REPORT

OF THE

TWENTY FOURTH

Annual Conference

OF THE

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION,

HELD AT THE

Club Room of the Burnley Branch,

ST. JAMES'S HALL, BURNLEY,

ON

GOOD FRIDAY, SATURDAY, AND EASTER SUNDAY,

April 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1904.

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1904.

REPORT OF THE

Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the S.D.F.

April 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1904.

The Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation was held at the S.D.F. Club, St. James's Hall, Burnley, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, April 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1904.

PETER WALKER, the provisional chairman, opened the Conference on the Friday morning, and, having welcomed the delegates, stated an Annual Conference such as that in which they were now meeting was a serious business to the S.D.F., and he had first of all to offer a word of apology because he was not aware, when selected by his comrades for the post of provisional chairman, that he would be called upon to deliver an address. It was eleven years ago since there had been an Annual Conference held in Burnley, and the local branch felt that the S.D.F. had done them a high honour in selecting Burnley for the present Conference, and assured them that they would do all they could to make them as comfortable as possible during their visit. The Burnley Branch during its existence had passed through many vicissitudes, and had done years of plodding, heavy, steady work. They had achieved some slight victories, and had suffered some "moral victories!" but they refused to accept anything as a defeat; it was only a repulse. He remembered the time when they had paid a shilling for a bacon box to use as a platform, but they now occupied a position which reflected great credit upon the energies of the men and women who had devoted time, labour and opportunity to the work of the S.D.F. Their real difficulty was the ignorance of the workers, which was used against themselves by those who desired to keep political power and administration in their own hands. If the Conference decided to elect him as their chairman, he should endeavour to act impartially to all, and he felt sure that those who had to move resolutions would do so in the spirit of endeavouring to find solutions to the questions which came before them rather than in a manner calculated to create difficulties.

Peter Walker (Burnley) and Councillor Albert Brooks (Blackburn) were then elected Chairman and Deputy-Chairman of the Conference. E. Lowthian (Carlisle), Councillor T. Lewis (Southampton), and F. Davey (Bow and Bromley) were elected the Standing Orders and Credentials Committee. G. M. Bickle (Birkenhead) and Frank Porter (Lambeth) were appointed tellers.

Letters of greetings and good wishes were read from the International Socialist Bureau at Brussels, and from our veteran comrade Frederick Lessner. The Secretary was instructed to send suitable replies.

A resolution from Stratford Branch was proposed by HECTOR KIRBY (Stratford), seconded by J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton), amended and agreed to as follows: "That this Annual Conference of the S.D.F. congratulates the town of Burnley on having for its Socialist Labour Parliamentary Candidate our veteran comrade, H. M. Hyndman."

Another resolution concerning assistance to be given by the delegates to propaganda in favour of Hyndman's candidature was moved by HECTOR KIRBY (Stratford) and seconded by H. BELSEY (Peckham). Next business was moved and lost by 24 votes to 22, but was shortly afterwards carried by 34 votes to 4.

G. M. BICKLE (Birkenhead) moved: "That in view of the attitude of the Liberal Party in putting forward Mr. F. Maddison to oppose comrade Hyndman at Burnley, the Executive Council be instructed to take steps to retaliate by putting forward candidates to prevent the return of Liberal candidates in constituencies where the Liberal majorities have previously been small." If they were to defeat the aims of the Liberal Party in keeping out Socialist candidates, they must select constituencies where the Liberal majorities have been small, and endeavour to keep their candidates out of Parliament.

L. RIPPON (Burnley) thought it was no good to make threats unless they meant to carry them out.

To the above resolution there were four amendments from other branches, and some slight confusion arose as regards the manner in which they should be taken. To add to the difficulty next business was twice moved and lost. The discussion was continued by F. PORTER (Lambeth), H. BELSEY (Peckham), H. QUELCH (Executive), DAN IRVING (Burnley) and

H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea). Next business was finally carried by 32 votes to 15. Some heat was exhibited by J. FITZGERALD (Watford) against the ruling of the Chairman that "Next business" applied not only to the Birkenhead resolution, but to the amendments also, and H. J. HAWKINS (Central West Ham) moved, and J. FITZGERALD (Watford) seconded, "That the chairman do leave the chair." This proposal received six votes, and H. J. Hawkins immediately claimed a division amid the protests of the delegates. The division was as follows:—

FOR: (10)

Aberdeen (2)
Battersea (2)
Central West Ham
Edmonton
Hackney & Kingsland
Peckham & Dulwich
Southwark
Watford

AGAINST: (54)

Accrington (2)
Aston
Bacup
Barrow-in-Furness
Birkenhead
Blackburn, Central (2)
Blackburn (St. Paul's)
Bow
Bournemouth
Burnley (3)
Canning Town
Carlisle
Central (2)
Glasgow (2)
Clayton-le-Moors
Clerkenwell
Chorley
Colne
Croydon
Darwen
East London (Jewish)
Fulham
Great Harwood
Kensal Town
Kentish Town
King's Lynn
Kirkcaldy
Lambeth
Manchester (Central)
Manchester (S.W.)
Marylebone
Mile End
Nelson
Northampton (2)
North Islington
Norwich
Reading
Shoreditch (2)
Southampton
South Islington
Stratford
Todmorden
Tottenham
Tunbridge Wells
Wigan
Wood Green

NEUTRAL: (8)

Burnbank
Dewsbury
Govan
Hanley
Ilkeston
Lincoln
Rawtenstall
Walthamstow

Next business was carried by 44 votes to 8 on the following resolution from the Bournemouth Branch: "That the Annual Conference recommend the branches to vote for the Conservative candidates at the General Election unless the Liberal Party removes its opposition to Socialist candidates."

On the question of the publication of the report of the Annual Conference, it was agreed that it be published separately from the rules.

The Standing Orders and Credentials Committee reported on the delegates present and the branches represented. The list with additional arrivals coming later was as follows:—

Aberdeen, W. Lowthian; Accrington, E. J. Cave and J. Thompson; Aston, G. Winterburn; Bacup, Wm. Marshall; Barrow-in-Furness, J. R. Cameron; Battersea, E. Fairbrother and H. C. Phillips; Birkenhead, G. M. Bickle: Blackburn, (Central) H. E. Dawson and J. Holden; Blackburn, (St. Paul's), J. Corrigan; Bournemouth, J. T. Whittaker; Bow and Bromley, F. Davey; Burnbank, W. Kennedy; Burnley, Dan Irving and L. Rippon; Canning Town, G. Bissell; Carlisle, E. Lowthian; Central, J. F. Green and A. S. Headingley; Central West Ham, H. J. Hawkins; Chorley, J. Heighway; Clayton-le-Moors, J. Alldritt; Clerkenwell, Dora Montefiore; Colne, J. Paterson; Croydon, G. H. Young; Darwen, P. Duckworth (Friday), Wm. Fairhurst (Saturday), and Wm. Atkinson (Sunday); Dewsbury, T. Butterworth; East London (Jewish), Boris Kahan; Edmonton, W. J. G. Mercer; Fulham, F. G. Jones; Glasgow, J. Laing and W. Reid; Govan, J. Burnett; Great Harwood, J. Waring; Hackney and Kingsland, J. Stokes; Hanley, F. Baggley; Ilkeston, W. Conroy; Islington (North), J. Gill; Islington (South), W. S. Cluse; King's Lynn, J. H. Duerden; Kensal Town, H. Burrows; Kentish Town, M. Short; Kirkcaldy, H. Turner; Lambeth, F. Porter: Lincoln, G. Bell; Manchester (Central), J. E. McGlasson; Manchester (South-West), A. H. Watson; Marylebone, S. Cleasson; Mile End, A. A. Watts; Nelson, H. S. Smith; Northampton, G. T. H. Digby; Norwich, E. Wheeler; Peckham and Dulwich, H. Belsey; Rawtenstall, J. Bice; Reading, J. Hunter Watts; Shoreditch, R. Kendall and H. B. Keast; Southampton, T. Lewis; Southwark, H. Neumann; Stratford, H. Kirby; Todmorden, J. T. S. Mitchell; Tottenham, T. A. Jackson; Tunbridge Wells, Rose Jarvis; Walthamstow, N. Hargreaves; Watford, J. Fitzgerald; Wigan, J. Peel; Wood Green, E. J. B. Allen.

The Financial Statement for 1903 was presented and passed after some questions had been asked and answered.

The next business was the Secretary's Annual Report which was presented as follows:—

Since the last Annual Conference, twenty-five ordinary and six special and adjourned meetings of the Executive Council have been held, excluding the special meeting of the full Executive held last

October. The attendances of the Executive Council have been as follows:—W. A. Woodroffe, 30 (once attendance too late to be counted); J. F. Green, 28 (and once excused on S.D.F. business); Olaf Bloch, 28; Clara Hendin, 28; A. A. Watts, 26 (once excused); H. Quelch, 22 (thrice excused); T. Rothstein, 24; J. Hunter Watts, 21 (twice excused); C. F. Davis, 19; Dora Montefiore, 17; F. G. Jones (elected to fill vacancy), 13; George Hewitt (resigned), 9 (twice excused); G. Pegg (resigned), 7; and W. J. Barwick (elected to fill vacancy), 7. Certain absences of C. F. Davis, Dora Montefiore, and J. Hunter Watts, were caused through illness. The attendances of the members of the Executive Council during the past year have been, on the whole, decidedly above the average.

The following new branches have been formed during the past year:—In London: Bethnal Green, Chiswick, Clapham Junction, Deptford (re-formed), North Islington, and Woolwich; in the provinces: Aston (Birmingham), Croydon (West), Grantham, Gravesend, Leicester, Liverpool (South), Sheffield (Brightside), and Whitehaven; in Wales: Penrhiwceiber and Treharris; in Scotland: Airdrie, Bo'ness, Coatbridge and Dundee (re-formed). Four of these branches were apparently started without the material to keep them going, for their existence was of short duration.

A question which may affect the growth of the organisation has been placed upon the agenda paper for the consideration of this Conference. The question is that of the affiliation of Socialist bodies to the S.D.F. Within the past few months a number of communications have been received from local Socialist bodies expressing a desire to affiliate with the S.D.F. Our rules, as they are at present constituted, do not provide for the affiliation of local societies to the organisation: branches are the only sections which are dealt with. But if, as seems certain, there is a desire on the part of local societies to affiliate with the S.D.F., though averse from sinking altogether their identity as a branch of the organisation, it is a matter which may well be discussed whether some means cannot be found to enable the organisation to extend itself in that direction.

A considerable portion of the time of the Executive Council has unfortunately been taken up with matters arising out the decision of the last Conference with regard to "impossiblism." The reference to "impossiblism" here is meant to allude not merely to what many may feel to be an impossible political attitude, but that form of it which is closely allied with vehement abuse and vilification of the S.D.F., and those particularly and prominently associated with it. The last Conference gave plenary powers to the Executive Council to deal with the form of political disease which was hampering the work of the S.D.F. in every quarter where it manifested itself; and, in accordance with those plenary powers, certain branches were dissolved and certain members were expelled. The decision of the Conference was keenly resented by a minority who saw no difference between the knife of the surgeon used to relieve a patient of a cancerous growth, and the knife of the

murderer used to relieve a healthy body of its existence, and eventually, on the demand of the necessary minimum number of six branches, a poll of the organisation was taken on the decision of the Conference. The result of the poll was the upholding of that decision by an overwhelming majority. But the mischief still exists. There is still a small minority in the S.D.F. who, though careful to avoid a distinct course of conduct which would bring them under the resolution of the last Conference, are nevertheless pursuing tactics which can only result in a general weakening and paralysis of the body in its Socialist work. Apparently convinced that in an impossible state of political perfection alone lies the salvation of the working class, they negatively criticise and generally pull to pieces everything said or done by anyone else. And some of them do not always stop there. Enough correspondence on this matter has been inflicted upon the branches to convince all unprejudiced minds that a good deal of insinuation and imputation of bad motives, based upon most misleading and inaccurate statements, lies behind some of the "clear cut" and "straight" propaganda going on inside the organisation. The growth of this kind of thing forced the full meeting of the Executive Council held on October 25th to decide that, with regard to the Central West Ham Branch, if that branch continued to send out misleading statements to the branches, it would be dissolved in the interest of the organisation. No more such letters have since been sent out.

The last Conference decided that no further alterations in the Programme, Rules and Policy of the S.D.F. should be made for three years. It has, however, been found necessary to bring before you two questions: The constitution of the Executive Council, and the rate of subscriptions from members to branches. The manner in which the various amendments to the constitution of the Executive Council were voted upon at the last Conference made it necessary to take a vote of the branches on a sentence in the new constitution which, if it had stood, would have rendered it positively unworkable. This raised the question of the constitution itself, and the Lancashire District Council expressed their feelings so strongly on the matter that it was decided at the full meeting of the Executive Council, held on October 25, to allow the Lancashire District Council to place their resolution on the Agenda Paper of the Annual Conference. The same course was taken with regard to subscriptions from members to branches. Several branches expressed the view that the increased subscription was operating adversely so far as their membership was concerned. This question will be referred to again in the paragraph dealing with finance.

With the consent of the Dewsbury branch our comrade H. Quelch has been withdrawn from Dewsbury, which he contested in 1902, and has been put forward at Southampton. The increased chances of the success for a Social-Democratic candidate at Southampton,

compared with Dewsbury, justify the change, although, generally speaking, such changes are to be avoided.

Applications have been made by branches to put forward Social-Democratic candidates at the general elections. The Executive Council have felt that it is impossible to undertake any Parliamentary candidatures other than those to which the organisation is already pledged. They will only consent to any further candidatures where branches can secure a suitable candidate and find the whole of their election expenses.

The S.D.F. secured six additional seats at the Municipal elections last November, and another at a bye-election shortly afterwards. It is to be regretted that no action was taken by the metropolitan branches in regard to the London County Council elections, the importance of which have been greatly increased by the fact that the London County Council is now the educational authority for the metropolis of these islands. On the other hand, it is encouraging to note the number of candidates put forward for the Guardians.

Your Organisation Committee has devoted a great portion of its labours to electoral matters, to the consideration and revision of election addresses, and to the consideration of local electoral situations, especially with regard to our attitude towards local Labour Representation Committees. The general policy pursued by the Committee has been to recommend that branches of the S.D.F. should join these local Labour Representation Committees wherever there are opportunities for influencing such committees in a Socialist direction.

Four manifestoes for gratuitous distribution have been issued by the Executive Council during the past twelve months, dealing with Labour Representation, the Fiscal Controversy, the Cotton Crisis in Lancashire, and Chinese Labour in the Transvaal. About 300,000 of these manifestoes have been distributed. The London District Council have also issued some excellent general propagandist leaflets.

From the financial point of view, the raising of the contributions of members to their branches, and the corresponding increase of Central dues from branches, has benefited the Central Office. It has enabled more propaganda work to be done in many parts of the country, as well as the distribution of the manifestoes referred to above. The Central Office has spent money on propaganda work in Dewsbury, Northampton, Liverpool, Birkenhead, and in Scotland, and recently comrade W. Gee, mainly through the kindness of a Cornish friend, has been giving a series of lectures in Cornwall, and has delivered addresses at Plymouth, Exeter, Bristol and Reading on his return journey. But although the increase of dues from branches has greatly benefited the Central Office, it must be acknowledged, on the other hand, that the increased amount represents a less membership than was represented on the former rate of contribution.

Since the last Conference, the Social-Democratic War Chest has been established to occupy the place of the old Central Election

Fund abolished last year. The War Chest receives voluntary contributions only, whereas the Central Election Fund was largely made up of contributions paid according to the rules. About £250 has been collected for the War Chest in about seven months, with promises amounting to about another £50. The appointment of George Hewitt as organiser and collector was made in this connection, but the result of his efforts has been greatly marred by his recent severe illness contracted whilst engaged on S.D.F. work, which has unfortunately compelled him to resign his position.

One of the most pleasing features of the year's work has been the remarkable success of the Socialist meetings on the Fiscal question held in all parts of the country and principally addressed by our comrade, H. M. Hyndman. An effort was made to follow Mr. Chamberlain as far as possible in the towns where he had been addressing meetings in favour of his Protectionist propaganda, and was largely successful. Save in one instance, packed meetings were held and people were turned away from the doors. Notwithstanding the terribly high price for the hire of Queen's Hall, London, the meeting realised a profit of over £10 to the S.D.F.

On the whole we can look back upon a successful year's work, marred only, in some instances, by a trifle too much of mere criticism accompanied by too little real work for the movement. The growing unpopularity of the present Government, the want of confidence in the Opposition, and the general muddle and confusion which reigns in every department of our national life, give us opportunities such as we have not had for many years past. It is for us to recognise our responsibilities, and to use those opportunities for the advancement and progress of the Social-Democratic movement in the United Kingdom.

Some slight friction arose concerning the order of the matters arising out of the report which had been placed upon the agenda paper, and the criticism on the report itself. The Chairman decided to take the criticisms first.

H. J. Hawkins (Central West Ham) expressed his dissatisfaction with that portion of the report dealing with the "impossibilists." During the past year censure had been passed upon his branch and himself for using unbecoming language, and the Executive had written that they would not take notice of branch letters until their secretary could couch his communications in more reasonable language. They burked serious matters of principle on mere matters of form. But what were they to think of some of the language contained in the report? It was mere assumption and assertion, and contained insinuations and vilifications against members who were quite as good as others. At any rate, it showed that the vilification was not all on one side. During his speech, some personal

remarks were introduced, and reference was made to the choice of H. Quelch against Ben Tillett as Parliamentary candidate for Southampton. He (Hawkins) had been informed that the Southampton Trades Council had been approached by the Liberals to run a candidate in harness with them, but the Southampton Trades Council had declined. Some of them had made up their minds to have Quelch or make a Labour candidate impossible. How easy would it have been for him to have communicated with people who would have spoilt all their plans ? But why had the Executive granted permission for the South Salford Branch to support the candidature of Ben Tillett in Eccles ? Was Tillett's candidature at Southampton a dummy one ? There were further personal references to Joseph Burgess and Will Thorne, and a few protests were raised.

W. S. CLUSE (South Islington) said that while the S.D.F. should be a fighting organisation, the fighting should be limited to our enemies and not against our comrades inside. He deprecated the attacks on the Executive in regard to the Southampton contest; it was one of the finest opportunities for getting a Social-Democrat on to the floor of the House of Commons by a trade unionist constituency. He complained that the London District Council was being used as a means of attacking the Executive Council.

W. REID (Glasgow) said that they in Glasgow had had a specimen of comrade Hawkins's methods when he wrote to the branches that they (the Glasgow Branch) were not supplying the speakers which they claimed to supply; they judged his insinuations against the Executive to be of the same value as those made against the Glasgow Branch.

The discussion was continued by J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton) and H. NEUMANN (Southwark) who urged the deletion of that portion of the report referred to by H. J. Hawkins.

T. LEWIS (Southampton) characterised the references to Southampton as deliberate misrepresentation on the part of "comrade" Hawkins. He should never have made such statements if he knew the facts, and what he had said was calculated to do them harm. Hawkins might protest that he made no charges, but in fact he had done so. It was perfectly untrue that there had been any collusion on their part. The only people at Southampton who had called Tillett's candidature a dummy one were the few "impossibilists," and it must have been from them that Hawkins obtained his "information." The Executive Council could not have known anything about Tillett being a candidate; Quelch himself did not know until he came down on the evening of the selection.

H. BELSEY (Peckham) protested against the methods used against the so-called "impossibilists."

H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea) and H. KEAST (Shoreditch) having spoken,

H. J. HAWKINS (Central West Ham) made reference to a remark which he stated that H. Quelch had made at the London Trades Council to the effect that if you could not get Socialist candidates you must support the next best man, and HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) and H. QUELCH (Executive) also spoke. The adoption of the report was then carried by 67 votes to 3.

On the assembling of the Conference on Saturday morning, the Standing Orders Committee reported the arrival of a few additional delegates, and recommended that speakers, with the exception of the movers of resolutions, be limited to five minutes on matters of internal business, and that the two resolutions from Glasgow and Walthamstow branches on the admission of Alexander Anderson to membership in the S.D.F. be taken together. The recommendations were adopted.

Congratulatory telegrams were read from Rochdale Socialist Bazaar and Shoreditch Branch S.D.F.

H. NEUMANN (Southwark), on behalf of the Peckham Branch, appealed against the decision of the Executive Council concerning their withdrawal from the local Labour Representation Committee, on which body the North Camberwell Branch had remained. H. J. HAWKINS (Central West Ham) seconded that the appeal be heard, and it was agreed to. After hearing NEUMANN's appeal, the Conference passed to next business.

W. REID (Glasgow) spoke in support of the following resolution: "That this Conference rescinds the decision of the Executive Council to admit A. Anderson, late of Edinburgh, a member of the Federation." The opinion of the Executive appeared to have undergone a change between December, 1903, and February, 1904, and he wanted to know what had occurred to cause that change.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) complained that this had been done

by the London portion of the Executive without any consultation with their provincial colleagues.

J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton) said that local circumstances had caused a change in the opinion of the members towards the admission of Anderson, who had declared that he would abide loyally by the policy of the S.D.F.

H. QUELCH (Executive) said that it was not so much a question with the Executive of Anderson being a fit and proper member, as that they did not consider it advisable to oppose what they understood to be the unanimous wish of the Edmonton Branch.

The Glasgow resolution was carried by 48 votes to 18.

Urgency was then moved by HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town), seconded by H. E. DAWSON (Blackburn), and carried by 58 to 9, for the following motion: "That this Annual Conference of the S.D.F. most strongly, emphatically and unequivocally condemns the conduct of those members who have carried on a campaign of calumny and intrigue against the Executive Council, and therefore against the whole organisation by which it was elected, and believing that such actions are thoroughly injurious to the S.D.F. and to the propaganda of Social-Democracy, hereby calls upon those members at once to apologise to the Conference and to pledge themselves, without any reservations whatever, to cease such conduct in the future."

The resolution was carried by 58 votes to 10, and, on a division being demanded, the voting was as follows:—

FOR: (56)

Aberdeen (2)
Accrington (2)
Aston
Bacup
Barrow-in-Furness
Birkenhead
Blackburn Central (2)
Blackburn (St. Paul's)
Bow
Burnbank
Burnley (3)
Canning Town
Carlisle
Central (2)
Chorley
Clerkenwell
Colne
Croydon
Darwen
Dewsbury
East London (Jewish)
Fulham
Glasgow (2)
Govan
Great Harwood
Hackney & Kingsland
Hanley
Ilkeston
Kensal Town
Kentish Town
King's Lynn
Lambeth
Manchester (Central)
Manchester (S.W.)
Mile End
Nelson
Northampton (2)
North Islington
Norwich
Reading (2)
Shoreditch (2)
Southampton
South Islington
Todmorden
Tunbridge Wells
Wigan

AGAINST: (6)

Battersea (2)
Central West Ham
Peckham & Dulwich
Watford
Wood Green

NEUTRAL: (11)

Bournemouth
Clayton-le-Moors
Edmonton
Kirkcaldy
Lincoln
Rawtenstall
Marylebone
Stratford
Southwark
Tottenham
Walthamstow

The six delegates who had voted against the resolution were called upon for an explanation or apology. H. BELSEY (Peckham) stated that he had always been a loyal member of the S.D.F., and he had done nothing to demand an apology. FAIRBROTHER (Battersea) said he had nothing to apologise for. H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea) said he had never been guilty of intriguing or spreading calumny, but he believed the men at whom this was aimed to be in the right. E. ALLEN (Wood Green) would not vote against individuals against whom no proof of the conduct attributed to them had been brought. H. J. HAWKINS (Central West Ham) was as strongly opposed to calumny and intrigue as any member of the Federation, though he had never hesitated to say what seemed to him to be facts. J. FITZGERALD (Watford) asked for evidence. He had always stood on the ground of uncompromising hostility to all non-Socialist parties, but denied having been guilty of intrigue.

H. QUELCH (Executive) said they had heard from Hawkins's own lips a specimen of what he had been saying, and the branches had been deluged with letters containing insinuations and calumnies against members of the S.D.F. When George Hewitt had been put in the field as organiser and collector, a dead set was immediately made at him so as to hamper him in his work. All sorts of insinuations of corruption and receiving money had been flung about. The Executive had been denounced as a corrupt body.

H. J. HAWKINS rose and denied that he had charged the Executive with being a corrupt body; they were too incapable. (Protests.)

H. QUELCH, resuming, referred to the allegations made regarding the Executive and Southampton. The Executive were charged with having bargained with Ben Tillett for him to withdraw from Southampton and to have the support of the S.D.F. at Eccles.

H. J. HAWKINS again rose to deny that he had said so, but it looked like it.

H. QUELCH (warmly): Yes, that is what is said; "comrade" Hawkins does not say that the Executive is corrupt, but it looks like it! He does not say we have been guilty of dirty political work, but it looks like it! This is the sort of slander and calumny which is being continually put around, and which is paralysing our efforts in all directions. Then take Fitzgerald, he had been more 'cute than Hawkins; he had not written letters and made statements publicly, but he had held "economic classes"—so had George Yates who was expelled by the last Conference—and as a result of these "economic classes," they found the same suspicions raised against the Executive Council. They knew Fitzgerald had associated himself with those whose conduct inside the organisation had caused them to be expelled; he had continually worn the S.L.P. button at S.D.F. meetings, and had refused to desist from exhibiting it.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) moved and H. E. DAWSON (Blackburn) seconded, "That H. J. Hawkins and J. Fitzgerald be expelled the Conference and the organisation."

H. J. HAWKINS (Central West Ham) protested that the resolution was out of order. How was it competent for delegates who had been instructed to vote for Fitzgerald and himself for the Executive Council to vote for their expulsion?

The resolution was carried by 61 to 8. On a division being demanded, the result was as follows:—

FOR: (58)

Aberdeen (2)	Colne	Lambeth
Accrington (2)	Croydon	Manchester, Central
Aston	Darwen	Manchester (S.W.)
Bacup	Dewsbury	Mile End
Barrow-in-Furness	East London (Jewish)	Nelson
Birkenhead	Fulham	Northampton (2)
Blackburn, Central (2)	Glasgow (2)	North Islington
Blackburn (St. Paul's)	Govan	Norwich
Bow	Great Harwood	Rawtenstall
Burnbank	Hackney & Kingsland	Reading (2)
Burnley (3)	Hanley	Shoreditch (2)
Canning Town	Ilkeston	Southampton
Carlisle	Kensal Town	South Islington
Central (2)	Kentish Town	Todmorden
Chorley	Kirkcaldy	Tunbridge Wells
Clerkenwell	King's Lynn	Wigan

AGAINST: (7)

Battersea (2)	Peckham & Dulwich	Watford
Central West Ham	Southwark	Wood Green

NEUTRAL: (8)

Bournemouth	Walthamstow	Stratford
Clayton-le-Moors	Lincoln	Tottenham
Edmonton	Marylebone	

J. Fitzgerald and H. J. Hawkins then left the Conference.

HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) moved, H. B. KEAST (Shoreditch) seconded, and it was carried by 54 to 5:—"That this Conference expressly instructs the new Executive Council to expel from the S.D.F., without appeal, any member, members or branches who in the slightest degree countenance or support any such conduct as the Conference by its votes has emphatically condemned."

The Southwark Branch resolution relating to the permission given the Glasgow Branch to support the candidature of J. Burgess was moved by H. NEUMANN. The amendment, as follows, moved by W. REID (Glasgow), was carried by 54 to 9: "That this Conference approves of and confirms the action of the Executive Council in granting permission to S.D.F. members to support the candidature of Joseph Burgess in Camlachie."

On the Blackburn resolution, moved by J. HOLDEN, calling upon the Conference to decide upon the attitude to be adopted towards candidates who are Socialists, but run under other auspices, the previous question was moved and carried by 48 to 11. This finished the Secretary's report and the questions arising out of it.

H. W. Lee was then unanimously re-elected General Secretary.

On the election of organiser and collector, for which the only nomination was W. Gee, DAN IRVING (Burnley) asked if it was the opinion of the Executive Council that the position should or should not be filled. H. QUELCH replied in the affirmative, stating that the thing had not been given a fair trial owing to the breakdown of G. Hewitt's health, and after questions had been asked and answered as to the financial results to date, it was carried by 45 to 11 that the appointment be left to the new Executive Council, and that if W. Gee were appointed he should not remain a member of the Executive if elected to the Council.

On the constitution of the Executive Council DAN IRVING (Burnley) moved the following resolution on behalf of the Lancashire District Council:—"The Executive Council shall consist of twelve instead of 24 members as at present, six London and six provincial members. They shall meet once in each quarter in different towns, and their expenses shall be paid from the general funds of the organisation. The six London members shall be a sub-Executive, and shall meet fortnightly in London." Until some such system was adopted the governing body of the organisation would never be satisfactory to a large number of the members.

The proposal was supported by J. F. GREEN (Central), FRANK PORTER (Lambeth), B. KAHAN (East London [Jewish]), and H. QUELCH (Executive), and opposed by J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton), and H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea). The resolution was carried by 39 votes to 25.

A difficulty then arose as to the election of the new Executive Council, several delegates stating that their instructions were based on twenty-four members still being the number of the Executive. It was finally carried by 40 votes to 29 that the nominations be sent round again to the branches, and the present Executive continue to act until the election was carried out. It was agreed that the voting papers be returned by April 30th. On the other resolutions relating to the constitution of the Executive Council, next business was carried by 43 votes to 14.

G. M. BICKLE (Birkenhead) formally moved the following resolution, which was agreed to: "That the Executive Council apply to all branches for the names and addresses of all members able and willing to act as speakers, and that a directory be drawn up and printed, copies being supplied to branches and speakers at a charge to cover cost of printing."

Next business and the previous question disposed of the next two items on the agenda paper from the Walthamstow and Canning Town Branches.

The question of the subscriptions from members to the branches was discussed by J. DIGBY (Northampton), H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea), A. A. WATTS (Mile End), G. BISSELL (Canning Town), J. E. McGLASSON (Manchester, Central), and J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton).

The Accrington Branch proposed: "All branches shall be levied 3d. per month per member as contributions to the

Central Office, and that the branches be left to regulate their own subscriptions." This resolution received equal voting. On a division being demanded, the voting was as follows:—

FOR: (32)

Accrington (2)	Colne	Kensal Town
Aston	Croydon	Lambeth
Bacup	Darwen	Marylebone
Battersea (2)	Dewsbury	Manchester (Central)
Birkenhead	Edmonton	Manchester (S.W.)
Burnley (3)	East London (Jewish)	Nelson
Canning Town	Govan	Peckham & Dulwich
Carlisle	Hanley	Todmorden
Central (2)	Hackney & Kingsland	Wigan

AGAINST. (36)

Aberdeen (2)	Glasgow (2)	Reading (2)
Barrow-in-Furness	Kentish Town	Shoreditch (2)
Blackburn (Central) (2)	King's Lynn	Southampton
Blackburn (St. Paul's)	Kirkcaldy	South Islington
Bow	Lincoln	Southwark
Bournemouth	Mile End	Stratford
Burnbank	Norwich	Tottenham
Chorley	North Islington	Tunbridge Wells
Clerkenwell	Northampton (2)	Wood Green
Fulham	Rawtenstall	Walthamstow

NEUTRAL: (5)

Central West Ham	Great Harwood	Watford
Clayton-le-Moors	Ilkeston	

The Northampton Branch proposal to reduce the subscription to 1d. per week was rejected by 37 votes to 27.

A resolution and five amendments dealing with the publication of a full list of S.D.F. branches came next, the proposal to place it in the annnal report being taken first, and lost by 34 votes to 28. The Colne Branch amendment: "That it be an instruction to the Executive Council to place in the columns of *Justice* a complete list of S.D.F. branches, and the charge to each branch be 4s. per year, such charge to be compulsory," was then carried by 23 votes to 22.

Next business was voted by 50 to 14 on the resolutions dealing with *Justice*. The same fate befel the items dealing with the proposed alteration of the name of the S.D.F. by 42 votes to 11.

On "The affiliation of Socialist bodies to the S.D.F.," H. QUELCH (Executive Council) stated that several local Socialist societies had desired to become affiliated to the

S.D.F., but to retain their local names. There was no provision for anything of this kind in the rules of the S.D.F., and the Executive now submitted to the Conference the desirability of conditions being formulated to provide for such affiliations. H. BELSEY (Peckham) proposed "That local Socialist bodies wishing to affiliate to the S.D.F. must recognise the class war," and the suggestion of the Executive Council, including this rider, was passed by 63 votes to 1, and the Executive Council was empowered to draft a scheme providing for the affiliation of local Socialist bodies to the organisation.

The discussion on "The Retention of Members in the Branches" was opened by W. GEE. He declared that after some experience the question most deserving of their consideration to his mind was not so much how to get new members of the Federation as to retain the members they already had. It was to him an amazing circumstance, having visited different branches in various parts of the country, that the present number of members constituted a microscopical quantity in proportion to the number that had passed through the branches. The conduct of the business of the branches was one of the first considerations. There was such a thing as S.D.F. time for starting business—namely, starting late—and nothing was more injurious. A definite time should be fixed for branch meetings, and business should be started to time, even if only a few were present, as much of the branch business was of a routine character. Some members could not speak from the platform, some could not canvass, &c., but all could attend branch meetings. Then, the chairman should not only take the chair at a definite time, but leave it at a definite time. Another important thing was that we should try to educate new members, and when they come in we should fraternise with them. We should never lose touch of our members, but if necessary go to them if they did not come to us. The area covered by the branch could be split up into districts, and when members absented themselves two or three times they should be visited. After calling on several, the visitor could report. By this means it could be ascertained if any objections to attendance or reasons for non-attendance existed, and these could be dealt with. Members who could not do platform work could do this. He affirmed that even if we had only one-fourth of those who had been members and

who were worth having, we would be a far greater power in the political life of the nation.

A. S. HEADINGLEY (Central) said it often happened that the manners of the members were far from attractive. This was essentially an aristocratic country, and the aristocratic feeling was stronger among the poorer classes than among the aristocrats themselves, and they had to impress the British workman by their individual superiority, and not merely by the superiority of their ideas. If those who preached Socialism were men who could be respected, the men they wished to influence would be much more likely to listen to their opinions.

L. RIPPON (Burnley) said that a large number of their members did not understand what political action meant, and it was on that point that they had the greatest difficulty. They did not understand the difference between policy and principle, and they had lost more members through disagreements than anything else.

J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton) after saying that the expectorating, swearing and drunken man was the product of capitalism, proceeded to speak of the overbearing conduct of some comrades. Because others did not see eye to eye with them, these comrades simply acted as monitors. Tolerance was required among the comrades. Every Socialist was a pariah in society, and a fraternal feeling was required more than in any other society. They should enter into the trials and tribulations of comrades working in the movement.

DORA MONTEFIORE (Clerkenwell) said that if a different atmosphere were brought into the branches they would not have the difficulty they had in getting women comrades to join. Very often the women did not like the way in which the branches were conducted. They had started a women's branch in London. She was sorry it was a women's branch, as she would rather see the women coming in to work with the men.

J. WARING (Great Harwood) urged that they should try to lift the branches on to as high a moral plane as they could. He spoke of the necessity of keeping old members who removed by the same means that the churches adopted, namely, keeping note of their new address, and looking them up.

HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) said their Social-Democracy was no use either to the individual or the organisation unless every man and woman who joined them was made better by it.

W. GEE, in replying to the discussion, denied that there was so much of the atmosphere which Mrs. Montefiore referred to. It was true the men were not always well dressed, but the difficulties of being able to "spruce" themselves up were not sufficiently well understood by those in a better sphere of life. Generally speaking, the conduct of the comrades of his class was better than in any other organisation.

H. QUELCH (Executive) then moved: "That this Annual Conference of the S.D.F. emphatically condemns the tactics of the 'peaceful' British mission to Thibet in the attempt to forcibly disarm the Thibetans, whose country we are invading, which has resulted in the wholesale slaughter and wounding of 1,300 badly-armed men defending their own territory." This was carried unanimously without discussion, and the Conference rose.

On the Sunday morning the Conference began its final sitting by some recommendations as to the procedure of business, and that telegrams should be sent to the Conferences of the I.L.P. and Shop Assistants' Union. These were agreed to.

M. SHORT (Kentish Town) moved the following resolution: "That the S.D.F. do all in its power to encourage any question on the matter of Socialist unity." The motion was seconded by F. PORTER (Lambeth) and carried unanimously.

F. G. JONES (Fulham) moved: "That pending the acquisition of complete adult suffrage, in order to re-affirm the position of the S.D.F. towards women's suffrage, support be given to the principle that for all purposes with and having reference to the right to vote at Parliamentary elections words in the Representation of the People Act importing the masculine gender shall include women." The Fulham Branch were prepared to accept the amendment of the Central Branch. Social-Democrats must advocate the enfranchisement of women, not merely for middle-class women, but for the whole of womankind.

DORA B. MONTEFIORE (Clerkenwell), in seconding the resolution, said that working women were feeling that they were not sufficiently represented by Labour members and candidates, and that they must send their own members to represent their own case in the House of Commons. In Australia, the women had shown that they were ready to take the most advanced side on social and political questions, and

she thought women's suffrage would be a great help to the Socialist movement in this country.

H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea) said that in supporting adult suffrage they necessarily included the suffrage of women, and there was, therefore, no necessity to make a speciality of it.

HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) said that women's suffrage had been in the programme of the S.D.F. since its formation, and it was not true that Social-Democrats had taken no interest in it. While he supported the resolution, lt must be recognised that other parties had taken interest in women's suffrage, not for women as women, but in order that capitalism might be supported by the vote being obtained for middle-class women, and he believed that the head and front of the women's movement was dead set against anything in the shape of adult suffrage. The suffrage demanded by the women's suffrage movement would still exclude the great majority of working women from the vote.

The resolution was carried by 49 votes to 11.

S. KARSKI, a delegate from the Polish Socialist Society in London, next addressed the Conference, and was cordially received. He expressed a hope that they would succeed in getting their first Social-Democratic representative into the English House of Commons at the next election, for it would mean a great growth of Socialism all over the country. The Continent, to-day, was specially interested in the growth of Socialism in England. Its backward condition in England was keeping back the movement all over the Continent. He went on to speak of the domination of Russia over the field of European politics to-day. Russia was not only the greatest enemy of the people he represented, but the greatest bar to the progress of Socialism in Europe. Therefore, they would welcome any blow which would crush Russia, wherever it came from, as the greatest blessing to humanity. (Hear, hear.) It was this fact which made all Socialists hope that Russia would emerge from her struggle in the Far East very much weakened. (Hear, hear.) The position was such that there might readily be a political and social revolution which would cause an upheaval in Russia, and bring with it the social emancipation of the people in the Russian dominions. That might be a prelude to a general Socialist European revolution, and he referred to the Polish insurrection of 1846 being a prelude to the general revolutionary movement of 1848.

HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) moved and A. S. HEADINGLEY (Central) seconded the following resolution, which was unanimously carried: "That the hearty good wishes of the S.D.F. be sent from this Conference to our Polish, Russian and Jewish Social-Democratic comrades in their national and Socialist struggles against Russian despotism and bureaucracy."

On the question of "Municipalism," H. BELSEY (Peckham) moved and E. J. ALLEN (Wood Green) seconded next business, but it was lost by an overwhelming majority.

J. STOKES (Hackney and Kingsland) then introduced the discussion on "The attitude of the Social-Democracy towards the production and supply of economic utilities by municipal authorities, with the best means of providing for and distributing the cost of such public action, and its probable effect upon national economy." He said some people were opposed to municipal enterprise on account of the profit-making. He thought municipal enterprise ought to be encouraged in every way, and the profits arising from it be applied to other enterprises, such as municipal coal depôts, milk depôts, and bakeries, instead of being applied to the relief of rates.

There were on the agenda a resolution on this question from the Southwark Branch and two amendments from the Glasgow and Central Branches. J. F. GREEN (Central) expressed his willingness on behalf of the Branch to withdraw the amendment in favour of the Glasgow one. This was objected to by some delegates, and finally leave for its withdrawal was granted by 47 votes to 9.

W. REID (Glasgow) in support of the amendment, said that they desired collective ownership, and municipal enterprise was at least a form of collective ownership and therefore along the line of economic evolution. To those who objected to any form of profitmaking under municipal enterprise he would ask how were they going to get money for that purpose to-day without paying interest for it? At Glasgow, they did not believe in applying profits in relief of rates. He thought they could devote the surplus from these enterprises to establishing municipal bakeries, milk depôts, clothing shops, and thereby municipalise everything. If they only pursued the policy far enough, the resolution of the Southwark Branch would become automatic, because the profits they would have drawn from the capitalist class would be enough to compete

the capitalist class out of existence. The using of profits to relieve rates should be strenuously opposed. It was the middle class that got the benefit of this; the working man had merely a tentative interest in the reduction or raising of rates.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) supported the Glasgow amendment generally, but desired the last clause deleted. He said it was not a question of what was an ideal system but what they could do under the present circumstances. The S.D.F. was too much in the habit of tying itself up, so that if it desired to move in a given direction to-morrow it could not do it. Under some circumstances, it was desirable to use the surplus from municipal enterprises to reduce the rates, and particularly in Lancashire towns, where working men paid their rates direct, especially under such a stress of circumstances as the cotton crisis had brought about. If they took the question of the cost of most municipal enterprises, they were bound to have a surplus. To say that under no circumstances should profits be applied in relief of rates was unduly tying the hands of the organisation, and would not improve the prospects of Socialists being returned on local bodies.

L. RIPPON (Burnley) contended that profit-making was a thing they could not help under existing society. In considering municipal enterprise it was not a question of stopping profit-making, but how to use it when they got it.

W. PATERSON (Colne) spoke of the difficulties of Social-Democrats on municipal bodies. The benefit of having funds from municipal enterprise was that they could use such money without paying interest, and without the Local Government Board everlastingly hampering them in their work for the extension of municipal enterprise.

W. ATKINSON (Darwen) dissented a good deal from what Dan Irving had said. It was no use arguing on conditions which obtained nowhere else than in Burnley; for reduction of rates would benefit the capitalist millowner rather than the mill-hand.

H. QUELCH (Executive) said the true position lay between the two extremes. Socialists must realise that under existing circumstances they could not put their Socialism into practice. The idea that they could abolish profit-making was just as absurd as to imagine that they could practise Socialism, and they could not say that under no circumstances would they relieve rates by any profits from municipal enterprises. Their

object should be to see that profit-making was subordinated to securing better conditions for the workers, especially those employed in municipal enterprises. Still, they must recognise that it was not a crime to reduce rates, nor was it a crime to use profits in reduction of rates.

J. W. G. MERCER (Edmonton) said the people who stood to gain most by the reduction of rates were the capitalists, whom they were banded together to fight. He would not sacrifice principle for the sake of immediate success on an administrative body. Some of their comrades had become inoculated with the municipal craze, and their desire to be returned to administrative bodies, if it meant the sacrifice of principle and the adoption of day-to-day opportunism, was to be deplored.

The Glasgow amendment was finally agreed to in the following form: "That this Conference is of opinion that Social-Democrats should support all forms of municipal enterprise which tend to substitute socialisation for private capitalism; it is of opinion, further, that at the present stage of economic development municipalities will attain the best results by giving the best hours, wages and conditions possible to their employees, and by supplying such utilities as can be charged for at prices which cover cost of production and sinking fund, and leave a surplus to be devoted to further extension; but is of opinion that the using of profits to reduce rates should be avoided as far as possible."

J. HUNTER WATTS (Reading) introduced, on behalf of the Executive, the question of the desirability of an agitation for Free Maintenance as a means of checking physical deterioration. He said the psychological moment had arrived when they should put forward with added zest their claim for the free maintenance of children. He spoke of the continued deterioration of the people, and mentioned that the *Times* practically supported the contention that it was the duty of the community to feed the children's bodies as well as their minds. If the physical deterioration went on, they were not likely to gain any very great accession to the ranks of the fighting forces of Social-Democracy. The workers must recognise that economic circumstances were against their properly maintaining children individually, though they collectively maintained the children of the well-to-do. He hoped within the next few months they would be able to organise public demonstrations in

Great Britain in favour of free maintenance. He objected to the taint of pauperism attached to children receiving charity. Fortunately, the matter had got beyond one free meal a day. This country was much behind Continental cities in the matter. If the children did not go to school properly clothed, clothing was provided. It was true the bill was sent to the parent, but if he could not pay he could not. He urged that it was the duty of the organisation to organise demonstrations in every industrial centre in Great Britain in favour of free maintenance. They rejected angrily the stigma placed upon everyone of them by being made parties to this starvation and this martrydom of the children.

F. G. JONES (Fulham) said that of all the palliatives upon the Social-Democratic Programme this was the most difficult to understand, yet the simplest, the most revolutionary, and the most beneficial. Alone by this method could the hideous physical deterioration of their people be ended. Probably in no county in England was this exhibition of physical deterioration so apparent, so cruelly and terribly apparent, as it was in this county of Lancashire. It was not true that London was the worst. The people who lived in Lancashire were the boys and girls of those who went at the age of four or five to work in the mills, and for years would they show the results of that terrible wage-slavery.

A. H. WATSON (South-West Manchester) suggested that "State Maintenance" should be substituted instead of "Free Maintenance," so that there should be no possibility of a mistake that charity was meant.

F. PORTER (Lambeth) described the scenes he had seen in the early morning of children searching the dust-bins for offal that could not be sold to the pigwashman, and these were to be the future citizens of the nation! In London charitable endeavours might have done some good, but that the feeling in favour of some stronger measures was growing could be judged from the fact that even the *Referee* was beginning to recognise the necessity of something being done to check physical deterioration amongst the rising generation.

HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) urged that they should set up a vigorous agitation on behalf of the children. The party which got hold of the children got hold of the future nation.

DORA MONTEFIORE (Clerkenwell) pointed out the immense

loss to the nation intellectually from the number of children who could not accept the education that was put before them. That to her was the great argument. The whole nation lost from the want of feeding of the children.

The necessity for an agitation on State Maintenance was generally agreed to.

There were still nearly a dozen important subjects on which a general discussion was to be opened, and the time was obviously too short. The Standing Orders Committee therefore recommended the withdrawal of those on "Colonial Policy" and "Trade Unionism"; to refer "Trusts and their Influences as Factors in Economic Development" and "The Unemployed Problem as a National Question" to the Executive Council to deal with in leaflet or other form; to accept resolutions on "The Fiscal Controversy," "The Alien Question," and "Chinese Labour" without discussion; and to discuss "The Cotton Crisis," "Socialism and Foreign Policy," and "The International Congress at Amsterdam." This report was adopted with the exception of the recommendation relating to "Trade Unionism," the discussion of which was carried by 34 to 33 on the motion of H. C. PHILLIPS (Battersea), and W. ATKINSON (Darwen).

The following resolutions on "Fiscal Controversy," "Alien Immigration," and "Chinese Labour in South Africa" were agreed to:—

"That this Conference, recognising that no tinkering with fiscal arrangements can be of any benefit to the workers, and that so-called 'fiscal reform' is brought forward as a mere red-herring to mislead the working-class, expresses its gratification at the apparent failure of the recent agitation, and trusts that the effect will be to strengthen the Socialist movement as the only means for the emancipation of the working class."

"That this Conference emphatically condemns the suggested legislation against alien immigration, more especially the institution of prohibited areas, passports, and police supervision, which are an attack on the elementary liberties of the subject, and are calculated to play into the hands of the most reactionary powers. This Conference further protests against the wholesale discretion as to the admission, exclusion and extradition of alien immigrants, placed in the hands of the Home Secretary by the Government Bill just introduced."

"That this Conference condemns the importation of

Chinese labour into South Africa under conditions which virtually amount to a reconstitution of chattel slavery in the interests of international capitalism, and which will tend to the degradation of the working class and the complication of existing social relations and class antagonisms by race difficulties."

On re-assembling Sunday afternoon, the Conference proceeded to decide upon the place of meeting for the Conference in 1905. The voting was as follows:—Northampton 37, Liverpool 10, Southampton 10, and Birmingham 5. Northampton, having secured an absolute majority of the votes cast, was agreed upon for the 1905 Conference.

The point was then raised by J. F. GREEN (Central) as to a proposal which would probably come before the I.L.P., for the holding of both Conferences in the same town next year. It was agreed that the Executive have power to make arrangements in that direction.

P. H. TAYLOR (Accrington) then introduced the discussion on the Cotton Crisis in an admirable paper. He said that a close similarity existed between the cause of one trade depression and the cause of any other. The cotton trade was in a deplorable condition. For three consecutive years mills had been running short time, and production had been curtailed. They were scarcely out of one depression before they were into another. The causes were: increased production due to the increased speed of machinery, and more intensified labour of the operatives, consequent on the increased number of spindles and looms in most parts of the world. Then there was the increased price of cotton cloth, without a corresponding increase in the purchasing power of those who consume it. The chief factor had been the shrinkage in the production of raw cotton, the inflated prices of which prevented the manufacturer from buying. It was said that the remedy was to increase the supply of cotton, and the looms would be kept going. Did it follow that the increase of a commodity would be for the workers' interests? Increasing the cotton supply alone would not solve the question any more than increasing the supply of other commodities would prevent other industrial crises. Who was going to get the benefit of the thousands of pounds spent in experimenting as to the cultivation of cotton? It was for Social-Democrats to insist on an answer. The remedy was to prevent any private

individual or company from taking that which by right belonged to the people.

L. Rippon (Burnley) said that the employers told them that to keep the trade they must adopt the American system, run more looms and turn out more work for less wages. The throwing people out of employment meant a weakening of the movement in Lancashire. Socialism would, of course, solve the problem, but how were they as Socialists going to deal with the problem to-morrow morning?

J. T. S. Mitchell (Todmorden) said they must try to scotch the Cotton-Growing Association, and get the Government to take the cotton fields over. As to the gambling, he said that gambling was engaged in as much in their own particular district as it was on the other side of the Atlantic.

W. Atkinson (Darwen) urged that they should not turn all their attention on Sully, but give some of it to our own cotton capitalists in Manchester. Socialists should seize the opportunity to point out to the workers in Lancashire how incapable the capitalists were of organising the industry upon which they depended.

J. Holden (Blackburn) said they must recollect that Lancashire, after all, was only a part of England, and that the cotton trade was not the only trade which was suffering. If they had to have cotton growing it must be by the Government, and they must not assist the Cotton-Growing Association. He said that the nationalisation of the means of transit was one of the first things necessary to the development of other things. This would benefit not only the cotton trade, but all other trades.

J. E. McGlasson (Manchester Central) said he did not think it was possible for them to offer an immediate solution to the crisis, which was the result of the capitalist system of production. He pointed out that hardly had the people resumed work this winter after weeks of short time before contributions were extracted from their wages by their employers, in order to provide for experiments in the growing of cotton. He offered his protest against this inhuman practice.

J. Bice (Rawtenstall) said there was no remedy, either by the British Cotton-Growing Association or an other association, except by international Socialism. He pointed out the other countries with better machinery could produce cheaper

than we could, and said the cotton trade of Lancashire was effectually doomed.

J. Hunter Watts (Reading) said that there was one lesson forcibly illustrated by their comrade Taylor's paper where he showed the figures for the world-market, and found that we were no longer in control of it. If the cotton mills were under the control of the people they could exchange for boots with Northampton, and for other goods with other towns. They were not desirous of seeing England the workshop of the world; they wanted to see it the playground; but in the meantime they did not want to see it a cemetery.

H. Quelch (Executive) said that whilst they must all admit there was no solution of trade crises of any kind except in complete Socialism, they had to recognise that in the meantime the people must live. Whatever they did they were never going to again resuscitate the commercial ascendency of England or the cotton trade ascendency of Lancashire. They had to go in for the re-organisation of industry. People could live without cotton, but they could not live without food, and the central industry must be the agricultural industry.

Dan Irving (Burnley) said that not only the Socialists but the Liberals condemned the state of the cotton industry. Not long ago a leading commercial man in Burnley, a prominent Liberal, and one of the most trusted financial experts in the town, told Mr. Hyndman that the cotton trade was in a far worse crisis than it had experienced since the Civil War, and he expressed his helplessness of any way out from the Liberal standpoint. Another, a Liberal manufacturer in Burnley, told them that if they did not adopt the eight-loom system a large number of them would be thrown out of employment, because they would lose trade in competition with America. Then another manufacturer said that if they did adopt that system, it would throw a lot of people out of work, so that they were between the devil and the deep blue sea. Up at the workhouse every week, during the last three years, he had heard old men, with a certain amount of capacity to work, asked by the same class who were speeding up machinery why they did not take two looms.

Thanks were expressed to comrade Taylor for the paper which he had given to the Conference, and it was agreed that it be published.

A. S. HEADINGLEY (Central) opened the discussion on "Socialism and Foreign Policy." He said that they would all like to see Social-Democrats returned to the House of Commons, but at the same time they must recognise that there would be other things to deal with besides purely Social-Democratic principles. One of the reasons why their comrade Hyndman was such a strong candidate was that many people who were not Socialists would vote for him because of his knowledge and capacity with regard to Indian affairs. Before they could hope to influence the legislative body of the country, they must qualify themselves on some of these important questions, and one of these important questions was undoubtedly that of Foreign Policy and International Diplomacy. If they looked at the political parties they would see that they were not in nearly so good a position to deal with questions of foreign policy as were the Socialists. The Conservative had certain traditions of foreign policy to which he adhered; the Liberal and Radical, for party interests, opposed the Conservative foreign policy, not because it was necessary, but because it *was* the policy of the Conservative Party. Hence, in dealing with near Eastern qnestions, they had the Conservative pro-Turk, and the Liberal pro-Russian. They, as Socialists, did not care for one side or the other, but only for truth, justice and freedom. The attitude of the Nonconformist conscience with regard to near Eastern questions, whether Armenian or Macedonian, was that of supporting one religion against another, but they would be much more likely to come to right conclusions, and to estimate what the course of events would be, if they judged by facts and not by prejudices. In considering the question of foreign policy and alliances, they should recognise that the Russian despotism was one of the greatest obstacles to human progress, and they were bound to applaud and to help anything tending to the disintegration of the Russian Empire. In that they would be acting as the friends, not the enemies, of the Russian people. Because they were internationalists, they should applaud the attempt of the Poles to regain their nationality, for they could not have true internationalism without nationalities, and therefore the wisest course was that those nationalities which were to-day being abolished by sheer brute force should be allowed to re-establish themselves. They would thus have a genuine internationalism growing out of the hearts of the

people, an internationalism which, by peace and fraternity, would break down race enmities far more effectively than could be done by force and violence. He advocated the strongest alliance between the two most progressive countries in Western Europe—England and France—as the best influence against that unnatural and absolutely abominable and contradictory alliance of France with Russian despotism, which, fortunately, was weakening every day. Internationalism would sweep away national prejudices. They must therefore encourage every form of international intercourse, with trade unions, health societies, local governing bodies, congresses on hygiene, on municipal questions, on every form of human activity upon which it was possible to bring representatives of various countries in touch with one another.

The discussion was continued by J. F. GREEN (Central), H. QUELCH (Executive), and HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town).

On the attitude of the S.D.F. towards Trade Unionism, it was carried by 47 votes to 11, on the motion of W. LOWTHIAN (Aberdeen), "that the S.D.F. re-affirm its position on Trade Unionism."*

A slight discussion took place on the International Congress at Amsterdam.

HERBERT BURROWS (Kensal Town) gave the closing address to the Conference. He said it was 23 years since the

* NOTE.—In order that the position of the S.D.F. towards Trade Unionism may be understood, the resolutions passed by 46 votes to 2 at the Northampton Conference, 1897, and by 70 votes to 7 at the Blackburn Conference, 1902, are given in full:—

"That this Conference counsels all members of the S.D.F., as far as possible, to become members of their respective trade unions, and to work harmoniously with trade unionists and co-operators as representing organisations having for their object the improvement of the status of the workers, whilst nevertheless insisting upon the fact that in the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange lies the only hope of permanently bettering the condition of the wage earners, and, therefore, claims the political support of trade unionists and co-operators as a means towards this end."

"That, seeing the growing tendency on the part of trade unions to enter upon political action, a tendency developed and encouraged by the legal decisions which have almost deprived them of the power of the strike, this Conference urges upon all members of the S.D.F. the necessity of becoming, as far as it is in their power, active members of their trade unions, and of using their influence as far as possible to turn this political action in a Socialist direction. While insisting upon the fact that the socialisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange must

Social-Democratic Federation was formed under the presidency of H. M. Hyndman. Regrets arose in him that he could not possibly look forward to another 23 or 24 years such as they had passed through. Those regrets, however, were only personal, for in that Conference, despite a few unpleasant incidents, they saw more young men and women coming to the front, and life was always with the young. Their object was the emancipation and regeneration of humanity. There was never a greater ideal in the world. Religion—what religion could be higher than theirs? Science was with them, literature was with them, art was with them, and the traditions of all the great reformers of the past. Their ideal was to remove from the great mass of the people all the hideous conditions of environment which made their life a hell, and to bring into their service all that science, literature, art, politics, religion, sociology, could do to uplift the corporate consciousness in the ennoblement of the individual life. They, in their hearts, had caught the first faint gleam of the dawn of a new social era: they must be careful that no cloud of their making dimmed the splendour of its ray. They who would free others must themselves be free; they who would purify others, must themselves be pure; they who would strengthen others, must themselves be strong.

The proceedings concluded with the singing of "The Red Flag," and "The Marseillaise."

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be the aim and object of every real working-class movement, and that this end can only be attained by the relentless prosecution of the class war until the proletariat is emancipated by the abolition of class domination, this Conference reaffirms the friendly attitude of the S.D.F. towards trade unions and kindred organisations, recognising them as bodies of workers banded together against the capitalists in this struggle. This Conference, further, while declining all alliances with trade unions or other bodies which might commit the S.D.F. to the support of men and measures with which it is not in agreement, counsels the cultivation of a good feeling between the Socialist Party and the trade unions, and assures the unions of its sympathy with them in their struggles for better conditions for the workers, and of its hearty co-operation with them whenever they are prepared to take action on Socialist lines. In accordance with the terms of this resolution, branches of the S.D.F. will be prepared to co-operate with trade unions for the promotion of any definite immediate object with which Socialists are in sympathy, but will not join with them in any electoral committees which will commit the branch to the support of any but Socialist candidatures."