resolution should therefore be given effect in some form. The blame for present conditions lay rather with the rank and file than with the National Executive or the Labour Party. The National Executive had indicated how to build up an effective machine, but had not been backed up by the rank and file, and had not got the co-operation of the local leaders throughout the country. His own experience was that at every election they had to go round begging money hat in hand. If the workers realized the necessity for using the political weapon and establishing effective political machinery, the present Labour Party would be only the nucleus of a great party of Freedom.

M. DONNELLAN (Limerick Trades Council) thought that the carrying out of the proposals of the resolution would be an immense advantage to the Labour cause. Propaganda was badly needed in the South. In Limerick, Labour was still divided politically, the prevalent notion being that the two political parties should be allowed to decide the political issues between them before Labour stepped in, though the political ambitions of the country might, in fact, safely be left in the hands of the Labour Party. If it were true that there had only been three meetings of the Party, that was not creditable,



and suggested things were allowed to drift. There should be frequent meetings to discuss policy.

W. P. WARD (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Ballinasloe) agreed that there was a great necessity for better political organization in the country, but he was not certain about the wisdom of passing the resolution. Mr. Johnson had suggested that if the matter was left to the National Executive it would carry out the suggestion of the resolution in some way. He would prefer that method, but could they take it as a promise?

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) said there could be no promise by the National Executive, for they did not yet know who would be the new Executive, but he would certainly promise to bring the matter before the new Executive.

J. H. BENNETT (National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, Dublin) thought they owed a debt to Deputy Davin, for the discussion had disproved all the rumours about divisions and dissensions in the Labour Party. Of course, there were bound to be occasional little differences of opinion between members, but there was no division. He hoped the Committee would be set up to inquire into the question of organization.

J. MCCOOKE (Railway Clerks' Association, Belfast) feared that the discussion had rather wandered away from the text of the resolution itself, to the terms of which he drew attention. Deputy O'Connell had admitted that he had been returned not by, but in spite of, Trade Unionists' votes. It was clear that with their present methods of organization they were never likely to win power. They could all earn cheap applause by talking of the overthrow of capitalism, but what practical steps were they taking to that end? The inquiry suggested would assist in getting practical results.

W. NORTON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dublin) said that the resolution must not be regarded as a vote for the National Executive and against the Labour Party, or the other way about. It was a very sensible resolution. The National Executive could not set up a better committee than that proposed, which had moreover the obvious advantage of bringing in a body outside both the National Executive and the Labour Party by the appointment of ordinary members of Congress.

At this stage the election of members of the National Executive took place.

### **Political Organization—Discussion resumed.**

W. O'BRIEN (Chairman, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin), speaking as a delegate, said that they had not much to regret in the discussion, and paid a tribute to Deputy Davin's services. His own outlook differed very often from Davin's,

but theirs was a broad movement, not a machine, and they wanted all types in it. The Labour Party, as a whole, was a credit to the Movement, and was a very fair reflex of the general body. If the Party were weak, it was because the Movement was weak. They were not yet rich enough in personalities of the kind needed. He suggested that Congress should approve the Report of the National Executive, and that the resolution should be withdrawn on the understanding that the National Executive would bring in advisers from the outside, but should not be tied down to the rigid composition of the Committee proposed in the resolution.

W. DAVIN, T.D. (Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin), replying, said that he was not greatly concerned how the object of the resolution was achieved, so long as it was achieved. Nothing had been done for three years, though he agreed that something had been attempted. As an example of bad organization, he pointed out that he had himself had to call a conference to select candidates for the local authority elections, at which they had secured the election of nine out of ten candidates; it was disgraceful that that sort of work should be left to the T.D.'s. In regard to his action on the Licensing Bill, he pointed out that there was no declared policy of Congress on the matter, and he had simply exercised the liberty of personal judgment that the Party itself had agreed to. As for asking for Party meetings, he had endeavoured unsuccessfully to get a meeting before the long adjournment of the Dail. He was prepared to accept the suggestion of the Chairman as to withdrawal on the very definite understanding that an advisory body would be set up without further delay.

Congress agreed to the withdrawal of the resolution.

The following resolution, standing in the name of the Sligo Trades Council, was not moved, no delegate from that organization being present :—

#### **Organization of Small Farmers.**

"That the National Executive be instructed to take steps without delay in the direction of spreading labour organization in rural districts with a view to embracing those hard-working and badly-paid individuals, the small farmers with uneconomic holdings."

The private session terminated at this stage.



## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT.

### V.—Education, and Resolutions—Discussion resumed.

Senator J. T. O'FARRELL (National Executive, and Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) said that the Report was offered as the Labour contribution to the solution of the educational problem in pursuance of their general policy not merely to criticise, but also to put forward practical proposals. If they could get an educated people, they could not be long enslaved, either intellectually or economically. The Celt was supposed to have a natural love for education, and one branch of the Celts, the Scots, were supposed to be particularly well able to see that they got value for money. Yet the Report showed that the Scots found it worth while to spend £2 4s. 6d. per head per year for education, while Northern Ireland spent £1 14s. 11d., and the Free State only £1 7s. 8d. That sort of economy led surely to national bankruptcy. The lack of technical education was the greatest handicap to their industrial progress. By all means, let the children be taught Irish and other languages, but let it be remembered also that a professor of languages was useless where a carpenter was required. At the same time they had to keep in mind the real object of education; a sound education, training the power of discrimination, would have averted the national catastrophes that had befallen them in the past. All men, it had been well said, were entitled to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In ignorance they could have life, certainly, but not liberty, and their only happiness could be that of the animals. They would have to make up their minds, as impoverished Austria had done, that on every ground they were too poor to economize on education.

W. P. WARD (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Ballinasloe), replying as the mover of the resolution on School Buildings, etc., complimented Congress on the high level of the debate, which would have done credit to a body concerned solely with Education. The proposal to utilise the Civic Guard for school attendance purposes had provoked some criticism, but the Teachers' Organisation had considered the matter very carefully in all its bearings, and had come to the conclusion that by no other method would it be possible to ensure proper attendance. The appointment of an officer of a local authority was invariably unsatisfactory; there was never money enough available for any but a part-time official, who was never free from local influence, and therefore never free to enforce attendance properly. It would not be so easy for children to evade the Guards as it was to evade the School Attendance Officer, and there would consequently in all probability be very few prosecutions. The teachers were not regarding the matter in any punitive spirit or in a mer-

cenary way; they wanted to get the children into the schools, so that they could do their best for them.

The resolution was carried, with one dissentient.

Congress adjourned at 1 p.m., and commenced the afternoon session at 2.15 p.m.

### DEATH OF A DELEGATE.

The Chairman announced that Mr. T. Pettit, of the Public Elementary School, Warrenpoint, a member of the Newry Branch of the Irish National Teachers' Organization, who had been appointed a delegate to Congress, had died. The death of an appointed delegate while Congress was sitting was an unprecedentedly sad event. He asked the delegates to show their sympathy by rising in their places. The delegates rose and stood in silence for a few minutes.

### Speech of Fraternal Delegate from the Scottish Trade Union Congress.

Mr. ROBERT SMITH, of the National Union of Scottish Mineworkers, conveyed fraternal greetings from the Scottish Trade Union Congress, and thanked the delegates for the resolution congratulating the miners of Great Britain passed at the opening session. He said he did not feel a stranger, for it was his second time in Ireland, and he was of Irish birth himself; indeed, nine-tenths of the active workers among the Scottish miners were of Irish percentage. Describing the situation in the mining industry, he said that there was a state of continued warfare all over the coalfields, for the employers were incessantly waging war on the piece-work or tonnage rates by which about half the total number of miners were paid. The average price paid to the producer over the whole of the Scottish fields was 3/- per ton, so that a miner had to turn out  $3\frac{1}{2}$  tons of coal in a day to earn 10/- Yet, when the miner came to buy coal at the pit-bank, he had to pay six times that price, and he understood that in Newry the consumer had to pay twenty times that price. That fact was the essence of the discontent in the mining industry. The miners had refused to submit their case to a further Committee of Inquiry, for they had no faith in inquiries of the kind proposed; they could never forget the Sankey Commission and the broken promises of the Government. The Press and the employers were



publishing balance-sheets and issuing statements to show that there were no profits to be got out of the mining industry. The fact was that in two and a half years the Scottish mine-owners, after paying royalties, wages, supplies, directors' fees, managerial salaries and all other expenses, had made a clear profit of £7,500,000. It was facts like that that made them insist that they were not going to have another mock inquiry: at any inquiry they took part in all the cards would have to be put on the table. There was no excuse for the Government's failure to take action in time, for they had been told last October that trouble was impending, and did nothing. The miners had been accused by the Press of blackmailing the nation in the interests of a few workers. But the miners were acting in defence not only of themselves but of six million Trade Unionists who, with their families, made up a total of 34 million souls, so that if they had threatened to hold up the nation, they had done so on behalf of the great majority of the nation. The settlement that had been effected did not bring them out of the wood. The miners had had their own Commission of Inquiry working since last October, and had found that huge sums had been invested by British owners out of their profits in German mines. The owners told the miners in Britain that if they did not reduce the cost of production they would be beaten by the competition of the German mines. Exactly similar statements were being made to the miners in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and the United States. They had told a Commission in the past that if the industry were well organised, all their needs could be met with a six-hour day. In June of the present year, the total production in the Scottish fields touched the pre-war output, though the number of men employed was very much smaller. They could produce the coal without difficulty, but they were going to insist on claiming all the results of their product, however it was used. At present the coal-owners sold the bye-products of coal to themselves and reaped a treble profit, without reckoning it as a profit on coal-mining. Now the owners were to receive a subsidy, and they were told that it was proposed to tax beer in order to find the money. He wondered what Messrs. Guinness would have to say to that!

The Scottish workers wished the Irish workers "God-speed" to their efforts to drive Capitalism out of their country. Capitalism knew no country; it was reproducing in Indian mines now the conditions that existed in Britain a hundred years ago, for Indians and their wives and children over ten years were being worked in coal-mines there for seven days a week. They were going to carry on the struggle until industry was put on a human basis everywhere. The struggle in the British mines had only been deferred: it would be resumed next June, and many believed that its scope would extend to every class of worker. Mr. Baldwin had told them that every worker would have to submit to wage reductions in order to save the

country. Their reply was that every shirker would have to make concessions first. They were not going back to the pre-war conditions. They would insist that human beings were born to live first and to work afterwards.

He had been particularly impressed with the discussion on Education. In his own county of Ayr, for a population of 60,000 school children they spent £300,000 raised from local taxation, with another £300,000 from State funds, making in all £600,000. The amount spent out of local taxation had been multiplied by four since 1914, and they were convinced that it was well-spent money. In no secondary school in the county did the number of pupils per teacher exceed 10-20. Expenditure on education was the best possible investment. The money would enable them to develop the brains that would help them to come into their own early, early.

A vote of thanks to the Scottish fraternal delegate, moved by T. J. BURKE (Association of Secondary Teachers, Dublin) and seconded by T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) was carried with acclamation.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT.

### V.—Education (pars. 20-24), Appendix I. (§ X) and Appendix II.

These sections of the Report were considered in conjunction with the following resolution:—

#### Working-class Education.

"That Congress recognises the urgent necessity for the Movement in Ireland to provide Adult Working-class Education, based upon Trade Union support and control, in the social sciences as distinct from the ordinary cultural education imparted by non-working-class institutions; welcomes the efforts to provide this in Belfast; congratulates the affiliated organizations which have given practical support to the Working-class Educational Movement; and in order that these efforts may be co-ordinated and made more effective, renews the instruction adopted by the 1919 Congress to the incoming National Executive to promote or co-operate with recognised Trade Unions in promoting such a scheme of Adult Working-class Education, under the control and direction of the National Executive or of Trade Unions."

C. O'SHANNON (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin), moving the resolution, referred to the fact that there was a Labour College already established in Belfast under the auspices of the National Council of Labour Colleges, which had obligations to the members in Ireland of Unions affiliated to it. But he agreed with the recommendations in the Report of Mr. Irwin in Appendix II., and particularly with the recommendation that this work ought to be initiated by Congress and the National Executive. The Report they had discussed earlier dealt with education in the broad, cultural



sense. This resolution was somewhat narrower, but he was not ashamed of that. While he agreed with the Report of the Committee on Education, he believed that they must do something for themselves. If the proposals of the Committee were carried out, it would be possible for all of them to get a decent cultural education, but they wanted more than that. They wanted a system of Working-class Education not only based on Trade Union support but controlled by the Trade Unions, and directed particularly towards education in working-class subjects, that is, generally, in the social sciences. They badly needed a Staff College for the training of young leaders of the Movement. They had first-class brains among the workers, but they lacked facilities for development. He wanted a frankly biassed education that would make them clear-sighted and proof against the sophisms of the employing class. They all knew that they had committed errors in the past, due to lack of opportunities, particularly among the newcomers into the Movement, to get a good grip of basic principles. They must take steps to prevent a repetition of that. That would require money, and it might not be very easy to get money in a time of depression, but that was just the time when they ought to be preparing for the future. There was no question about the value of the work; it had been largely responsible for the development of the Movement in Scotland demonstrated by the solidarity of all workers with the miners. An attempt had been made to start this work in Ireland with the Connolly College. That failed because of circumstances that they could not control, but it had served to show that there was a demand for working-class education if only facilities could be given; County Kildare, for example, which had a very active Labour Movement, had benefited by the work of the Connolly College. They must make those facilities available to the rank and file of the affiliated organizations, and must also have their own Staff Training College. They would have to do the work themselves. It was different from the ordinary educational work of Universities and other educational institutions, and besides, Irish Universities, unlike those of most other countries, had never done anything that was of any use to workers.

J. F. GILL (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Edenderry), seconding the resolution, referred to the discussion on political organization, and said they had to educate both leaders and rank and file. The present system of education was not designed to educate the working-class in the right direction; the capitalist class saw to that. So long as they had only a scanty education, their progress would be limited to a certain distance, but if they were highly educated they could become a great power. If the industries of the country were handed over to them to-morrow, they would not be educated enough to run them. They must have well-educated workers if they hoped not only to control the government of the country but also its wealth production.

T. J. O'CONNELL, T.D. (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Dublin) moved the following amendment:—

To delete all the words after "Congress" and substitute therefor:—  
 "recognising that an urgent necessity exists for providing opportunities for the education of adult workers, and that it is a duty of the Labour Party to assist in providing such opportunities, hereby instructs the incoming National Executive to set up a representative Committee within Trade Union ranks to draw up a scheme of adult education under Labour auspices which would be suited to Irish conditions."

He said that the object of the resolution and amendment were the same, and the difference was only one of method. They were all agreed as to their present backwardness and the existence of a demand which only needed to be organized. They were much behind Great Britain and other countries, but on the other hand they would have the advantage of being able to learn from their experience. The amendment instructed the National Executive to appoint a Committee to frame a scheme. It was almost two years since the other Education Committee whose work they had been discussing had been set up, but he thought it would be agreed that the time had been well spent in preparing a full report. He suggested following a similar course with Working-class Education. There were various schemes at work in Great Britain which differed as to the lines on which the work should be done, but recently the Trade Union Congress General Council had taken steps to co-ordinate them. Before copying any particular scheme here, they ought to examine the whole matter carefully in order to see what would suit conditions here. They had to remember that this was not a highly industrialized country, but had a very scattered population, and they did not want a scheme suited only to Dublin and Belfast, but one that would take in all Irish workers. It would not be easy to frame such a scheme, and consequently a committee was needed to make inquiries. The appointment of a special committee was really a more definite instruction to the National Executive than that given in the resolution. There was no opposition to the resolution itself, but they felt that a better scheme would be produced if a committee were appointed.

J. HARBINSON (Irish National Teachers' Organization) seconded the amendment. There were many different schemes of working-class education, and it was possible that no one of those already in existence would suit Irish conditions, so that it would be wise to appoint a special committee of inquiry before committing themselves to any particular scheme.

T. IRWIN (Operative Plasterers' Society, Dublin) opposed the amendment. At the Rothesay School organized by the National Council of Labour Colleges, he and students sent by the Transport and Women Workers' Unions had met representatives of every



phase of the British Movement. They had the same differences there as here—Left Wing, Right Wing, and so forth—but they were all agreed on Working-class Education, and were ready to help to speed the educational movement in Ireland in any way possible, and not from any particular point of view, and all agreed that the work would be done better if it were done by the National Executive. It would not be good for each Union to act on its own. The work should be done by the National Executive, and there was no need for any delay or inquiry before it started to do the work.

J. MCCOOKE (Railway Clerks' Association, Belfast) found some difficulty in reconciling Irwin's speech with his Report, given in the Appendix, in which he stated that the "star" discussion at the Rothesay School resulted in approval of the agreement with the proposals of the General Council of the Trade Union Congress. That seemed to him to be a strong argument in favour of the amendment, which proposed to set up a Committee of Inquiry. He regretted that the National Executive had selected two of its own members to attend these Summer Schools; it would have been more useful to send two outsiders. The School held just prior to Congress called for congratulation; the time and place were not all that could be desired, and the students might perhaps suffer from mental indigestion, but the experiment showed what could be done with a properly-organized Summer School. He did not think the Universities were quite so indifferent to workers' education as had been suggested; Queen's University, Belfast, certainly was not, some of the professors there being more progressive than the workers themselves. He had himself been interested in the Workers' Educational Association, having examined the merits of the different systems and decided in favour of the W.E.A., which gave facilities for an all-round education. The Labour Colleges gave education from one side alone, and a half-educated man was a danger both to himself and to the Movement.

Senator W. CUMMINS (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Droichead Nua) said that whatever scheme was started must be capable of general application. The difficulty they had found in Co. Kildare was the lack of a graduated series of lectures suited to the local conditions and to the mental condition of the workers. If they could get hold of boys when they left school and continue their education on a graduated course, they would get a generation of fit workers, but at present the workers had not sufficient preliminary education to enable them to draw wise conclusions. Any scheme to suit their conditions must consider the rural element and must have a rural bias. The National Executive itself had quite enough to do, and they ought therefore to set up a Special Committee with power to co-opt outside people prepared to help.

### Result of Election of National Executive.

At this stage, H. T. WHITLEY (Typographical Association, Belfast), Chairman of the Scrutineers, presented a report on the election for members of the National Executive showing the election of the following :—

	No. of votes received.
W. McMULLEN, M.P., Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast ... ..	130
T. CASSIDY, Typographical Association, Derry ... ..	125
T. J. O'CONNELL, T.D., Irish National Teachers' Organization, Dublin ... ..	120
Senator T. FARREN, Workers' Council, Dublin ... ..	116
T. IRWIN, Operative Plasterers' Society, Dublin ... ..	116
M. SOMERVILLE, Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Dublin ... ..	114
M. J. McGOWAN, Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Drogheda ... ..	107
A. HERON, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin ... ..	103
Senator T. FORAN, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin ... ..	102
Miss E. O'CONNOR, Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin ... ..	100
L. J. DUFFY, Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin ... ..	99
O. HYNES, Ancient Guild of Brick and Stonelayers, Dublin ... ..	98
T. RYAN, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Waterford ... ..	85

The total number of voting papers distributed and returned was 154. The votes recorded for unsuccessful candidates were :—R. S. Anthony, 81; J. H. Bennett, 81; J. Farren, 59; G. F. Gillespie, 58.

The Officers were elected without opposition, as follows :—

*Chairman*—DENIS CULLEN, Irish Bakers' and Confectioners' etc., Union, Dublin.

*Vice-Chairman*—Senator J. T. O'FARRELL, Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin.

*Secretary*—Thomas JOHNSON, T.D., Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin.

*Treasurer*—William O'BRIEN, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin.



## Result of Election of Auditors.

The election of Auditors, for which Messrs. D. O'Connor & Co. and Messrs. J. R. Reynolds & Co., both of Dublin, had been nominated, resulted in the election of the former by 106 votes to 25.

## Working-class Education—Resumed.

A. HERON (Treasurer, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) said they must realise the distinction between ordinary education and Working-class Education. When they left the purely technical side of orthodox education and came to examine the cultural side and the social sciences, they found that education ceased to be impartial, and was designed to fit workers into capitalist society rather than to help them to find a way out of it. It was time they began to fit their organizers and leaders for that task. He agreed that conditions in this country were different from those in Britain, and that consequently the system of the National Council of Labour Colleges, suitable for Britain, would have to be modified here. But the point that the resolution definitely stressed was that the education to be given must be working-class education, imparting knowledge of the particular subjects which would enable the students to be of value to the Movement. They must remember that when it came to subjects such as the interpretation of history, there was no such thing as an all-round education or impartiality; the average University professor was as one-sided in favour of Capitalism as they would have their people on the side of the working-class.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) pointed out that there was no contradiction between the resolution and the amendment, unless they were to impart into the resolution a certain meaning. If it was to be taken to mean that the National Executive was to organize a system of working-class education in order to pump a certain set of ideas into students so that they would never think outside those ideas, they would be going utterly wrong. But if the resolution was not to be taken as approving any particular method of working-class education, it did not matter whether the resolution or the amendment was carried. For himself, he had no doubt that the work done by the Plebs in Great Britain was excellent, but it was not suitable to this country. He hoped they would get an assurance from the mover of the resolution that it was not intended to limit them to any particular school of thought.

At this stage a motion "that the question be now put," was proposed by T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) and seconded by J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork), but was defeated.

D. R. CAMPBELL (Trades Council, Belfast) stated that the Belfast Trades Council had affiliated with equal readiness to both the

National Council of Labour Colleges and the Workers' Educational Association. Though he was no lover either of the capitalist class or of University professors generally, he did not want bias in education. What they wanted was the truth, and if they tried to get the truth there was no question of bias. He agreed that the ordinary school teaching very often was biased, but it was no remedy to put something equally evil as a bias in the opposite direction. It would be deplorable if they were to try to give an education in subjects that they thought would be helpful to workers, irrespective of whether what they taught was true or not. Their task was to educate the mind of the workers so that they would seek after the truth themselves.

Senator J. T. O'FARRELL (National Executive, and Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) said the discussion showed that there was a distinct cleavage of opinion between two schools. But how many delegates knew what were the differences between the educational systems spoken of? He had attended lectures on pure Marxian Economics, and found that no regard was paid to any development since the time of Marx, that the matter was taken bodily from cheap pamphlets, and simply pumped into the minds of the students, and that it was calculated to inspire them with no greater ambition than to destroy. They would have to take a full, comprehensive view of education, and mould their system to suit the social and economic life of their country, recognising that a man's outlook on life was determined not only by his education, but also by his economic conditions. They would have to give workers such an education as would put them in a position to choose their own policy and party for themselves. They would never get a really genuine working-class movement by pumping one set of ideas into workers.

C. O'SHANNON, replying as mover of the resolution, said the discussion showed the need for a school, for it was clear that some of the delegates had not read the Report on the matter. Of course, their country wanted a scheme different from that of other countries. The resolution did not ask for a hard and fast copy of the National Council of Labour Colleges' scheme. The National Executive could set up a Committee to consider the subject whenever it liked without any instruction from the Congress. He was quite prepared to leave the procedure to the National Executive to decide. He had almost been prepared to accept the amendment until it was made clear that the amendment deliberately omitted to speak of Working-class Education. The difference between the two ideas might be compared with the difference between the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language and the Gaelic League; he wanted the popular Gaelic League type, not the academic type. They were denuding the industrial movement of some of its best workers by putting men into the Dail and similar bodies, and they must train others to take



their place and introduce new blood. He was not prepared to ask Congress to spend money on education of the ordinary cultural type, which could be got outside; he wanted Working-class Education.

On a vote being taken, the amendment was defeated, receiving 54 votes against 72, and the resolution was then carried *nem. con.*

## VI.—Health Insurance and Medical Service.

This section of the Report was considered in conjunction with the following resolution :—

### Health Insurance.

“This Congress records its amazement that the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into National Insurance and Public Health should, in opposition to the weight of evidence, and utterly regardless of the interests of insured persons, recommend the Amalgamation of Approved Societies into a Unified Society in the control or administration of which they could not have any effective voice; we call upon the Government not to give legislative effect to these recommendations, and suggest that if unification becomes inevitable it can be effectively achieved only by the formation of a State-owned Society under the control of a Minister responsible to the Oireachtas; that before departing from the principle of Approved Societies it seems to us desirable that the Government would dissolve such Societies as are improperly administered, or whose membership is insufficient to permit of economic administration, and encourage otherwise the voluntary amalgamation of kindred Societies.”

L. J. DUFFY (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin), moving the resolution, recalled the early opposition to Trade Union Approved Societies. The Committee appeared to have been set up merely to find the Minister a pretext for doing what he wanted to do. The argument of economy that was put forward was quite baseless, for Societies were limited to a yearly sum of 4s. 5d. per member for administration, which was far cheaper than any private insurance institution. The real difficulty was the cost of the Insurance Commission itself, and the duplication of records which was complained of would be the same whether there was one society or a hundred. The Committee's proposal was to set up a single, centrally-controlled society, entirely wiping out the element of democracy, for the Committee would be a nominated body, responsible to nobody.

T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) seconded the resolution, and suggested that the Government seemed to be endeavouring to filch away all their rights as citizens, and this attempt should be met by a general strike of all insured persons.

P. DORAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) supported the resolution, and said the Insurance Commissioners were

responsible for most of the bungles connected with Health Insurance.

M. SOMERVILLE (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Dublin) pointed out that the big Friendly Societies had knowledge of the transfer of insured persons from Great Britain before the Trade Union Societies. That situation had been met by the formation of the Irish Trade Union Congress Health Insurance Society. But the Commissioners still cling to the idea of wiping out all the smaller societies. His view was that the Trade Union Societies were the only societies administering benefits properly, and it was a great advantage to draw both Union and Insurance benefits from the one organization.

T. JOHNSON (Secretary, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks) objected to the rhetorical wording of the resolution, particularly as the evidence had not been published. The passage of the resolution might have the effect of binding them, no matter what the evidence. He thought it would be sufficient if Congress recorded its opposition to any recommendation of a single unified society in the control and administration of which insured persons would have no voice. There might be proposals that they could approve if consideration of them were not debarred by the resolution under discussion.

S. BYRNE (Workers' Council, Dublin) advocated nationalization of Health Insurance. There were 83 Approved Societies, most of them kept alive by petty, parochial considerations. All insured persons should get the same benefits for the same contributions, but that was impossible with 83 Societies. Congress was strong enough to secure representation on any single society that might be set up.

T. IRWIN (Operative Plasterers' Society, Dublin), supporting the resolution, referred to previous attacks on the small societies. In his view the small societies were the only societies working Health Insurance in the right spirit. His own evidence to the Departmental Committee was to the effect that if unification was insisted on it ought to be secured by nationalization. There was plenty of other changes needed. Health Insurance Funds were supposed to be used for building houses, but this was never done. There were streams of complaints about benefit administration by the large societies.

J. H. BENNETT (National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, Dublin) opposed the resolution, but also opposed any State-owned Society under the present Government, for workers would not get the benefits they were entitled to. He regretted that the National Executive had made no statement on the very important matter of the Irish Trade Union Congress Health Insurance Society.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Society was a self-governing body, and its affairs could not be discussed by Congress.

Mr. BENNETT pointed out that there were representatives of the National Executive on the Management Committee of the Society.



The CHAIRMAN repeated that discussion of the Society's affairs would be out of order.

Mr. BENNETT said he only wanted to make an appeal to Trade Unionists in the Free State to get into a Trade Union Society—either that of their Union or the Congress Health Insurance Society. The Congress Society was controlled by themselves, and members got full benefits. He suggested that Congress should have an annual report from the Society, and that the Secretary and Manager should attend the Congress.

T. RYAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Waterford) supported the resolution, holding that the small societies generally were the better for the insured persons, while admitting that there might be some badly managed.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) endorsed the suggestion made by Mr. Johnson. He could see no objection in principle to unification.

J. DUNNE (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Bray) asked if delegates could have the opinion of the Manager of the Irish Trades Union Congress Society on the matter.

The CHAIRMAN said that could not be done.

L. J. DUFFY, in reply, said that the number of Approved Societies was 81, and of those a substantial number had under 5,000 members. The only evidence in favour of unification was given to the Committee by the Commissioners themselves. There was no objection to abolishing the badly-managed societies. But if they were going to insist on a single society, it was clearly better to have a State-owned Society; the State would not be obliged to guarantee the benefits. Mr. Bennett had said he was opposed to a society owned and run by a capitalist Government, but did he object to the State running the Post Office, telephones, etc.? The Trade Unions were prepared to let the State run Unemployment Insurance, and did not even avail of Section 17 of the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920. There was a strong case for the Trade Union Approved Society. His own Union had had to give a grant of £100 to its Approved Section, but they thought it was good value, for they did not refuse benefit on mere technicalities.

On a division, the resolution was carried by 60 votes to 34.

## VII.—Workmen's Compensation.

This section of the Report was passed without discussion.

## VIII.—Factory and Shops Acts.

With this section of the Report was taken the following resolution :—

### The Shops Act, 1912.

“This Congress renews its demand for an immediate amendment of the Shops Act, 1912, to provide for :—

- (a) Its extension to the fullest extent to the Non-Urban Areas.
- (b) Administration by the Central Authority.
- (c) Minimum rates of pay for Shop Assistants and Clerks.
- (d) A 44-hour week and an 8-hour day.
- (e) Abolition of Sunday work.
- (f) A leaving note of character.
- (g) Eighteen Working Days' Annual Leave.
- (h) Payment for Overtime.
- (i) The abolition of the “Living-in” System.
- (j) The licensing of all shops and Shop Workers.
- (k) The compulsory closing of all shops and offices on Bank Holidays and the prevention of the use of private houses for the purposes of shops, factories and workshops.”

W. J. BYRNE (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) moved the resolution, which, he said, was intended as a summary of the requirements of the distributive trades. The existing Act dated back to 1912, and was a poor piece of legislation, operated only with the greatest difficulty, and inadequate. He drew special attention to the necessity of a compulsory leaving note or reference, and to the necessity of holidays for indoor workers. Local authorities had shown no desire to enforce the law, and administration by a central authority was necessary. Meanwhile Labour members of local authorities should give attention to this matter. But there were fairly large bodies of workers in small towns not covered by the Act, which needed extension to non-urban areas.

T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick), seconding the resolution, said that improved legislation was specially necessary for the smaller towns and non-urban areas, where conditions made impossible the Union activity that could be made effective in the larger towns.

The resolution was agreed to.

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) regretted that the deputation referred to in the Report had not interviewed the Minister. Apparently new officials called “Industrial Inspectors” were to be appointed. What were to be their qualifications for the work? She was anxious to see the practical experience of workers utilized by the appointment of workers as Factory Inspectors. She urged strongly that the work already done in this connection should be followed up.



The following resolution was sent in by the Navan Trades Council, but was not moved, no delegates from that body being present :—

“That Congress requests that a sufficient number of Inspectors be appointed to see that the Factory and Workshops Acts are complied with by Factory Owners and others governed by these Acts, and especially direct attention to the large number of bakehouses and factories throughout the country which are in a very bad sanitary condition, such insanitary workshops being responsible for a large number of deaths at an early age amongst the Irish Workers.”

An amendment by the Irish Women Workers' Union to insert “properly qualified” before “Inspectors” lapsed with the resolution.

## **IX.—Government Commissions.**

The following resolution was taken in conjunction with paragraph 29 of the Report :—

### **Old Age Pensions.**

“That this Congress urges the restoration of the Old Age Pension to 10s. per week, and that it be made payable to all persons over 70 years of age whose income is less than £1 per week.”

Miss FAGAN (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the resolution, and intimated that she accepted an amendment by the Sheet Metal Workers' Union to alter the pension age from 70 to 65 years. She reminded the Congress that the Free State Government had reduced the Old Age Pension from 10s. to 9s. weekly as a maximum, and asked that a strong demand should be made for the restoration of the 10s., and, if possible, an increase beyond that.

John FARREN (National Union of Sheet Metal Workers, Dublin), seconding, said that the cut in the pension was the most drastic thing ever done by any Government. He cited a case of a pensioner paying out of the pension a rent of 4s. 3d. a week, who had had to be brought to the workhouse hospital and died shortly after admission. The Government was really responsible for the death in such a case. Provision ought to be made so that superannuation benefit paid by Trade Unions would not disqualify for the Old Age Pension. The age limit ought to be reduced to 65 years.

Mrs. BUCKLEY (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said the reduction of the pension was the meanest form of economy. The plight of many pensioners was heart-breaking.

M. CONNOR (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Drogheda) cited a case of a woman who had been held disqualified to receive a pension on the ground that her husband's earnings were 35s. a week, though he had been six months out of work.

L. J. DUFFY (National Executive, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks) pointed out that the Department's Inspectors

were interpreting the Blind Persons' Act as though a claimant had to be totally blind before becoming entitled to an Old Age Pension. That was not the intention of the Act.

J. DOYLE (National Union of Life Assurance Workers, Dublin) said he would prefer to see a demand, not for the restoration of 1s., but for a pension of £1. Pensioners were being refused relief in Dublin by the Commissioners who had superseded the Board of Guardians, the Labour members of which used to be able to get grants of 3s. to 5s. for pensioners who could not live on their pensions. The responsibility for the reduction in the pension rested on those who refused to send more Labour Deputies into the Dail.

The resolution, as amended, was carried without dissent.

### **Commission on the Poor Law—paragraph 30.**

Resolutions dealing with Nurses' working conditions were taken in conjunction with this paragraph.

#### **Housing of Nurses.**

"This Congress asserts that district nurses and midwives should be given suitable housing accommodation, with proper sanitary arrangements, and that Local Authorities should see that their nurses are properly housed, and that night nurses have a quiet sleeping apartment."

Miss FLANAGAN (Irish Women Workers' Union—Nurses' and Midwives' Section, Dublin), moving the resolution, said that in very many cases midwives found it impossible to get lodgings, and deplorable conditions existed in all parts of the country that made it impossible for them to observe the proper precautions as to washing, disinfection, etc. Nurses in County Hospitals were also badly housed. In one case a nurse on night duty had to sleep in a room opening on a passage that was being used all day.

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) seconded the resolution, and urged Labour members of local authorities to take action in the matter.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

#### **Working Hours of Nurses.**

"That Congress considers the long hours still imposed on Nurses by Local Authorities and the Local Government Ministry are a scandal to this country, and we re-affirm our opinion that Nurses, like other workers, should not be compelled to work longer than forty-eight hours per week, day or night."

Miss FLANAGAN (Irish Women Workers' Union—Nurses' and Midwives' Section, Dublin) moved the resolution, and said that the



hours Nurses were called upon to work were scandalously long. Workers generally regarded 48 hours a week as a maximum, but Nurses often had to work 56 hours a week, and often had to do 12 hours' night duty for periods of three to six months. The Nurse's day was never less than 10 hours.

Miss O'CONNOR (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin), seconding, said it was principally the working-class who were dependent on the services of Nurses employed by local authorities. The present administration of Boards of Health was reducing the number of Nurses and lengthening their hours. It was impossible for a Nurse working 12 to 14 hours a day to give proper attention to patients. Labour members of local authorities should give special attention to this matter.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) said that whole-time night duty for Nurses was very undesirable. A system of alternating day and night duty had been introduced in Waterford and found to work well.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

### **Remuneration of Nurses.**

"This Congress protests most strongly against the Government policy of paying Nurses and other workers engaged on temporary work at the lowest rates at which they can be procured, in some cases barely covering the cost of board and lodging in the locality."

Miss FLANAGAN (Irish Women Workers' Union—Nurses' and Midwives' Section, Dublin), moving the resolution, said that in the case of a Tuberculosis Nurse in Co. Dublin the salary fixed by the Department was so low that the Union had been able to prevent the Council from getting any Nurse, and eventually the Council had taken the matter in its own hands and decided on a decent salary. Some Nurses were paid salaries barely sufficient to cover the cost of their board.

M. STAFFORD (National Union of Vehicle Builders, Dublin) seconded, and said that in the case cited by Miss Flanagan the members of the Insurance Committee and County Council had risked surcharge rather than agree to the sweated conditions imposed by the Local Government Department. Labour members of local authorities might follow the example of Dublin.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

At this stage, discussion of the National Executive Report was suspended for consideration of the following resolution :—

### **Industrial Insurance.**

"This Congress calls upon the Government of Saorstát Éireann to introduce and pass into law, as soon as may be, Industrial Assur-

ance Legislation on the lines recommended by the Committee of Enquiry presided over by Mr. McCann, K.C.; further, we beg to register our opposition to any whittling down of these recommendations at the dictation of wealthy foreign combines."

W. J. BYRNE (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) moved the resolution, and pointed out that the report of the Committee had been with the Free State Government since July, 1924, and there was no sign of any action being taken on it. There were many irresponsible Irish Societies and Companies undertaking insurance with quite inadequate resources. In addition, there were a number of cross-Channel Companies that could not be dealt with in the Free State Courts.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) seconded the resolution.

The resolution was carried.

### **Greetings from Irish National Foresters.**

A telegram was received conveying greetings from the Irish National Foresters, meeting in Convention at Monaghan. It was decided to send a telegram in reply conveying the good wishes of Congress.

Congress adjourned for the day at 5.55 p.m.

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*Fourth Day—Thursday, August 6th, 1925.*

The Chair was taken at 9.50 a.m.

## **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE—Resumed.**

### **X.—Railway Amalgamation.**

In conjunction with this section of the Report, the following resolution was considered :—

#### **Nationalisation of Railways.**

“This Congress hereby records its considered opinion that the time is now opportune for the railways to be owned and controlled by the Government in the interests of the whole Nation. We therefore instruct the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress to make the Nationalisation of the Railways a prominent item in their policy and use every endeavour at all times to convert the people and Government to this necessary reform.”

T. WARD (National Union of Railwaymen, Belfast), moving the resolution, said that the resolution was an old and well-known one, but was never more opportune. Railways had declined so much and the companies had made so little effort to meet opposition that nationalization was the only remedy. Railways had made a handsome profit in 1913, though railwaymen had been grossly underpaid. In 1917 came a period of State control, with a guaranteed revenue for the shareholders, followed by a large payment out of State funds as “compensation” on decontrol. In 1923 the average dividend paid by railway companies in Northern Ireland was 4.18 per cent., and in the Free State 3.71 per cent. The railways were now faced with serious competition, and were endeavouring to meet it by cutting down staffs to an extent that imperilled the safety of the public. The right way to economize was to nationalize the railways. The roads were not run as a private concern, and railways should not be. Referring to the Report, Mr. Ward said that the Labour Party had done a tremendous amount of good work for railwaymen, and he desired to express their gratitude.

J. McCooke (Railway Clerks' Association, Belfast), seconding, declared that even if he were not a railwayman he would still be strongly in favour of public ownership, because only by public control was it possible to get the utmost efficiency. The railway situation must drift to disaster unless the Governments took action. The Governments had a duty to the railways, which had been brought into being with Government aid and money. The motor competition had not been foreseen, and before long there would be a demand for a further subsidy to the railways. He did not believe in subsidizing without getting public control. High wages and short

hours were not the cause of the railways' position, for that had been unsatisfactory when railwaymen were the most sweated of all workers. The fact was that Ireland was too small to maintain the luxury of railways as private ventures. If the railways were efficiently managed, which would necessitate a share in the management by the workers, they would be able to withstand competition.

T. TOBIN (National Union of Railwaymen, Dublin) said that the only solution of the problem of securing cheap and efficient transport lay in nationalization. Referring to the Report, he expressed surprise at the brevity of the reference to railway amalgamation. He paid tribute to the value of the handbook on the Railways Act that had been published, but pointed out that the Act appeared to have left the companies a loophole by allowing them to dismiss old men, and cited the case of a driver who had been specially selected to drive a train with Press-men on a tour of inspection, and had been discharged immediately afterwards on a pension of 7s. a week.

P. O'TOOLE (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) pointed out the serious position of shopmen on the Great Southern Railways, at whose expense the Company was economizing by working only three-quarter time. Yet, while hundreds had been discharged and thousands were working short time, the Company was importing goods that could have been produced at home. The Minister had given an assurance that no importations would be permitted, but Pullman coaches had been brought in, locomotives imported in parts and only assembled in Dublin, and 4,000 new lamps bought in Great Britain that might have been made by Irish tinsmiths.

W. McMULLEN, M.P. (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast) referred to the unfair competition of motor traffic with railways. Railwaymen were relatively well paid, while in the case of motor traffic men were very badly paid, drivers of charabancs being sometimes dependent solely on tips. It was difficult to organize workers in the industry until it was fairly well developed, and other action, as through local authorities, would have to be taken.

T. WARD (National Union of Railwaymen, Belfast), replying, stated that a joint committee of railwaymen and transport workers in Belfast had been set up to deal with the organization of motor-men.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

#### **XI.—International Relations, and Appendix III., Report of Fraternal Delegates to the Scottish T.U.C.**

These parts of the Report were passed without discussion.



## **XII.—Labour Day.**

This Section was passed without discussion.

## **XIII.—Political Activities.**

This Section of the Report was considered in general at an earlier stage, and discussion was limited to certain detailed points.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) objected to an offer made by Deputy Davin that miners at the Wolf-hill Collieries would accept a wage of £2 weekly, and to his discouragement of the miners' claim to representation on the Board of the Company.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) pointed out that Deputy Davin had done ten men's work in trying to keep the mine open when the company was in liquidation. The offer referred to was made by the men in an effort to keep the mine from shutting down. Deputy Davin's view was that a single representative on the Board would be of little use and might give an excuse for throwing the blame for failure on the men. The case was one of temporary emergency in a special case and could not be held to indicate any general policy.

## **Housing Act.**

In conjunction with paragraph 53 of the Report, the following resolution was considered:—

### **Housing.**

"That this Congress protests with indignation against the failure of the Government to make the housing of the workers the primary object of their social programme, and demands:—

- (a) The establishment of a National Housing Council and the framing of a definite and continuous programme for the building of working-class houses over a prolonged period; such scheme to be facilitated by Government loans and subsidies to Local Authorities.
- (b) That 25 per cent. of the new houses built be four-roomed houses, with a scullery, bathroom, and hot water supply.
- (c) That the purchase of new houses be in all cases optional.
- (d) That the first preference in the allocation of new houses be given to large families living under crowded conditions, irrespective of their capacity to pay a purchasing price if otherwise eligible."

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) moved the resolution, and said that until they got a Housing Council and a continuous programme they could not get houses built satisfactorily. The Labour Party should make Housing a very prominent part of its policy. In Dublin almost all the houses being built were of the five-roomed type, requiring a rent of 15s. to £1 weekly, which

was not within the means of the less well-paid worker. They must have at least a proportion of four-roomed houses, with a good kitchen-living-room. The practice of compelling occupants to purchase houses was unfair to workers. The first preference should be given to persons with the largest families who were in the most urgent need.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford), seconding, stated that the tendency of public bodies was to ignore the claims of workers to houses; they seemed to be oblivious to the present wage position. The purchasing rent charged in Dublin seemed exorbitant. In Waterford the rent was fixed at 12s. to 12s. 6d. weekly for 15 years.

J. HUGHES (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Kilrush), referring to the plight of the smaller towns, said that in Kilrush only six houses had been built in 30 years. If the clergy brought pressure to bear on the public boards in regard to housing, they would be discharging their duty to look after the moral condition of the people.

J. JONES (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Waterford) urged that measures must be taken to deal with housing in rural districts as well as towns.

W. F. CUNNINGHAM (Trades Council, Newry) asked that pressure should be applied to speed up the building of houses by the Sailors' and Soldiers' Trust. In spite of repeated applications, none of these houses had been built in Newry Urban District.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

T. IRWIN (Workers' Council, Dublin) formally moved the following resolution:—

"In view of the urgency of the Housing Problem in every part of the country, and being satisfied that under existing conditions the problem cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by local effort, we call for the immediate establishment of a National Housing Authority on which the Building Industry will have representation, this Council to take over the whole responsibility of Housing and Town Planning from existing authorities, with full power to survey the Housing requirements of the whole country, commandeer or manufacture building materials as required, and build or arrange for the building of houses wherever required."

E. FITZGERALD (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Cork) seconded. It was essential that the workers in the building industry should be represented on the Housing Authority. Much money was wasted, and overhead charges were excessive. The engineers of local authorities should be quite competent to supervise the erection of houses on standardized plans. In Cork a Building Guild had



been working successfully, producing better houses at £535 than contractors put up for £750-£800. A national authority with representatives of building workers would make housing an economic proposition.

MISS BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) questioned whether it was right to suggest that the proposed Council should take over the *whole* responsibility from the local authorities. The latter should be represented on the Council.

J. F. GILL (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Edenderry) charged many local authorities with not doing their duty. In Edenderry the population had increased by 1,000 in 20 years, but no houses had been built, and 78 families were living in converted stables owned by members of the local authority.

M. SOMERVILLE (Workers' Council, Dublin) called attention to the extent to which substitutes and imported materials—asbestos roofings, fibre slabs, ready-made joinery, etc.—were being used in houses built by local authorities. These were often not durable, and would entail heavy expense on the tenant before he had completed the purchase of his house.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) pointed out that the resolution was a re-affirmation of a decision of the 1919 Congress which had since been the basis of Labour policy. It was clearly intended that the national housing authority should have full responsibility, though it would call in the local authority for consultation and co-operation. In general they were opposed to depriving the local authority of responsibility in local affairs, but housing was a national matter, and local authorities had met with insuperable financial difficulties, and sometimes had shown a want of appreciation of the need for houses. It was not a question of filling gaps here and there in housing accommodation, but of re-housing the people. To meet present needs they required 50,000 houses, but the existing arrangements provided for only three or four thousand houses a year. The need could only be met by a national authority, planning for continuous work for a period of, say, 15 years, and mobilizing all the building operatives, building employers, architects, surveyors, etc. They were not laying down any rigid composition for the national authority, except to claim representation for the building industry itself.

Senator J. T. O'FARRELL (National Executive, and Railway Clerks' Association, Dublin) referred to the charge that was repeated in both Houses whenever housing was mentioned, that the high cost of houses was due to restriction of output by building workers. If that were true, it was a crime against the community, and above all against the working-class. If it was false, the building workers ought to give it an emphatic denial, and show that they were prepared to make their contribution to the solution of the housing problem.

O. HYNES (National Executive, and Brick and Stonelayers' Guild, Dublin) said that the charge that bricklayers restricted output to an agreed number of bricks per day had been so often denied and repeated without any attempt at proof that they had given up denial as useless. However, he would again emphatically deny that there was any rule or regulation, written or unwritten, in force that output should be in any way restricted. This sort of charge was repeatedly being made by men like Mr. John Good, T.D., who controlled the Dublin Brick Company, and had a monopoly of the supply in Dublin. When the Dublin Building Guild started to build houses for the Corporation, this company quoted £8 a thousand for bricks, though it was supplying private builders at the time at £7. The Guild decided to build with concrete instead of bricks, and immediately the company offered bricks at £7. The Guild found that they could get bricks from outside Dublin at £6 10s., and immediately the company reduced its price to £4 10s. Finally the company was asked to quote for a million bricks for the Corporation, and it offered them at £4 7s. 6d. a thousand. Yet, during the whole period not a single brick had been manufactured by the company, which asked for £8 when it could make a profit at £4 7s. 6d. It was easy to see why charges were made against bricklayers by people who wanted to divert the attention of the public.

Senator T. FARREN (National Executive, and Workers' Council, Dublin) said that the best local authorities could do fell short of the need. The grant of a million pounds first given by the Free State Government to local authorities had produced only a few houses. Then by the Building Facilities Act, 1924, the Government offered subsidies to private speculators instead of to local authorities, but it had fixed a maximum letting or selling price, and had taken power to prevent profiteering in building materials. That Act did not produce houses in reasonable number, and under the Act of 1925 a reduced subsidy was offered, but all restrictions on profiteering, whether in rents, selling prices or materials, were removed. The result was that not two per cent. of the houses built would be occupied by working-class people. As for the charges about output, the only people who talked about output were those who never put out anything themselves. The largest building contractors in Dublin had expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with the men's output.

T. IRWIN (National Executive and Operative Plasterers' Society, Dublin) declared that local authorities had failed absolutely to deal with the problem. Even the three "supermen" who had been appointed to supersede the Dublin Corporation had not produced a single house beyond those planned by the Corporation. Their contribution to the problem had been to suggest a reduction of wages to men working on Corporation houses—in other words, to suggest that men working for the same contractor on opposite sides of the road should be paid different rates for the same work. On the out-



put question, he was prepared to pay £5 to any public charity if any of the gentlemen who made the charges would name any organization of building workers that had any sort of rule restricting output.

The resolution was carried *nem. con.*

In conjunction with paragraph 55 of the Report, dealing with the Local Government Act, 1925, the following resolution was considered :—

### **Abolition of Local Authorities.**

"That Congress reiterates its protest against the undemocratic and reactionary policy of the Governments of the Free State and of 'Northern' Ireland in arbitrarily suppressing popularly-elected Local Authorities and replacing them by selected paid Commissioners of their own political parties, and demands that the responsibility of Local Government in all areas in which these Commissioners are functioning be restored to the local electorate, and that elections for all such suppressed Local Authorities be held forthwith upon the same conditions as the elections for the general body of Local Authority."

J. F. GILL (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Edenderry), moving the resolution, said that the result of abolishing local authorities and appointing paid Commissioners had been to inflict hardship on working people. For example, a man with a wife and ten children, who had been continuously unemployed for three years and was not receiving any unemployment insurance benefit, applied to the Home Help Officer for assistance and was refused. When the case was brought by the speaker to the notice of the Commissioner, the latter declared that in no case would he give home help to any able-bodied man, no matter what the circumstances might be. The same Commissioner had done everything possible to break up the road-workers' organization, and to substitute the old system of contract work for direct labour.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) seconded, and said they had similar experiences in Cork, where a paid Commissioner drew a salary of £20 a week, but declared that £2 14s. a week was enough for any man to live on.

T. LAWLOR (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) thought the resolution did not go far enough. Paid Commissioners were regarded as giving a good form of local administration by those people—the Government, Chambers of Commerce, and so on—who wanted local authorities that could be trusted not to pay higher wages than private employers, but to reduce wages. Dublin had been harder hit in this way than any other part of the country, and there ought to be a demand for a new election for the local authority. He hoped the National Executive would give special attention to the matter.

L. J. DUFFY (National Executive, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) pointed out that the abolition of elected local authorities began in Northern Ireland, where some of the elected bodies did things not pleasing to the Belfast Government. The Dublin Ministers then copied their colleagues in Belfast. There was a deeper significance in the matter. There was, for example, the campaign that had been carried on for three or four months to secure an extension of the lease of the Dublin Tramways' Company, to which the appointed Commissioners appeared to have succumbed. The Free State Ministry of Local Government had distinguished itself in being the Department most hostile to working-class opinion.

A. HERON (Treasurer, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) declared that the suppression of local authorities meant the replacement of government of, for and by the people by dictatorship. The local authorities were alleged to be wasteful, uneconomic and corrupt. Labour recognized the need for economy, but what was the real economy—moderately high rates and good services, or very low rates and no services? If they wanted a good public health service, good roads, good technical education, they would have to pay for them. The Labour members of local authorities could proudly claim that they had been conspicuous for efficiency and cleanness in administration. Those who talked of slack attendance and jobbery might consider the case of the Dail, where only 38 members of the Government Party attended to deal with legislation of such importance as the Treason Bill, but 101 turned up to vote on the nominations for the Seanad election. Administration by paid Commissioners did not produce efficiency. In Offaly there was a Commissioner; in Kildare, the adjoining county, there was a popularly elected Council, but in Offaly the roads were among the worst in Ireland, while in Kildare they were among the best.

Mrs. BUCKLEY (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said that the abolition of local authorities was a blow at democracy. The local authorities stood between the Government and the people, and when they were abolished the people were at the mercy of the Government. There had been no gain in efficiency. In Dublin the Commissioners were taking credit for work actually done by the old Corporation. The Corporation had been denounced for extravagance in granting pensions, but the huge pensions granted to high officials were not objected to. The economy that the new Commissioners practised was illustrated by the stoppage of the weekly bag of coal that the Dublin Guardians used to give to poor people in the winter.

W. NORTON (Irish Union of Postoffice Workers, Dublin) pointed out that there was a growing demand in certain quarters for representation on local authorities on the basis of the amount of rates paid. It was not a big step from the appointment of paid Commissioners to the introduction of a complete change in the system of



representation which would turn public bodies into "close boroughs." The tendency called for the most resolute opposition.

MISS L. BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) said she found some inconsistency between the resolution under discussion and that on Housing, which deprived local authorities of control over Housing on the ground that they had failed to deal with it satisfactorily. She preferred the principle of the present resolution.

R. TYNAN (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) asked Congress to realise that the policy of the present Government was only a continuance of that of the party of which the members of the Government had been a part before it split into two sections.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

### **Appointments by Public Boards.**

A resolution in the following terms—

"This Congress is of opinion that canvassing for any positions under public Boards or Committees should be made illegal, and should disqualify any person from obtaining a position"—

submitted by the Irish Women Workers' Union (Nurses' and Midwives' Section) was, by the acceptance of an amendment submitted by the Irish National Teachers' Organization, altered to read as follows :—

"This Congress is of opinion that all appointments to positions in the public service, including those under local authorities, should be made solely on the grounds of merit, qualifications and experience, and, further, that canvassing for any such positions should be illegal and should disqualify any person from obtaining a position."

W. P. WARD (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Ballinasloe), moving the amended resolution, said that hitherto appointments to public positions appeared to have depended more upon the number of friends a candidate had upon the Board than on his merits. A proper system of appointment would give working people a chance of getting such positions. The Minister for Local Government had promised Senator O'Farrell, when the Local Government Bill was being discussed in the Seanad, that a Bill would be introduced to provide that all public appointments should be filled by competitive examination, but the promise had not yet been kept.

MISS FLANAGAN (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) seconded the resolution, and urged that canvassing should disqualify a candidate for appointment.

M. DONNELLAN (Trades Council, Limerick) said the resolution did not go as far as he would like. The first entry into public service should be by competitive examination, and vacancies in the

higher ranks should be filled by promotion of those in the service, instead of allowing less competent outsiders to be brought in.

P. CURRAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Balbriggan) objected to the Government requiring an oath of allegiance, which was being used in the case of a board of which he was a member to prevent the promotion of a competent man already in its service. The canvassing for appointments as Nurses was very objectionable.

T. LAWLOR (Irish Municipal Employees' Union, Dublin) warned Congress against assuming that competitive examinations would make everything all right. It was possible for the subjects of the examination and the number of vacancies announced to be manipulated so as to facilitate the appointment of favoured persons.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

The CHAIRMAN reminded delegates that the Labour Party had secured an amendment to the Local Government Bill which would compel a fresh election after three years of any local authority superseded by a Commissioner.

The Newry Trades Council, on the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee, were permitted to move the following resolution not on the Agenda:—

### **Superannuation of Employees of Local Authorities.**

"That this Congress, representing the organised workers of Ireland (North and South), recognising the hardships inflicted on those employed by Municipal Corporations and Councils, whereby the common workers are debarred from maintenance in old age, by the recent legislation under the Pensions and Superannuation Act, notwithstanding that those who have been employed by these public bodies for 20 or more years, are on retiring often physical wrecks, with no hopes in their old age beyond that of the workhouse, or to be a burden on their relatives for the remainder of their days, call on the Labour Parties in the Dail and Northern Parliament to pursue a vigorous line of action, and have this injustice remedied, so that these workers can look forward to spending the evening of their lives in comfort and happiness."

W. F. CUNNINGHAM, U.D.C. (Trades Council, Newry), moving the resolution, contrasted the generous attitude of the British Government, which treated every permanent employee as a pensionable officer, with that of both the Free State and Northern Governments, which refused pensions to workmen. In Newry a pension to an employee of the Gas Committee with 25 years' service had been sanctioned by the Urban District Council, but disallowed by the Northern Ministry, and a petition to the Governor had produced no response. Their own Governments were more tyrannous than the British.



M. STAFFORD (National Union of Vehicle Builders, Dublin) seconded the resolution, which was carried without dissent.

In conjunction with paragraph 56 of the Report, dealing with the Intoxicating Liquor Act, 1924, the following resolution was considered :—

### **Licensing Laws.**

"We demand that, if and when the existing Licensing Laws are being amended, effect shall be given to the demand for working conditions for Shop Workers in Licensed Houses at least comparable with those in other classes of shops, and towards this end we demand that the non-licensed portion of the premises shall be structurally separated from the portion licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor."

T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) moved the resolution, and asked for support for the Union's demand that the conditions of workers in the licensed trade should be made as tolerable as those of other shop-workers. The fact that drink was sold in the same premises as other goods made it difficult to secure reasonable closing hours in shops where drink was not sold.

J. MURPHY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork), seconding the resolution, cited cases of girls having to work as much as 70 hours a week.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

Paragraph 57, dealing with the **Treaty (Confirmation of Supplemental Agreement) Act, 1925**, and Section XVI., **The Situation in the Six Counties**, were considered together and passed without discussion.

Paragraph 59 of the Report, dealing with the **Finance Act, 1925**, was taken in conjunction with the following resolution :—

### **Tariffs.**

"In view of the admissions of Ministers that the existing tariffs in An Saorstát are largely experimental, and having regard to their possible effects on the lives and conditions of the workers throughout the country, this Congress demands that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce shall appoint a Non-Departmental Advisory Committee, on which the Labour Movement will be adequately represented, to watch their effects and to advise as to their utility as a measure of protection for home industries."

L. J. DUFFY (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) moved the resolution, and pointed out that a conditional approval of protective tariffs had been given by the Special Congress in 1924, but they had no means of knowing whether those conditions

were complied with or anything else about the effects of the tariffs. They only knew that the articles taxed were more expensive. They did not know if the prices of articles made in Ireland had been increased, or if the tariffs were giving more employment. There ought to be a Committee, free from political influences, non-party, and so commanding public confidence, whose duty it would be to ascertain the facts and enable the public to form a considered judgment. He believed that some of the information published was untrustworthy; for example, some of the statements about the effect of the tariff on the boot industry could not be confirmed on inquiry in the districts where the Irish factories were working.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin), seconding the resolution, said that he still differed from Duffy as to the advisability of tariffs, but was entirely at one with him as to the need for a close inquiry into the effects of tariffs on prices, employment, wages and the community in general. What was needed was not a mere committee of departmental officials, but one representative of all public interests, including Labour. They were not now discussing the merits of tariffs but demanding that there should be proper inquiry into the effects of tariffs.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) pointed out that the purpose of the sixpenny parcel post delivery fee, namely, the reduction of imports by parcel post, was being defeated by the sending of consignments in bulk to a single addressee on behalf of a number. An effort should be made to counteract this.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

In connection with the same paragraph, the following resolution was considered:—

### **Income Tax.**

"We demand that, for the purpose of assessment for Income Tax, the personal allowance in the case of earned incomes be raised to £240 for unmarried wage-earners, with a pro rata increased allowance in respect of dependents; and we further demand the repeal of Section 6 of the Finance Act, 1923, which is being ruthlessly employed for the purpose of collecting pre-Truce arrears of Income Tax in the case of wage-earners."

T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) moved the resolution, and said that in some cases the Revenue Commissioners were compelling employers to deduct as much as £10 a month from salaries of £16 or £18 a month as a means of collecting arrears of Income Tax. There would be no limit to what the Government would do if this were allowed to pass unchallenged. The present personal allowance for non-taxable income was £135 for a single man, and £225 for a married man, and that was much too low.



F. DEMPSEY (Associated Society of Loco. Engine Drivers and Firemen, Mallow) seconded the resolution. £135 was hardly a living wage, much less a wage that should be subject to Income Tax. The railway companies were collecting Income Tax for the Government by deductions from pay at the rate of £2 and £3 a month.

J. MANWEILER (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) inquired whether deductions from pay by the railway companies were legal.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) explained that there was nothing new in deducting tax from salaries and wages paid in the public services and railways, and there was legal authority also for the deductions of arrears. The Labour Party had tried but failed to prevent the passage of Section 6 of the Act of 1923, but had secured a promise from the Minister for Finance that he would give instructions for leniency in the instalments of arrears to be collected in cases of individual hardship.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

The remaining paragraphs of Section XIII. of the Report were passed without discussion, and Congress adjourned for lunch, resuming at 2.10 p.m.

In connection with Section XV. of the Report, **The Attempt to disrupt the Irish Labour Movement**, J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) inquired what exactly was the position in regard to Deputy Johnson's resignation of the Chairmanship of the Labour Party in the Dail, which was giving rise to many rumours.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) said that the Labour Party in the Dail elected its Chairman at the beginning of each session, and the matter was one for them to decide. But the fact that he had occupied the office so long led to a public estimation of his position which was not quite in accord with the facts. Because he was both Secretary of Congress and Chairman of the Party at the same time, the public regarded him as a kind of personification of the Labour Movement, and attributed to him a responsibility he did not possess. The immediate cause of his resignation of the Chairmanship was a statement he had made at a Labour meeting in Kildare in connection with Unemployment and Unemployment Insurance and the Government's attitude thereon. This problem was extremely critical and most important. The Labour Party had tried the utmost by every means to bring home the necessity for action by the Government, but he realised that the absence of a virile and active agitation amongst the workers and the Trade Unions was perhaps the reason for the Government's failure to take action. At that meeting he had intimated that if no action was taken he would feel it his duty to retire.

He had not thought then, or at any other time, that it would be the duty of the Labour Party to retire, but was thinking only of his own position. What he had in mind was that he should leave his work in the Dail and try to do work outside in rousing the Trade Unionists of the country. He realised that probably his particular faculties were not such as would fit him specially for the work of agitation, but he felt that as Secretary it was probably his primary duty to do that work in preference to the work of the Chairman of the Party in the Dail. He had been persuaded by his colleagues that it would be unwise for him to resign his seat, and that such work as had to be done would have to be done by other people as well as himself. He was himself persuaded that he was probably better fitted for the work in the Dail. Nevertheless, he had felt, as a subsidiary reason, that perhaps he had the reputation of acting as a restraining influence on other members of the Party in the Dail, and that if any such restraint did exist, even as a matter of his own temperament, it would be good if it were removed, that it would be good to release the dogs of war if they had ever been held in leash.

For a long time he had felt that the work of Labour Party organization in the country and the work of the Trade Unions, so far as that was affected by the National Executive, might have been retarded by the fact that while he was nominally the chief Executive officer of the Movement, he had had to devote the greater part of his time to legislative work in the Dail. The responsibilities were too great, no one man could discharge them. It had been his desire not to accept re-nomination for the Secretaryship, feeling that it would be better to allow the position to be filled by someone who could devote close attention to it. He had accepted nomination on the understanding that the views of the National Executive on re-organization, expressed in their Report, were likely to receive the approval of Congress, and that the newly-elected National Executive would be authorised to go thoroughly into the whole matter.

CATHAL O'SHANNON (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin), referring to paragraph 77 of the Report dealing with the **Workers' International Relief**, said it would be well to make quite clear how necessary was the attitude that had to be taken up in regard to that organization. That body had done good work in many countries, but he could not be sure that that was true of its work in Ireland. There were two or three elements in the so-called Irish section of the organization which Labour could not touch; one section had justly forfeited the confidence of the Labour Movement, another consisted of persons not at all identified with the Movement, some of whom had been vilifying Labour in the interests of another political party. He thought there was a need for some kind of organization to help stimulate Labour opinion on behalf of the distressed people in the West; they had been dealing with another aspect of the same matter in connection with the political organiza-



tion of small working farmers. But that was a different thing from what had happened. British organizations had been subscribing to the Irish Section of the W.I.R., but it had been found that money raised for education among the Scottish Miners had been devoted to this relief organization. Quite recently George Lansbury had been the medium for handing over a large sum of money to the Irish Section, and in reply to certain remarks of his, the speaker wished to make it clear that there had never been any suggestion that any individual diverted money to his own purposes. Their objection was that the Committee of the Irish Section of the W.I.R. was not a Labour body, and that the whole object of its activity had been firstly to make propaganda for certain political elements in Ireland, and secondly to make personal popularity for certain individuals.

J. HICKEY (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Cork) thought that they ought to recognise the sincerity of Mr. Lansbury and the value of all he had done for the Labour Movement.

L. J. DUFFY (National Executive, and Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) pointed out that Mr. Lansbury's personality was not in question, but according to the published report of his speech, all that he had said was that the money would be devoted to the purpose for which the donors intended it. The organization had produced no balance sheet for two or three years, and it seemed that more money had been spent in England on propaganda than would be covered by the total income of the organization. One of the avowed functions of the W.I.R. was to tell people why distress arose, so that it could quite easily argue that even money subscribed for relief would be "properly" expended if spent on propaganda. Lansbury had not made any claim that all the money would actually go to relief of distress.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) said that lest any doubt should be raised by Mr. Duffy's statement, it might be well to give the W.I.R.'s own official version of why it was founded. "The W.I.R. came into existence in 1921," according to its own circular. "It set itself to do two things: to carry relief to the victims of the famine then raging in the first Workers' Republic (Russia); and to neutralize by agitation and information the attempts of International Capitalism to use this distress as an excuse for further aggression upon Soviet Russia." It was avowedly a class organization intended to provide international financial help to any section of workers struggling against capitalism.

The motion for the adoption of the Report as a whole was then put and carried unanimously.

### Statement of Accounts.

S. BYRNE (Workers' Council, Dublin), as one of the Auditors, moved the adoption of the Statement of Accounts. The accounts had all been found in order, and their keeping reflected credit on Mr. Cassidy, whose work did not often come into the limelight. Both the auditors, reviewing the salaries of the staff, agreed that improvement was necessary. They were not properly remunerated for the magnificent work they did.

P. DORAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union Dublin), as the second Auditor, seconded the motion, and emphasized their view that it was the duty of the National Executive to review and improve the condition of the staff.

T. IRVINE (Union of Postoffice Workers, Belfast) inquired how many were on the staff, and whether they were all Trade Unionists?

The CHAIRMAN replied that there were four members of the staff and that all were Trade Unionists.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) thought it would be generally agreed that the staff was insufficient, and referred to the paragraphs in the National Executive Report dealing with office organization. He strongly supported the suggestion made by the Auditors.

A. HERON (Treasurer, and Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) endorsed the remarks made about the staff. They ought all to realise that the Labour Party Office was understaffed. The Assistant Secretary, Mr. Mortished, in addition to Parliamentary work, had to do much onerous and voluminous research work, and besides had had to take over a great deal of the Secretary's work formerly done by Mr. Johnson, attend all meetings of the Resident Committee and practically to give effect to the decisions taken at the meetings. Mr. A. J. Cassidy voluntarily did a great deal more than a clerk's work; he had assisted in the work of the Labour Clubs, had recently been appointed as Director of the Seanad Election, and had done a great deal of work at other elections previously. The ladies on the staff were enthusiastic workers, and were always willing to work all the hours that might be required of them.

A DELEGATE inquired how it was that the Assistant Secretary's salary was shown as £439 0s. 10d., while the Secretary's was only £240.

The CHAIRMAN explained that he occupied a double position as member of the Dail and as Secretary, but drew only one salary, and that his salary from the Congress was fixed at £240 a year, in addition to his allowance as member of the Dail so long as he held both positions. The Assistant Secretary's salary was at the rate of £450 a year.



T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) questioned the payments made to Mr. Casey included in the return of expenses of members of the National Executive. Mr. Casey had been co-opted as a member of the National Executive for Limerick, and only the previous week had had to be expelled from the previous year without consultation with the Movement in membership of the Labour Party owing to his conduct as a member of Limerick Corporation at the election of the Mayor.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) explained that the financial year ended on the 30th June. Between that date and the Congress in August Mr. Casey had attended meetings on behalf of the National Executive, and as member of the Executive had also had to attend the Congress, though he was not a delegate. The query really had relation to the accounts for the previous year. Practically all the expenses were incurred while Mr. Casey was a member of the Executive.

The CHAIRMAN, before putting the motion, endorsed the praise that had been given to the services of the staff.

The motion for the adoption of the Statement of Accounts was carried without dissent.

Congress then proceeded to the consideration of the resolutions on the Agenda not dealt with in conjunction with the Report of the National Executive.

### **Cost of Living.**

"That this Congress protests against the basis on which the cost-of-living figure is ascertained, and demands that it be extended to include all ordinary items of domestic expenditure."

W. WILSON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Blackrock, Co. Dublin), moving the resolution, said that it was not fair to adopt the conditions of 1914 as an adequate basis for a cost-of-living figure in 1925. The Committee responsible for the production of the Free State figure consisted only of officials of three Departments, and could not have been more unsympathetic; there should be a representative of Labour on the Committee. The index figure was calculated as a result of the Postoffice strike; the Free State Government had then definitely stated that the figure would be an agreed figure; in fact, it was only a produced figure. The prices to which it related were those only of food, clothing, fuel and light, and such sundries as tobacco and soap. No allowance was made for doctor's fees, holidays, education, insurance, etc., and the rent allowed for was only 5/- weekly, including rates.

W. NORTON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dublin), in seconding the resolution, pointed out that in the calculation of the

index figure no account was taken in effect of anything but bread and butter.

Mrs. BUCKLEY (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) objected to the "nosebag" basis on which the index figure was calculated. The figure did not relate to the cost of living, but to the cost of merely preventing dying, so that they could retain sufficient energy to work for the bosses and avoid arrest for indecent exposure.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) supported the motion because it would be well to have a revision of the basis of the inquiries in accordance with which the index figure was calculated. But it was necessary to be clear as to what exactly the index figure was. It was simply an index of the extent to which prices went up or down from a certain standard in respect of certain commodities. They must not draw the unwarranted deduction that the figure was accepted or proffered as representing a standard of life desired by the people calculating it. The calculation was a mathematical operation. The changes in consumption since 1914 rendered a revision of the basis of inquiry necessary.

W. NORTON, replying, pointed out that the Committee had adopted an extremely low standard as regards the quantity of food consumed.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

L. J. DUFFY (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) moved the following resolution:—

"Whereas we believe that the existing high cost of living in this country is mainly due to the element of profiteering inherent in the unscientific and chaotic system that, through lack of organisation, imposes innumerable middlemen's profits on the food-stuffs and on the other necessities of the people; that through the operations of this system the cost to the consumer of sea-borne commodities is enhanced out of all proportion to their original value and the return to the home producer in the field, factory and workshop is not an adequate reward for his labour, we call upon the Government to organise and maintain a central purchasing and distributing organisation for the purpose of securing the advantages for the consumers of mass purchasing and scientifically organised distribution, and for the home producer the advantages of a more remunerative market freed from the exploitation of middlemen."

Mr. Duffy referred to the extravagant profits exacted by middlemen in such articles of home production as eggs. Of the £68 millions of foodstuffs imported, wheat alone was value at £6 millions, and foreign bacon at £1.8 millions. They suggested that there should be a Government agency to buy in bulk in the country of production such goods as had to be imported, and also that at least in the case of some commodities such as foodstuffs there should be Government distributing agents in the large centres. The middleman would thus



be cut out. He quoted an Australian authority to the effect that on the British Empire's meat consumption the difference between the prices paid to the producer and by the consumer amounted to £156 millions a year, or 7d. per lb. Australian meat delivered to the Port of London, carriage paid, cost in all 4½d. per lb., while the same meat was sold in the East End of London at 1s. 4d. per lb., and in the West End up to 2s. The experience of war-time had proved the practicability of State buying and distribution.

P. DORAN (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) seconded the resolution.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

### Social Insurance.

"This Congress is of opinion that the time has now arrived to extend the scope of Social Insurance Legislation to embrace all wage-earners and to cover the needs of the Working Class during periods of sickness, unemployment and incapacity, and to include accident and mortality in addition to Widows' and Mothers' Pensions; we therefore direct the National Executive to prepare an "all-in" scheme to meet these requirements and to press for its adoption in the Constituencies and in the Oireachtas, it being understood that the proportion of the cost to be borne by the workers shall not exceed the equivalent of their existing weekly contribution."

L. J. DUFFY (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin) moved the foregoing resolution, and said he desired to alter the word "direct" to "urge." The preparation of an "all-in" scheme of social insurance required investigation of a kind not possible for ordinary laymen unassisted. Social Insurance would include Health Insurance, Unemployment Insurance, Workmen's Compensation Insurance (out of the millions annually paid by employers to insurance companies, only about a quarter was received by the injured workers), and Old Age Pensions, which at present were unsatisfactory in administration apart from the amount of the pension. The resolution suggested that existing contributions should not be increased, because workmen at present contributed from a quarter to a third of the total cost.

In reply to SEUMAS BYRNE (Workers' Council, Dublin), who asked what was the relation between this resolution and that already passed dealing with Industrial Assurance, Mr. DUFFY said that the Social Insurance scheme would be compulsory; at present only Health and Unemployment Insurance and, in effect, Workmen's Compensation Insurance, were compulsory. Industrial Assurance was voluntary, and the previous resolution demanded safeguards against exploitation in respect of it.

T. O'GORMAN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Limerick) seconded the resolution.

An amendment was submitted by the Irish Women Workers' Union to make the resolution read as follows:—

"This Congress is of opinion that the time has now arrived to extend the scope of Social Insurance Legislation to embrace all wage-earners and to cover the needs of the Working Class during periods of sickness, unemployment and incapacity, and to include accident and mortality: we therefore urge the National Executive to prepare an 'all-in' scheme to meet these requirements and to press for its adoption in the Constituencies and in the Oireachtas, it being understood that the proportion of the cost to be borne by the workers shall not exceed the equivalent of their existing weekly contribution, and that in addition to such contributory benefits adequate pensions to all Mothers and Old People not otherwise provided for be paid on a non-contributory basis."

Miss O'CONNOR (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin), moving the amendment, urged that they should be careful to avoid committing themselves to a contributory basis for Mothers' Pensions and Old Age Pensions.

T. JONES (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Bandon) seconded the amendment.

T. JOHNSON, T.D. (Secretary) uttered a warning against the danger of an insistence in all cases on a non-contributory basis, which might result in practice to a proposal to take the management of the insurance fund entirely out of the hands of the workers.

The amendment was carried by 41 votes to 15, and the resolution as amended was then carried by 42 votes to 20.

### **Trade Boards.**

"This Congress protests against any proposal in An Saorstát to withdraw from the operations of the Trade Boards Acts any Trade or Industry in which, at December 6th, 1921, a Trade Board existed unless it can be shown that both sides of the Board approve of the proposal; that the Workers' side of the Retail Bespoke Tailoring Trade Board most emphatically opposes the proposal of the Ministry to dissolve that Board; that this Congress supports and approves of their opposition in the matter; and, further, that we call on the Ministry to set up Boards for the Retail Distributive Trades where in many centres wages are particularly low."

L. J. DUFFY (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin), moving the resolution, said that it seemed to be the policy of the Free State Minister to get away from Trade Boards, and he was now endeavouring to abolish the Retail Bespoke Tailoring Board, on the ground that it was of no assistance to employers! Notice had been given to abolish the Board on August 18th. The



situation in regard to Trade Boards was not much better in Northern Ireland, for the rates fixed by the Boards were not enforced.

Miss A. HOLMES (Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union, Derry) seconded the resolution, and said that every effort should be made to defeat the Minister's amazing proposal. This was not the first attempt to undo the scheme of Trade Boards, which had been established, not out of any benevolence for either employers or workers, but because the public conscience had been aroused by intolerable conditions. The evidence produced to the recent British Commission of Inquiry into their working, set up in the hope of getting an excuse for abolishing the Boards, had instead resulted in a report praising them. Immediately the Northern Government had been set up the employers had tried to secure the abolition of the Boards, but the evidence had compelled the Government to refuse. The Northern Government was enforcing the Trade Board rates, because of the Union's activity, but the difficulty found there was that the rates were not enforced in the Free State area. Several Derry employers had for this reason crossed the Border, though the Free State rates were nominally slightly higher.

Miss BENNETT (Irish Women Workers' Union, Dublin) assured Miss Holmes that women workers in the Free State had in most cases higher wages than the Trade Board rates.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

### **Part-time Workers in Post Office.**

"That this Congress protests against the employment of part-time workers at sweated wages by the Post Office, and demands that the Post Office services shall be organised so as to provide full-time established employment for all employees."

T. NAVIN (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Cork), moving the resolution, referred to the low wages paid to part-time employees, and said that the situation in regard to part-time employment had grown worse since the change of government. The Union had urged an examination to admit these employees into the regular service, but the Ministry had declared that this was impossible at present.

J. HUGHES (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Kilrush) formally seconded the resolution.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

### **Arbitration in Civil Service.**

"That this Annual Congress calls upon the Government of Saorstát Éireann to establish suitable Arbitration Machinery for the Civil Service, as a lead to private employers to set up similar machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes."

Moved by—*Civil Service Clerical Association.*

J. HOGAN (Civil Service Clerical Association, Dublin) formally moved the resolution.

W. NORTON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dublin), seconding the resolution, said that the Civil Service had been pressing for three years for the establishment of conciliation machinery to replace that which existed under the British regime. The scheme eventually offered by the Government was extremely objectionable. Full-time officials of Service associations were not allowed to be members of the proposed Council. The Chairman of the Council was to be appointed by the Minister for Finance, and was to have the power to decide what matters should appear on the agenda. The Council would have no power to come to agreements; the Chairman would simply report the discussions to the Minister, who could disregard the views expressed. Yet every day members of the Government were giving lectures on the need for methods of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

Several delegates pointed out that the concluding words of the resolution appeared to commit the Movement to support of compulsory arbitration, and it was agreed that these words should be omitted.

The resolution was then carried without dissent in the following form :—

“That this Annual Congress calls upon the Government of Saorstát Éireann to establish suitable Arbitration Machinery for the Civil Service.”

### **“One-Grade” Civil Service.**

“That this Annual Congress is of opinion that the interests of economy and efficiency in the Civil Service would best be served by the abolition of the numerous existing grades and the establishment of a ‘One-Grade’ Service.”

J. HOGAN (Civil Service Clerical Association, Dublin) moved the resolution, and said that under the present system it was practically impossible for a Civil Servant to rise from the lower grades to the grades at the top of the service. They wished to abolish these barriers.

T. NAVIN (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Cork) formally seconded the resolution.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

### **Civil Servants' Civil Rights.**

“That this Congress demands that full civil rights shall be accorded to all Civil Servants.”

Moved by—*Postoffice Workers' Union.*



W. NORTON (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Dublin), moving the resolution, said that the present regulations as to Civil Servants becoming candidates for Parliament and speaking at elections were the same as under the British regime. But the administration had considerably restricted the former liberties of Civil Servants. On the eve of the recent elections for local authorities a circular had been issued forbidding Civil Servants to become candidates. The Labour Party had at once raised the matter in the Dail, but though they made an unanswerable case, the Minister had refused to budge. On this occasion the circular was issued so late that it had been withdrawn as unenforceable, and in fact ten members of the Post Office service out of fourteen nominated had been elected to local authorities. But a new circular had been issued denying the right to be a candidate in future. The Ministry's case was based on the position of high Departmental officials, and had no relation at all to minor officials. The Minister for Posts could be a politician, and the Secretary to the Post Office could nominate a candidate for the Dail and write on highly contentious subjects and libelling a large body of Civil Servants, but a minor official could not be a member of a local authority which was not a political body at all, but was concerned with such matters as roads and public health administration.

M. J. MacGOWAN (Irish Postoffice Workers' Union, Drogheda) seconded the resolution, and pointed out that in his own case the issue of the circular had prevented him, as one of the Labour candidates at the municipal election, from attending at the polling stations, and had given rise to rumours. He had been elected nevertheless, but had been informed that he could only sit on the Council until the next election.

L. J. LARKIN (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Waterford) supported the resolution, and mentioned that a Post Office official had already been before the electors as a Labour candidate for three weeks when the circular was issued.

The resolution was carried without dissent.

The following resolutions were not moved, no delegates from the organizations submitting them being present : —

### **Affiliation to Local Councils.**

"That in the opinion of the Congress, no Union affiliated to the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress should be allowed to retain a Branch which refused, without good and sufficient reason, to affiliate with the local Trades or Workers' Council."

Submitted by—*Drogheda Workers' Council.*

### Organisation of Small Farmers.

"That the National Executive be instructed to take steps without delay in the direction of spreading labour organisation in rural districts with a view to embracing those hard-working and badly-paid individuals, the small farmers with uneconomic holdings."

Submitted by—*Sligo and District Trades and Labour Council.*

### Dismissal of School Teachers.

"That this Congress instructs the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress to take immediate action relative to the dismissal of School Teachers against whom no charge has been preferred."

Submitted by—*Sligo and District Trades and Labour Council.*

### Vote of Thanks to Chairman.

At this stage Mr. L. J. DUFFY (National Executive) took the chair.

R. G. CORCORAN (Operative House and Ship Painters' Society, Belfast) moved a vote of thanks to Mr. O'Brien for his Chairmanship of the Congress. The manner in which the proceedings of the Congress had been conducted under a Chairman of their own selection was a sufficient answer to the allegation that the workers of Ireland were divided and at loggerheads with one another. They might differ on details, but were all united in the one aim of securing the ultimate emancipation of the workers. No man had done better service for the Movement than Mr. O'Brien, and he deserved all their thanks.

J. DOYLE (National Union of Life Assurance Workers, Dublin), seconding, said that the vote of thanks was all the more fitting in view of the calumny Mr. O'Brien had had to endure in the last two years. The Movement owed him a debt of gratitude for the stand he had made against the attempt to disrupt Irish Trade Unionism. He had earned the title of Father of the Labour Movement.

L. J. DUFFY (National Executive), in putting the resolution, pointed out that Mr. O'Brien had been their Chairman three times, in 1913, 1918, and now in 1925, and each occasion had marked a definite stage in their onward and upward movement. Mr. O'Brien had given years of arduous, untiring labour, without complaint or ostentation, because he believed in the working-class to which he belonged.

The vote was carried with acclamation.

W. O'BRIEN, replying, said that it had been easy to preside over the Congress, because of the manner in which all the delegates had



helped. That was, he thought, the first Congress that had completed its agenda without having to impose a time-limit on speeches. It was the most successful Congress in the whole history of the organization. He had been in the Trade Union Movement for 27½ years, and that was the seventeenth Congress he had attended—but he was still on the right side of forty-five, so that they were likely to be afflicted with him for some time longer—and he could say with certainty that that was the best distinctively Labour Congress he had ever experienced. There had been times when Congress had been afraid to talk about politics, and other times when they had hardly been able to talk anything else, but the atmosphere now had become normal. The time had come when every worker should give his first and only allegiance to the Labour Movement.

### **Vote of Thanks to the Citizens of Newry.**

T. CASSIDY (Typographical Association, Derry) moved a vote of thanks to the Urban District Council and citizens of Newry for the use of the Town Hall, and the reception that they had given to the Congress, and contrasted the lack of a civic reception to the Congress held in Newry twenty-two years ago with the reception they had met with on that occasion.

L. J. DUFFY (Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks, Dublin), seconding the vote of thanks, pointed out that their place of meeting emphasized the fact that theirs was an All-Ireland movement, for they were in Newry at the invitation of the organized workers of Newry.

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

### **Vote of Thanks to Newry Trades Council.**

B. THOMPSON (Irish National Teachers' Organization, Mullingar) moved a vote of thanks to the Trades and Labour Council of Newry for its reception of Congress. Reference was often made to the cold, black North, but delegates had found in Newry that the North was neither cold nor black, but if anything rather "red."

W. McMULLEN, M.P. (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Belfast), seconding the motion, said that only a Northern delegate like himself could appreciate the difficulties that the Trades Council had had to meet. The Belfast Press had persistently referred to their Congress as a "Free State" Congress, but they had ample evidence that it was an All-Ireland Congress, which refused to recognise the optical illusion of the Border a few miles south of Newry. The election of Mr. Cassidy and himself at the head of the

poll for the National Executive was another proof of the close bond between North and South.

The motion was carried by acclamation, and Mr. W. F. CUNNINGHAM (Trades Council, Newry) briefly replied.

At the conclusion of the Congress, P. O'TOOLE (Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, Dublin) sang three songs. The proceedings terminated at 5.10 p.m.





# TRADE UNIONS AND COUNCILS AFFILIATED

WITH

Membership, Affiliation Fees Paid,  
Secretary, Delegates and  
Delegation Fees Paid,  
1925-1926.

Aug 3-1  
1925



# UNIONS AFFILIATED

With Membership, Affiliation Fees Paid, Secretary, Delegates, and Delegation Fees Paid.

Name of Trade Union	No of Mem- bers Jan. 1st, 1925	Affiliation Fees paid £ s. d.	Secretary	Delegates to 1925 Congress	Dele- gation Fees paid £
Assurance Workers, National Union of, Life	262	3 5 6	B. Brooke, 316 Oxford-road, Manchester	Joseph Doyle, 37 Ring-st., Inchicore, Dublin	1
Bakers', Confectioners, and Allied Workers' Amalgamated Union (Irish)	2000	25 0 0	Denis Cullen, 37 Lower Gardiner-street, Dublin	James Brown, 138 Woodvale Road Belfast... Patk. Shanahan, 72 MacCurtain-villas, College road, Cork Francis Moran, 37 Lr. Gardiner-st., Dublin Denis Cullen, 37 Lr. Gardiner-st., Dublin R. Beggs, 3 Tennyson-street, Belfast	4
Building Trade Workers, Amalgamated Union of	1100	13 15 0	Gen. Sec.—G. Hicks, "The Builders," Crescent Grove, Clapham Common, South Side, London. S.W. Irish Organiser—M. Coburn, Fort-road, Dowdallshill, Dundalk	...	1
Brick and Stone Layers (Ancient Guild of Incorporated)	600	7 10 0	Owen Hynes, 49 Cuffe-street, Dublin	Owen Hynes, 49 Cuffe-street, Dublin	1
Brushmakers, National Society of (Dublin Branch)	—	—	W. Murphy, 17 Russell-street, N.C.R., Dublin	—	—
Blacksmiths' and Ironworkers, Society, Associated (Dublin Branch)	—	—	A. W. Stevenson, 5 Myrtle-ter., Church-road, Dublin	—	—
Civil Service Clerical Association	400 (for 1923-24-25)	11 13 4	John Hogan, 11 Molesworth-st., Dublin	John Hogan, Civil Service Clerical Assoc'n., 11 Molesworth-street, Dublin	1
Clerical and Allied Workers' Union (Irish)	—	—	W. F. Clifford, St. Andrew's Chambers, 1 College-street, Dublin	—	—
Distributive Workers and Clerks (Irish Union of)	9555	119 8 9	L. J. Duffy, Cavendish House, Cavendish row, Dublin	L. J. Duffy, Cavendish House, Dublin J. W. Kelly, do. W. J. Byrne, do. Thomas Johnson, T.D., 32 Lower Abbey-st., Dublin Thos. O'Gorman, 54 O'Connell-st., Limerick L. J. Larkin, 17 Lady-lane, Waterford	6
Engineering Union, Amalgamated (Inchicore Branch)	150	3 0 0	L. Keegan, 2 First-av., Inchicore, Dublin	L. Keegan, 2 First-avenue, Inchicore, Dublin	1
Do. (Cork Branch)	100	1 5 0	Sean McAuliffe, 2 Seminary-villas, Cork	Sean McAuliffe, 2 Seminary-villas, Cork	1
Do. (Dublin No. 1 Branch)	—	—	B. Cunningham, 44 Pembroke-cottages, Donnybrook	—	—
Engineering Industrial Union (Irish)	3000	37 10 0	P. O'Hagan, 6 Gardiner's-row, Dublin	Joseph Toomey, 6 Gardiner's-row, Dublin William, Craig, c/o Miss Newett, St. Mary's-road, Dundalk	—
Furnishing Trades Association (National Amalgamated)	985	10 6 3	Gen. Sec.—Alex Gossip, 58 Theobald's-road, London, W.C. 1 Irish Organiser—J. Collins, 11 Leo-av., Leo-street, Dublin	James Collins, 11 Leo-ave., Leo-st., Dublin S. Johnston, 26 Wellwynne-street, Belfast	2
Flax Roughers and Yarn Spinners' Trade Union	—	—	Dawson Gordon, 99 Donegall-st., Belfast	—	—
Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, Amalgamated Society of	2100	26 5 0	J. Bromley, M.P., 9 Arkwright-road, London, N.W. 3	G. Moore, A.S.L.E. & F., 9 Arkwright-road, Hampstead, London, N.W. 3 R. H. Jones, A.S.L.E. & F., 19 Southdale-rd., Wavertree, Liverpool H. Bell, 28 St. Alban's-gardens, Belfast F. Dempsey, West End, Mallow	4
Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen's Trade Union (Belfast & Dublin)	594	7 5 0	Wm. Reid, 9 Canada-street, Belfast	John McVicker, 89 Newtownards-rd., Belfast Wm. Hayes, 11 New North Queen-st., Belfast	2
Mental Hospital Workers' Union (Irish)	1400	17 10 0	M. J. O'Connor, 21 Lower St. Brigid's-road, Drumcondra, Dublin	—	—
Municip. Employees' Trade Union (Irish)	1550	19 7 6	Thomas Lawlor, 24 & 25 Winetavern-st., Dublin	Robt. Tynan 24 & 25 Winetavern-st., Dublin Robt. Farrell do. James Delaney do. Thomas Lawlor do.	4
Packing Case Makers (Dublin)	100	3 0 0	W. Shanks, 3 Chamber-street, Dublin	W. Shanks, 3 Chamber-street, Dublin	1



Name of Trade Union	No. of Mem- bers Jan 1st 1925	Affiliation Fees paid £ s. d.			Secretary	Delegates to 1925 Congress	Dele- gation Fees paid £
Painters & Decorators, National Amalg. Society of Operative House and Ship	1971	24	12	9	J. A. Gibson, 4 Camp-street, Lower Broughton, Manchester	G. Corcoran, 40 Frank-street, Belfast T. Kerins, 51 Bayview-ave., North Strand, Dublin	2
Painters and Decorators, Irish National Union of	—	—	—	—	Thos. Fogarty, 27 Aungier-street, Dublin	—	—
Plasterers' Trade Society (Dublin Op.)	250	3	0	0	Thos. Irwin, 32 East Essex-st., Dublin	Thos. Irwin, 32 East Essex-street, Dublin	1
Plumbers' & Domestic Engineers United Operative	1315	18	8	9	Gen. Sec.—L. McDonald, 15 Abbeyville-road, Clapham, S.W., 4 Sec., Dublin Branch—R. Boyd, 61 Cale-don-road, Dublin	P. Walsh, 37 Wickham-street, Limerick J. Copas, Moorland, Dundalk	2
Post Office Workers' Union (Irish)	3500	43	15	0	W. Norton, 4 Cavendish-row, Dublin	Wm. Wilson, Garryowen House, Sandycove, Dun Laoghaire M. MacGowan, 46 Magdalen-st., Drogheda T. Navin, Glen View, Mayfield, Cork W. Norton, 15 Richmond-hill, Rathmines, Dublin	4
Post Office Workers, Union of	997	12	9	3	J. W. Bowen, 43 Cromwell-road, South Kensington, London, S.W., 7	T. Irvine, 13 Cadogan-street, Belfast	1
Railwaymen, National Union of	11701	146	5	3	Indus. Gen. Secretary—C. T. Cramp, Unity House, Euston-rd, Lond., N.W., 1 Irish Sec.—C. D. Watters, 33 Parnell-sq., Dublin	T. Tobin, 3 Prospect-ave., Glasnevin, Dublin T. Ward, 54 Eliza-street, Belfast C. D. Watters, 33 Parnell-square, Dublin	3
Do. Inchicore No. 1 Branch	...	...	...	...	...	Denis Byrne, 54 Lower Kevin-street, Dublin	1
Railway Clerks' Association	2700	33	15	0	Gen. Sec.—A. G. Walkden, 25 Euston-road, London, N.W., 1 Irish Sec.—Senator J. T. O'Farrell, 48 Henry-street, Dublin	Senator J. T. O'Farrell, 48 Henry-st., Dublin T. H. Gill, 77 Lindley-street, York W. Davin, T.D., 1 Crofton-terrace, Dun-Laoghaire J. McCooke, 8 Parkside Gardens, Belfast	4
Sailors' and Firemen's Union, National	1000	12	10	0	Gen. Sec.—E. Cathery, 2 t. George's Hall, Westminster Bridge-road, London	W. L. Verinder, N.S.F. Union, 13 Queen's-square, Belfast J. H. Bennett, 113 Marlboro'-st., Dublin	2
Slaters' and Tilers' Amalgamated Soc. (Dublin Branch)	—	—	—	—	J. Sheppard, 77 Eccles-street, Dublin	—	—
Sheet Metal Workers and Gas Meter Makers of Ireland, National Union of (Dublin Branch)	160	3	0	0	John Farren, 20 Blackhall-place Dublin	John Farren, 20 Blackhall-place, Dublin	1
Tailors' and Garment Workers' Trade Union	3692	46	3	0	A. Conley, 20 Park-place, Leeds	Miss A. Holmes, 11 Butcher-street, Derry R. H. Kennedy, 17 Malone-place, Belfast P. Devir, 19 Carlisle-ave., Donnybrook, Dub.	3
Tailors and Tailoresses, Amalgamated Society of	700	8	15	0	T. A. Flynn, 115 Oxford-road, M'chester	John McMahon, 28 St. Alban's-rd., Dublin	1
Garment Makers' Industrial Union (Irish)	250	3	2	6	W. Carpenter, 44 York-street, Dublin	—	—
Teachers' Organisation, Irish National (Association of Secondary Teachers) (Agric. and Technical Instructors Assn.)	12900	161	17	6	T. J. O'Connell, T.D., 9 Gardiner's-place, Dublin (I.N.T.O.) T. J. Burke, 9 Gardiners-place, Dublin (A.S.T.I.) F. McNamara, Reenmore, Arklow (A & T.I.A.)	T. J. O'Connell, T.D., 9 Gardiner's-pl., Dublin T. Glancy, D.E., Newry Model School, Newry	10
Typographical Association	1620	20	5	0	Gen. Sec.—H. Skinner, "Beechwood," Oak Drive, Fallowfield, Manchester Irish Organiser—T. Cassidy, 41 Chapel-road, Waterside, Derry	Hugh O'Donnell, Cloonanure N.S. Gurteen, Ballymote Liam MacSweeney, Killorglin, Co. Kerry John Harbinson, c/o 9 Gardiner's-pl., Dublin W. P. Ward, River View House, Ballinasloe B. Thompson, Colehill, Mullingar T. J. Burke, 9 Gardiner's-place, Dublin H. T. Whitty, 12 Frederick-street Belfast C. G. Carey, 3 Prospect Villas, Rostbrien, Limerick	3
Typographical Provident Soc. (Dublin)	1050	13	2	6	W. J. Whelan, 35 Lr. Gardiner-st., Dublin	Thos. Cassidy, 41 Chapel-rd., Waterside, Derry Robert A. Kerr, 35 Lr. Gardiner-st., Dublin William J. Whelan do. Sean P. Campbell do.	3
Vehicle Builders (National Union of)	1385	17	6	3	J. Nicholson, 195 Oxford-rd., M'chester Irish Organiser—T. O'Hanlon, 104 Mid. Abbey-street, Dublin	J. Graham, M. Stafford, 97 Cork-street, Dublin R. Waugh, 42 Deramore-ave., Belfast	2
Woodworkers, Amalgamated Society of	7414	92	13	6	Gen. Sec.—A. G. Cameron, 131 Wilm-slow-road, Withington, Manchester	Jas. Delaney, 168 North Strand Road Dublin	2







# TRADES AND WORKERS' COUNCILS AFFILIATED

WITH MEMBERSHIP, AFFILIATION FEES PAID, SECRETARY, DELEGATES AND DELEGATION FEES PAID.

Name of Council	No. of Mem- bers Jan. 1st 1925	Affiliation Fees paid £ s. d.	Secretary	Delegates to 1925 Congress	Dele- gation Fees paid £
Athlone	... 5000	3 0 0	P. Mulvihill, Trades Hall, Athlone	—	—
Ballina Workers' Council	... —	—	H. McGlade, Ballina	—	—
Ballinasloe	... —	—	D. McCarthy, Ballinasloe	—	—
Belfast and District	... 15000	5 10 0	D. R. Campbell, 11 Kimberley-street, Belfast	D. R. Campbell, 11 Kimberley-st., Belfast ... John Campbell, 30 Ashton-street, Belfast	2
Bri Cualann and District	... 3000	3 0 0	J. Dunne, 15 Main-street, Bri Cualann	James Murphy, 3 Sidmonton-av., Bri Cualann	1
Clare Workers' Council	... —	—	J. Reale, 9 Linnanes-terrace, Ennis	—	—
Clones	... —	—	M. Johnstone, Trades Hall, Clones	—	—
Clonmel	... —	—	W. Prendergast, Trades Hall, Clonmel	—	—
Cork Workers' Council	... —	—	G. Duncan, 1 Annville, Ballinlough-road, Cork	G. Duncan, 1 Annville, Ballinlough-rd., Cork R. S. Anthony, 5 St. Anthony's-vil., Pouladuff- road, Cork	2
Cobh	... —	—	J. Dunne, 25 The Mall, Cobh	—	—
Drogheda	... 5000	3 0 0	E. Mullen, Foresters' Hall, Drogheda	—	—
Dublin	... 50000	14 5 0	Senator T. Farren, 37 Lr. Gardiner-st. Dublin	M. Somerville, 1 O'Curry-road, Fairbrothers' Estate, Dublin ... Thos. Irwin, 32 East Essex-street, Dublin ... Seamus Byrne, 6 Whitworth-pl., Drumcondra, Dublin Thomas Farren, 37 Lr. Gardiner-st., Dublin	4
Dundalk	... —	—	J. Smith, 7 Annville-ter., Chapel-st., Dundalk	—	—
Dun Laoghaire	... 5000	3 0 0	T. Ryan, 3 Glathule-ter., Dun Laoghaire	—	—
Droghda Workers' Council	... —	—	M. MacGabhann, Liberty Hall, Droichead Nua	Senator Cummins, Central Hotel, Droichead Nua ...	1
Kilkenny	... —	—	M. J. Murray, Labour Hall, Patrick-st., Kilkenny	—	—
Killarney	... —	3 0 0	J. Murphy, Trades Hall, Killarney	—	—
Limerick	... 10000	4 5 0	J. Carr, Mechanics' Institute, Limerick	Ml. Donnellan, St. Alphonsus-av., Limerick Jas. Brenn, 20 Charlotte-quay, Limerick	2
Navan	... —	3 0 0	T. Byrne, Trades Hall, Navan	—	—
Newry	... 5000	3 0 0	P. Howley, I.T.G.W.U. Hall, The Mall, Newry	W. F. Cunningham, U.D.C., 17 Chapel-st., Newry	1
Mullingar	... —	—	T. Gavin, Trades Hall, Mullingar	—	—
Sligo and District	... 4000	3 0 0	J. Lambert, Trades Hall, Sligo	—	1
Tralee Workers' Council	... —	—	W. McEnery, 18 Urban-cottages, Upper Rock-street, Tralee	—	—
Waterford „ „	... —	1 0 0 (for 1924)	T. Brett, Waterford Workers' Council, 1 Lady Lane, Waterford	—	—
Wexford	... —	—	P. White, King-street, Wexford	—	—

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49-0-0  
1867-2-7  
1916-2-7



Year	No. of Delegates	Place of Meeting	President	Secretary	Treasurer
1894	119	Dublin ...	Thomas O'Connell (Carpenter) ...	John Simmons ...	Patrick Dowd
1895	121	Cork ...	J. H. Jolley (Printer) ...	" ...	J. H. Jolley
1896	93	Limerick ...	James Dalton (Printer) ...	" ...	"
1897	86	Waterford ...	P. J. Leo (Pork Butcher) ...	" ...	"
1898	90	Belfast ...	Richard Wortley (Tailor) ...	" ...	P. J. Tevenan
1899	62	Derry ...	James McCarron (Tailor) ...	" ...	"
1900	77	Dublin ...	George Leahy (Plasterer) ...	Hugh McManus ...	Alex. Taylor
1901	73	Sligo ...	A. Bowman, T.C. (Flax Dresser) ...	E. L. Richardson ...	"
1902	98	Cork ...	William Cave (Bootmaker) ...	" ...	Geo. Leahy
1903	86	Newry ...	Walter Hudson, M.P. (A.S.R.S.) ...	" ...	"
1904	74	Kilkenny ...	William Walker (Carpenter) ...	" ...	"
1905	72	Wexford ...	Jas. Chambers (Saddler) ...	" ...	E. W. Stewart
1906	72	Athlone ...	Stephen Dineen (Baker) ...	" ...	"
1907	87	Dublin ...	James McCarron (Tailor) ...	" ...	"
1908	85	Belfast ...	John Murphy (Printer) ...	" ...	"
1909	108	Limerick ...	M. Egan (Coachmaker) ...	" ...	"
1910	85	Dundalk ...	James McCarron (Tailor) ...	P. T. Daly ...	M. J. O'Lehane
1911	75	Galway ...	D. R. Campbell (Insurance Agent) ...	" ...	"
1912	87	Clonmel ...	M. J. O'Lehane (Drapers' Assist.) ...	" ...	D. R. Campbell
1913	99	Cork ...	William O'Brien (Tailor) ...	" ...	"
1914	94	Dublin ...	James Larkin (Transport Worker) ...	" ...	"
1915	—	— ...	NO CONGRESS HELD ...	" ...	"
1916	81	Sligo ...	Thomas Johnson (Shop Assistants) ...	" ...	"
1917	111	Derry ...	Thomas MacPartlin (Carpenter) ...	" ...	"
1918	240	Waterford ...	William O'Brien (Tailor) ...	" ...	"
1919	220	Drogheda ...	Thomas Cassidy (Printer) ...	William O'Brien ...	Thomas Johnson
1920	246	Cork ...	Thomas Farren (Stonecutter) ...	" ...	"
1921	250	Dublin ...	Thomas Foran (I.T. & G.W.U.) ...	Thomas Johnson ...	William O'Brien
1922	244	Dublin ...	Thomas MacPartlin (A.S.W.) ...	Thomas Johnson ...	William O'Brien
1923	241	Dublin ...	Cathal O'Shannon (I.T.G.W.U.) ...	" ...	"
1924	201	Cork ...	L. J. Duffy (I.U.D.W. & C.) ...	" ...	"
1925	160	Newry ...	William O'Brien (I.T.G.W.U.) ...	" ...	A. Heron



# IRISH LABOUR PARTY

## AND

# TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

### CONSTITUTION.

*(Revised to August, 1924.)*

**1.—NAME.**—IRISH LABOUR PARTY AND TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

**2.—OBJECTS AND METHODS.**—

(a) To recover for the Nation complete possession of all the natural physical sources of wealth of this country.

(b) To win for the workers of Ireland, collectively, the ownership and control of the whole produce of their labour.

(c) To secure the democratic management and control of all industries and services by the whole body of workers, manual and mental, engaged therein, in the interest of the Nation and subject to the supreme authority of the National Government.

(d) To obtain for all adults who give allegiance and service to the Commonwealth, irrespective of sex, race or religious belief, equality of political and social rights and opportunities.

(e) To abolish all powers and privileges, social and political, of institutions or persons, based upon property or ancestry, or not granted or confirmed by the freely expressed will of the Irish people; and to insist that in the making and administering of the laws, in the pursuit of industry and commerce, and in the education of the young, Property must always be subordinate to Humanity, and Private Gain must ever give place to the Welfare of the People.

(f) With the foregoing objects in view, to promote the organisation of the working-class industrially, socially and politically, e.g., in Trade Unions, in Co-operative Societies (both of producers and consumers), and in a Political Labour Party.

(g) To secure labour representation on all national and local legislative and administrative bodies.

(h) To co-ordinate the work of the several sections of the working-class movement.

(i) To promote fraternal relations between the workers of Ireland and of other countries through affiliation with the international Labour movement;

(j) To co-operate with that movement in promoting the establishment of democratic machinery for the settlement of disputes between Nations; and in raising the standard of social legislation in all countries to the level of the highest; and

(k) Generally to assist in the efforts of the working-class of all Nations in their struggle for emancipation.

**3.—MEMBERSHIP.**—The Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress shall consist of its affiliated organisations, i.e.: Trade Unions, Branches of Trade Unions, Trades Councils, Local Labour Parties, together with those men and women who are individual subscribing members of a recognised local Labour Party group and who accept the Constitution and Policy of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress.

#### **4.—NATIONAL CONGRESS.—**

(a) The supreme governing authority shall be the National Congress, which shall meet as provided for in the Standing Orders.

(b) The basis of representation at the National Congress shall be as follows:—

Trade Unions or Branches of Trade Unions having less than 500 members—One delegate;

500 members or over, but not exceeding 1,000—Two delegates;

Over 1,000 members, but not exceeding 1,500—Three delegates;

Over 1,500 members, but not exceeding 2,000—Four delegates;

and one additional delegate for every complete 1,000 members above 2,000.

(Where a Trade Union has paid affiliation fees on the whole of its membership in Ireland, the payment by a branch of affiliation fees on the branch membership shall not entitle it to additional representation).

Trades' Councils shall be entitled to send one delegate for 5,000 members or fraction thereof for whom affiliation fees



have been paid by the Council, and one additional delegate for every additional 5,000 members.

(c) Where the local Trades' Council undertakes the duties of a local Labour Party, it shall be entitled to send one additional delegate to represent the Labour Party in each parliamentary constituency covered by the activities of the Council, provided that there shall have been three months prior to the date of the Congress not less than 100 individual subscribing members of the Party in the constituency claiming to send a delegate, such delegates to be individual subscribing members of the Party, men or women, and voters in the constituency they represent.

(d) In towns or constituencies where a local Labour Party has been formed according to Clause 5 (below) such local Labour Party shall be entitled to send one delegate for each constituency covered by its activities, provided that there shall have been three months prior to the date of the Congress not less than 100 individual subscribing members of the Party in the constituency claiming to send a delegate, such delegates to be individual subscribing members of the Party, men or women, and voters in the constituency they represent.

**5.—LOCAL LABOUR PARTIES.**—Where a local Trades' Council does not discharge the functions of a local Labour Party, or in the opinion of the National Executive has failed to do the work in a satisfactory manner, the National Executive shall have power to organise a local Labour Party independent of the Trades' Council, such local Labour Party to consist of individual subscribing members of the Party, Trade Unions, or Trade Union Branches, and such other working-class organisations as subscribe to the constitution and policy of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, and are approved of by the National Executive.

**6.—INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIBING MEMBERS.**—Individual subscribing members shall be organised into Divisional or Ward Groups under the direction of the Trades' Council or local Labour Parties. They shall be expected to undertake the electoral activities and propaganda work of the Party in the constituencies.

## **7.—FINANCE.—**

(a) Trade Unions or Branches of Trade Unions shall pay to the Central Funds of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress threepence per member on the full certified membership in Ireland on the first day of January in each year.

(b) Trades' Councils shall pay £3 for the first 5,000 members, and £1 5s. 0d. for each additional 5,000 or part thereof.

(c) The minimum annual contribution from affiliated Societies shall be three pounds (£3).

(d) Individual subscribing members shall pay at the rate of sixpence per member per month, of which sum threepence shall be paid to the Central Fund and threepence retained by the local Trades Council or local Labour Party for organisation and labour representation purposes, subject, where necessary, to a payment out of the local moiety of one half-penny for the expenses of collection.

(e) A woman member who has paid a total of three shillings within the year shall be deemed to be a fully-paid subscribing member.

(f) The National Executive shall be authorised to make special appeals for funds for political and other purposes from time to time as may be desirable.

(g) Any Society whose affiliation has been accepted shall be considered to be permanently affiliated and liable for affiliation fees unless such Society has given six months' notice of withdrawal or has been excluded by the special decision of Congress.

**8.—NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.**—There shall be a National Executive consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and thirteen other members, elected by the National Congress at its regular Annual Meeting in accordance with the Standing Orders, and this National Executive shall, subject to the control and direction of the National Congress, be the administrative authority and be responsible for the conduct of the general work of the organisation.

It shall interpret the Constitution and Standing Orders in all cases of dispute, subject to an appeal to the next regular Annual Meeting by the organisation or person concerned.

It shall ensure that Labour is represented by a properly constituted organisation in each constituency in which this is found practicable.

It shall give effect to the decisions of the National Congress, watch all legislative measures affecting labour in Ireland, initiate such legislative and other action as may be deemed necessary, and generally promote the objects of the organisation in the most effective manner within its power.

In case of the death or resignation of any of its members, the remaining members shall have power to co-opt a successor.



**9.—SUB-COMMITTEES.**—The National Executive shall be empowered to appoint Sub-committees to undertake any specified branch of its work and to invite the assistance of any persons with special knowledge to advise and co-operate. It may appoint the necessary officials and make all arrangements to carry on its work. The Executive as a whole shall be responsible to the National Congress for the work and decisions of all Sub-Committees.\*

**10.—PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES.**—

(a) A Candidate for election to Parliament must be nominated by the National Executive, or by one or more of the affiliated bodies, and before adoption for any constituency must be approved of by a special local conference convened by the Trades Council or local Labour Party.

(b) The basis of representation at the local Conferences shall be as follows:—

One delegate for Societies and Divisional Groups having 100 members or less;

One delegate for each additional 100 members up to 500;

One delegate for each additional 250 members up to 1,000; and

One delegate for each additional 1,000 members afterwards.

(c) Before any action towards the selection of a Candidate for Parliament is taken, the National Executive shall be consulted. No candidature can be promoted by an affiliated organisation until endorsed by the National Executive.

(d) In constituencies or divided boroughs where no Trades Council or local Labour Party exists, or where in its opinion special circumstances warrant such action, the National Executive shall have power to promote a Candidature.

\*NOTE.—Under this Clause the National Executive may divide itself into **Industrial** and **Political** Committees: the former to promote Trade Union organisation, to compile statistics of Industry, provide legal information, watch all legislative proposals affecting industry, and keep in touch with all wage movements, disputes, etc., etc.; the latter to supervise the conduct of the political work of the Party, the preparation of literature and propaganda, the organisation of constituencies, and to keep informed regarding local government activities. It may also appoint Sub-Committees to deal with important problems affecting different industrial groups—Agricultural, Building, Transport, Distributive, Civil Service, etc., and may invite assistance from the Trade Unions particularly interested; also Sub-Committees to deal with specific problems such as Housing, Education, Food Supply, Local Government, Military Service, etc.

(e) The expenses of Candidates for election to Parliament shall be borne by the organisation or organisations nominating the Candidates, with such financial assistance as the Central Fund can afford.

(f) The expenses of Candidates for election to local bodies shall be borne by the organisation or organisations nominating the Candidates. In special circumstances financial assistance may be given out of the Central Funds at the discretion of the National Executive.

(g) Candidates for election to Parliament must have been for not less than twelve months prior to the election, and if elected must continue to be, members in good standing of a Labour organisation eligible for affiliation to the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress. They shall also pledge themselves to accept this Constitution, to agree to abide by the decisions of the National Congress and the National Executive in carrying out the aims of the Constitution, and to appear before their constituencies as "Labour Candidates" only.

(h) Candidates for election to Parliament and members of the National Executive shall abstain strictly from identifying themselves with or promoting the interests of any candidature not endorsed by the National Executive.

**11.**—This Constitution shall come into operation on and from November 7th, 1918.

## STANDING ORDERS.

*(Revised to August, 1924).*

**1.—NATIONAL CONGRESS.**—The Annual Congress shall be held regularly on the first Monday in August in each year and three following days.

Special Congresses may be called at such other times as may be decided upon by the National Executive, or upon the receipt by the National Executive of a requisition from at least five Trades Councils having a total affiliated strength of 15,000 members.

The Congress shall assemble on the first day at 11 a.m., on the following days at 9.30 a.m., adjourn at 1 p.m., reassemble at 2 p.m., and adjourn for the day at 5 p.m.

**2.—DELEGATES' QUALIFICATIONS.**—Persons to be eligible as Delegates to the National Congress must be bona-fide members or permanent officials of the Trade Union they represent; or Delegates to or officials of a Trades Council or a local Labour Party recognised by the National Executive.



The names and addresses of the Delegates, together with the Delegates' fees, must be forwarded to the Secretary three weeks prior to the date fixed for the Annual Meeting.

**3.—DELEGATION FEES.**—A delegation fee of one pound (£1) for each delegate attending the Annual Congress shall be paid. For special Congresses such lesser fees as may be decided upon by the National Executive shall be paid.

All Fees—delegation and affiliation—and the expenses of Delegates attending Congress must be borne by the affiliated organisations.

**4.—FINANCIAL YEAR.**—The financial year shall end on the thirtieth day of June, and all affiliation fees shall be paid and accounts for the year closed on that date.

A Balance Sheet and Financial Statement shall be prepared, audited by a public auditor or qualified accountant, and sent to the affiliated Societies at least seven days before the opening of the Annual Congress.

**5.—CONGRESS ARRANGEMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE.**—The National Executive shall appoint a Congress Arrangements Sub-Committee to act with the local Committee in the town where the next Congress is to meet, for the purpose of arranging the business of the Congress. This Sub-Committee shall be empowered to consider the Agenda before the Congress meets, to make suggestions to the Standing Orders Committee (to be appointed by the Congress) respecting the grouping or re-drafting of the Resolutions, and respecting any other matter which in their opinion will facilitate the business of the Congress.

**6.—STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.**—A Standing Orders Committee of five members shall be elected on the first day of the Congress from the Delegates present and their duties shall be to:—

(a) Verify and report upon the credentials of the Delegates.

(b) Co-operate with the movers of Resolutions and Amendments, in order that composite Resolutions may be obtained whenever possible.

(c) Submit to the Chairman of Congress a programme of all propositions and amendments approved by them as being in accordance with Standing Orders, together with any suggestions for the proper conduct of the business of the Congress.

(d) Control the distribution of all literature.

(e) Transact any other special business not provided for in these Standing Orders.

They shall meet not later than half-an-hour prior to each sitting of Congress for the purpose of arranging the despatch of business and carrying through the Agenda. They shall report to Congress any violation of the Standing Orders that may be brought to their notice, together with any recommendations agreed upon.

**7.—TELLERS AND SCRUTINEERS.**—Three delegates, or such other number as may be agreed upon at the time of election, shall be appointed as Tellers, whose duty shall be to count and record the votes on every occasion on which a division is taken. Their decision as to the numbers recorded on any vote shall be final. In cases where the Tellers disagree the Chairman shall order a recount.

Three or more delegates shall be appointed as Scrutineers. They shall be responsible for the arrangements for the election by ballot of the National Executive and Officers for the coming year. They shall take account of the number of ballot papers printed and distributed, shall, before the ballot is taken, destroy all unused ballot papers in excess of the numbers distributed to the delegates and take such other steps as will ensure the validity of the election.

**8.—METHOD OF VOTING.**—The voting on resolutions shall be by show of hands except when a proposition to be voted upon involves financial liability to the affiliated Societies, in which case a "card vote" may be demanded. Cards will be issued to delegates of Trade Unions on the basis of one card for every 250 members on which affiliation fees are paid; to Trades Councils and local Labour Parties: one card to each delegate attending the Congress.

**9.—RESOLUTIONS AND AMENDMENTS.**—**Propositions** for the Congress Agenda must be signed by the authorised officials of the Organisations submitting them and must reach the Secretary of Congress at least eight weeks before the meeting of Congress. They shall be printed and copies sent immediately to the Secretaries of affiliated organisations.

**Amendments** to the propositions on the Agenda must be sent to the Secretary in writing, endorsed by the authorised officials of the organisations submitting them, at least three weeks before the opening of Congress. They shall thereupon be printed and sent to the Secretaries of affiliated organisations immediately.

In order to ensure that important questions affecting Labour may not be omitted from the discussions at Congress, the National Executive shall be empowered to place Resolutions on the Agenda, and may in cases of urgency submit Resolutions which have not appeared in the printed Agenda.

The order in which Resolutions shall be inserted in the agenda shall be decided by the National Executive.



**10.—LIMITATION OF SPEECHES.**—The proposer of a Resolution or Amendment shall be allowed ten minutes, and each subsequent speaker five minutes.

A Delegate shall not speak more than once on the same question except the mover of the original Resolution, who shall be allowed ten minutes to reply to the discussion. Each delegate on rising to speak must announce his (or her) name and the Society he (or she) represents.

**11.**—In the event of a proposal to take “the previous question” or to proceed to the next business, being moved and seconded, it shall, after the proposer of the resolution in question has been heard, be put to the vote, and if the proposal is carried, the resolution under discussion shall be deemed to be disposed of and Congress will proceed to the next item on the Agenda.

**12.—ELECTION OF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE.**—The National Executive shall be elected by ballot on the third day of the Annual Congress. Delegates only shall be eligible for election.

Nominations must be sent in by affiliated organisations three weeks prior to the opening of Congress, the list of Nominees to be printed and sent to the Secretaries of affiliated organisations at the same time as the Final Agenda.

The maximum number of delegates from any one organisation that may be elected to membership of the National Executive, otherwise than as officers, shall be :—

For an organisation with a membership not over 10,000—  
One.

For an organisation with a membership over 10,000, but not over 20,000—Two.

For an organisation with a membership over 20,000, but not over 50,000—Three.

For an organisation with a membership of over 50,000—  
Four.

Members of the National Executive shall attend the Congress by virtue of their office, and remain in attendance until the disposal of their Report. They shall not be entitled to vote unless they are duly qualified as delegates. If qualified as delegates they shall be eligible for re-election.

The officers for the year shall remain in office until the close of Congress.

**13.—MEETINGS AND QUORUM.**—The National Executive shall meet at least once a quarter, five members at any meeting to form a quorum.

**14.—NATIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT.**—The Report of the National Executive, which shall have been transmitted to the delegates at least three days before the assembly of Congress, shall be presented and considered immediately following the presidential address. The report shall be discussed paragraph by paragraph, each speaker being limited to five minutes on any one paragraph.

Interim reports of the activities of the National Executive shall be issued periodically throughout the year and sent to all affiliated bodies for their information and guidance. Consideration of the Balance Sheet and Statement of Accounts shall follow as the next business after the Annual Report is disposed of.

**15.—APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS.**—A public auditor or qualified accountant for the succeeding year shall be appointed at the Annual Meeting who shall have access to all the papers and documents relating to the income and expenditure of the National Executive.

**16.—PUBLIC MEETINGS.**—At least two public meetings shall be held under the auspices of the National Executive in the town appointed for the Annual Congress, one of these meetings to take place during Congress week.

**17.—SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.**—Standing Orders shall not be suspended unless previous intimation shall have been given to the Standing Orders Committee and the Motion agreed to by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present.

32 Lower Abbey Street,  
Dublin.



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