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REPORT

OF THE

TWENTY-EIGHTH

Annual Conference

OF THE

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY (S.D.F.),

HELD IN THE

COAL EXCHANGE, MANCHESTER,

ON

GOOD FRIDAY, SATURDAY, AND EASTER SUNDAY,

April 17th, 18th, and 19th, 1908.

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The Twenty-Eighth Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Party was held at the Coal Exchange, Manchester, on Good Friday, Saturday, and Easter Sunday, April 17th, 18th, and 19th, 1908.

Chairman's Address.

JOHN MOORE, the provisional Chairman, gave the opening address. He said that on the occasion of the 28th Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Party he had great pleasure in heartily welcoming, on behalf of the Lancashire comrades in general and the Manchester comrades in particular, the delegates assembled for the Annual Conference of the Party. We could congratulate ourselves that the past year has been one of phenomenal success, so far as we are concerned. Great as has been our growth in previous years, this year has eclipsed all previous records. During last year fifty-seven new branches had been brought into existence, and with vigour and energy in our work of propaganda and organisation that number might be doubled or trebled in 1908-9. We could congratulate ourselves, not only on the number of new branches formed, but that we had been brought into greater prominence during the past twelve months than ever before, as evidenced by the interest which the capitalist press had taken in all our doings. The capitalist parties were recognising that the Social-Democratic Party was a factor in our national politics, and was going to be so even more in the future than it had been in the past. The fight of the future lay between the party represented by us on the one hand, and the capitalist party represented by Liberals and Tories on the other. In spite of what the late Member—he hoped the very late Member—for North-West Manchester had stated about the “farce” which was being witnessed in that constituency, he was convinced that the sham fight between Liberal and Tory was showing the

beginning of the end. Instead of a sham fight between candidates like Mr. Joynton-Hicks and Mr. Winston Churchill, we hoped that such sham fights will soon be things of the past, and that we should be brought face to face with our enemies, and that the battle would then be between the proletariat and the master-class, and end in the victory of the proletariat.

Speaking of our work as pioneers of the movement during the last twenty-eight years, the chairman referred to the time when it was said that there was only enough of us to fill a one-horse 'bus; it would now require a very much larger conveyance to hold even those who lived in the City of Manchester alone.

Reviewing the record of the strongest Government of modern times, there was Puritanism in the Licensing Bill, the Puritanism which loved to circumscribe and limit all pleasure among the working classes in order to drive them into the chapels and little Bethels. On the education question, our point of view was altogether different from those of the other parties. We realised undoubtedly that the fight of the so-called Education Bills was a struggle of the Nonconformists, the Anglicans, and the Catholics to dominate the children; our concern was for the physical welfare of the children, and the moral welfare could then look after itself. Our concern was that the children attending the elementary schools should first be fed before any kind of learning or education was given to them. We alone, when other parties were silent, had upheld the banner of looking after the little ones first. The organisation that had done so much on behalf of the children was the Party with which they had the privilege to be associated, and he was sure there was not a single man in the room who was not proud to stand upon the platform of the Social-Democratic Party.

It was our business to fight the Liberal and Tory alike. Why, within ten minutes' walk of the hall where the Conference was meeting there were slums, such as Angel Meadow and those in Ancoats, where the death-rate was so terrible as to warrant them in describing it as the continual murder of the people from generation to generation. All around we found justification for the fight we were waging. We must carry on this fight with greater vigour in order to rouse the proletariat to a sense of the things around them, and to secure the land of Great Britain for their own welfare; and to make them feel that instead of being engaged in a sham battle, they were taking part in a real fight on behalf of themselves and their fellow-workers in other lands. The only victory worth fighting for was the victory of Social-Democracy in all countries.

Election of Chairman and Officials.

After the opening address, J. Moore (Rochdale) was unanimously elected Chairman of the Annual Conference.

A. Lees (Tyldesley) was elected deputy-Chairman.

For Standing Orders and Credentials Committee, S. V. Amstell (Enfield), G. T. Cowpe (Bacup), and F. Davey (Bow and Bromley) were elected.

J. R. Crane (South-West Manchester), W. Foy (South Salford), and W. Geard (Battersea) were elected tellers.

On the motion of H. QUELCH (Bermundsey), the following resolution was unanimously agreed to:—

"This Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Party sends cordial fraternal greetings to the Annual Delegate Meeting of the Printers' Warehousemen and Cutters' Union, and wishes the Union continued success in their efforts to improve the condition of their section of the working class. And this Conference calls attention to the bye-election in North-West Manchester, which affords an opportunity for organised labour to strike a blow against both sections of the capitalist class by supporting Dan Irving."

Cr. DAN IRVING (Burnley) called attention to a notice in the press that the Manchester and Salford Trades Council had refused to endorse his candidature; the Chairman of that body had ruled out of order a proposition of support, being under the mistaken impression that he (Irving) was not a member of an affiliated body, whereas he had for many years been a member of the Gasworkers' Union.

On the motion of J. SUTCLIFFE (Rawtenstall), supported by H. M. HYNEMAN (Central) and F. VICTOR FISHER (Central), the Conference repudiated a pamphlet which had been distributed in Manchester entitled "Socialism: Christ, the Enemy of the Human Race," and called upon the distributors of this pamphlet to withdraw it.

The suggested Standing Orders for the Conference as drawn up and submitted to the branches were then agreed to, after one slight alteration had been made; and it was further decided that the voting at the Conference should be by branches, as formerly, instead of by members according to Rule 22.

On the consideration of the Financial Statement for 1907, it was agreed, on the motion of R. THOMPSON (Rochdale), that, in future, both statement of accounts and Executive Council report should be sent round to the branches at least a fortnight before the Conference. After some questions had been put, and the Secretary had replied thereto, the Financial Statement was adopted.

It was moved that the consideration of the Executive Council's report be deferred till Sunday morning, and this course was agreed to, after an amendment that the Report be taken at once in conjunction with the question of the Rossendale candidature had been put to the Conference and lost by 59 votes to 41.

E. W. MARSH (S. Islington) asked for permission to move a resolution to the effect that the time was opportune for calling a conference with a view to forming a Right to Work Committee, with branches in every industrial centre.

J. P. LLOYD (Blenclydach) was not clear as to the meaning of the resolution. When the proposed conference was called, what was going to be done, and who were to bear the expenses? He thought they had better devote themselves to the propagation of Socialist principles, which meant, ultimately, the extinction of the unemployed problem. It was eventually decided, on the motion of Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham), seconded by H. M. HYNDMAN (Central) that the matter should be referred to the Standing Orders Committee to submit a resolution.

H. W. LEE was unanimously re-elected General Secretary.

A. INKPIN was unanimously elected Assistant-Secretary.

J. F. GREEN was unanimously re-elected Treasurer.

On the election of Financial Secretary, H. M. HYNDMAN (Central) thought that, in connection with this office, somebody was required who would be able to take up the very important duty of approaching sympathisers who would be likely to assist them in the way of funds.

E. W. MARSH (S. Islington) proposed W. A. WOODROFFE, who had held the office before, though he thought under the new system of membership cards, the office would be a sinecure.

Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) urged that the matter be left to the Executive Council. He had no desire to cast any reflection upon Woodroffe, but he was a workman with his ordinary occupation to attend to, and what they required was someone with a fair amount of time at his or her disposal. They wanted somebody to get down into other people's pockets without their knowing it.

It was then agreed that the matter should be referred to the Executive Council.

D. CARMICHAEL, W. ERWOOD, and F. G. JONES were nominated for the position of auditors. D. Carmichael afterwards withdrew from nomination, and W. Erwood and F. G. Jones were unanimously re-elected.

After some discussion it was decided that the ballot papers for the Executive Council should be distributed to the delegates at once, to be returnable by Saturday at noon.

Matters of Internal Organisation.

J. SUTCLIFFE (Rawtenstall) moved:—

“That this Conference desires to place on record its disapproval of the action of the Executive in withdrawing J. F. Green from the Rossendale division.”

He said that the Rossendale comrades raised the matter to decide whether a decision which had been arrived at by an Annual Conference should be carried out, or whether a body of men forming the E.C. should be allowed to over-ride that decision. The Carlisle Conference had decided that Rossendale should be contested, and the candidature had been prosecuted successfully until August 18th. On that day he received from the Secretary a letter stating that the Executive Council were convinced that it was undesirable to pursue J. F. Green's candidature in Rossen-

dale. Rule 27 stated that the Executive Council should carry out the decisions of Annual Conferences. He claimed that the Executive had broken that rule in taking Green away from Rossendale and placing him in South Bristol. They in Rossendale claimed that the Party should give them the opportunity of flinging back the imputations made against them by the Radicals in Rossendale that it was never intended that Green should go to the poll. If Rossendale was not a suitable constituency to contest it was for the Conference to decide, and not the Executive Council, much less the London section of the Executive.

J. EGAN (Rawtenstall) seconded the resolution. He said they had money coming in from every quarter until the candidate was withdrawn; then everything went “wallop.”

F. KNEE (Executive Council) desired to make an explanation. There was no desire on the part of the Executive Council to “boss” the Party. They were extremely anxious to carry out the decisions of the Annual Conferences as far as possible, and in the best interests of the Party. If they withdrew a candidate from one particular constituency and placed him in another, it was because they thought he would have a better chance of being returned in the second constituency than in the first. The paucity of letters on this matter, referred to by the mover of the resolution, was due to the fact that the London Section of the Executive could not deal with the matter without first consulting the full Executive. They regretted that, quite unintentionally, there was an apparent lack of courtesy on the part of the Executive towards the Rossendale comrades. Then as regards funds. This was a matter which had seriously to be considered by the Executive. It would cost far more to contest a county division like Rossendale than a constituency like S. Bristol. Then, too, the Executive had to carry out the instructions of the Conference generally—not down to every comma and semi-colon—and he maintained that they had acted in the best interests of the Party in moving a candidate from a constituency where he stood a poor chance to one where he stood a better chance.

P. H. TAYLOR (Accrington) thought that F. Knee's explanation was anything but satisfactory. They had no evidence that S. Bristol would prove a better constituency than Rossendale. The opinion of the Party should have been taken before Green was withdrawn.

D. CARMICHAEL (Battersea) supported the resolution.

H. QUELCH (Bermundsey) could quite understand the feelings of the Rossendale comrades, but was sorry that the representative from that division should have expressed his opinion in such bitter terms. He was not there to appeal for the infallibility of the Executive, but it should be remembered that they had to do their best for the Party. It was said that Rossendale was a constituency which should be contested by the Party. He agreed. There was no constituency in the country which should not be contested. But they had to remember that their Exchequer was limited, and

the number of men they could put forward as parliamentary candidates were very few. They may have been wrong in their judgment, but they were of opinion that with less money they could put up a much better fight in S. Bristol.

J. P. LLOYD (Blanchydach) thought it was well that someone apart from the two contending parties should have a word to say on the Rosendale question. The idea of a parliamentary candidate was a "darling toy" with every S.D.P. branch. A branch of eight members wanted to run a candidate, and regarded him with hostility because he would not support the idea. He pleaded for tolerance for the E.C. in its difficult task.

At this juncture a motion that the question be put was put to the Conference and lost.

W. GEARD (Battersea) supported the resolution.

E. LOWTHIAN (Carlisle) spoke as an unrepentant member of the Executive. He desired to repudiate the idea that Green had been withdrawn for any other reason than that S. Bristol was a better constituency than Rosendale.

H. M. HYNDMAN (Central Branch) thought the Executive had not treated the Rosendale comrades with sufficient consideration. The matter should have been discussed more fully with the branch. But if a mistake had been made it had been made with the best intentions: it was a matter of manners rather than malignity. But the Executive were convinced that Bristol was an easier constituency to fight than Rosendale.

J. SURCLIFFE (Rawtenstall) declared that he had made no impulations against the Executive. He would be willing to modify his resolution by substituting the word disagreement for disapproval.

Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) moved, as an amendment, that the Conference expresses confidence in the Executive Council, but that in all similar cases in the future, a deputation should be sent from the Executive to consult the local branches.

This amendment, on being put to the Conference, was carried by 67 votes to 40; and was carried as a substantive proposition after J. SURCLIFFE and others had protested against the original resolution not being put to the meeting.

After the luncheon interval, J. SURCLIFFE (Rawtenstall) moved:—

"The Conference discuss the advisability of running a candidate in the Rosendale Division at the next General Election."

They had five branches in the Division, with 400 members, £30 in the bank and £40 more promised. The Labour Party wanted them to get out of the way in order to put a Labour candidate forward.

J. EGAN (Rawtenstall) seconded.

F. KNEE (Executive Council) thought the Rawtenstall comrades had not advanced sufficient reasons to justify a candidate going forward; there was a wide gap between £70 and the £500 which would be required to contest a county division; the return of an

elective auditor was no ground for hope in a Parliamentary election.

J. G. WEBSTER (Bournemouth) and R. THOMPSON (Rochdale) opposed contesting the Rosendale Division.

A. LEES (Tyldesley) suggested that a deputation should be sent from the Executive and the Lancashire District Council to confer with the Rosendale branches.

This was agreed to.

F. DAVEY (Bow and Bromley), on behalf of the Standing Orders and Credentials Committee, reported on the credentials presented. Informalities on the part of certain branches in regard to the credentials were passed, and the delegates then present numbered 140, representing 112 branches and two affiliated societies.

G. W. HALE (Govan) next raised the question of the Govan candidature, and moved that it be placed on the Parliamentary fund, but, after a brief discussion, it was carried by 101 to 12 votes that the candidature be not proceeded with.

After recommendations by the Standing Orders Committee re the Agenda had been dealt with, the Chairman read a letter of congratulation from the London Socialist Sunday-school Union (who said 33 new schools had been formed in 1907), and also a telegram from the Printers' Warehousemen's Conference, reciprocating the fraternal greetings of the Conference and wishing Dan Irving every success.

"Next business" was carried in the case of the resolution from North-West Ham Branch regarding membership of political clubs, and members of the S.D.P. running no candidates under the Labour Party, and in the case of the resolution from Stockport that no member of the S.D.P. belong to any other political organisation.

The Programme of the S.D.P.

The following proposition from South Hackney was, after a brief discussion, carried:—

"That the E.C. appoint a committee to consider the necessity or otherwise of co-ordinating and re-classifying the items in the S.D.P. programme, and to suggest any necessary alterations, deletions, and additions, and to submit a report to the branches through the medium of the E.C. at least two months before the next Annual Conference."

The Fulham resolution on legal assistance for comrades coming into conflict with the police was next taken, T. WYTHERRIDGE (Fulham) recalling what happened on the occasion of the Kaiser's visit, when comrades were sent to prison.

Mrs. MURRAY (Walthamstow) thought the resolution would lead to infinite trouble.

J. F. HARVEY (Bradford), on the other hand, supported the resolution, and referred to the recent prosecution for pavement chalking.

Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) thought we were getting too respectable. The party was going to exist, he said, for the purpose of paying fines. Why not do as they did in the old days—go to prison, and if they had any money to spare, devote it to the maintenance of the prisoners' families?

E. PAV (Tunbridge Wells) referred to the recent Brighton case, where much money was wasted in consulting a local solicitor.

H. QUELCH (Bermundsey) warned the Conference to be careful. They did not want to fall into the pit from which the trade unions had escaped—being liable for the actions of every member of the party. Eventually the proposition was carried in the following form:—

“That the Executive consider and devise some scheme for the provision of legal assistance for comrades who may have come in conflict with the police, or require legal assistance in consequence of any other action whilst in the furtherance of the principles and policy of the Social-Democratic Party, subject to the approval of the E.C.”

The previous question was moved and carried on a resolution in the name of the Bradford Branch as follows:—

“This Conference believes that all S.D.P. candidates for public bodies and speakers on the official list should pass an examination in economics, and instructs the E.C. to draw up a scheme to be submitted to the next Annual Conference.”

Co-operative Trading.

E. W. MARSH (S. Islington) moved the following resolution standing in the name of the Watford Branch:—

“That this Conference appoint a small Committee to consider the question of co-operative trading with a view to financing the movement. Such Committee to consider the advisability of starting a wholesale centre for supplying branches and districts who are trading.”

Branches in London were taking up the question of trading, and they found that if they were to extend the business, they must purchase goods at much lower prices than they did at present. This question was a live one, and should receive the attention of the Conference.

A. H. WARSON (S. W. Manchester) referred to the report of the Belgian Party issued a few years ago which showed the great progress made in the matter of co-operative trading. He opposed the idea of referring the matter to the E.C. as they had too much to attend to at the present time. He urged that the matter be left to the local comrades to devise schemes, and he thought efforts should be made to get hold of the existing co-operative movement in this country, and thus bring it and its funds in support of the Social-Democratic movement.

A. S. HEADINGLEY (W. Islington) said that the Belgian co-operative movement started with a few comrades subscribing a

little capital and receiving no dividends. They wanted great business genius to make a success, and there was after all a danger of excellent men becoming too absorbed in mere business details.

Mrs. MONTFLORE (Tottenham) thought there was much to be learnt from the Belgian co-operative movement which would be of assistance in this matter. She thought that if a few comrades were chosen with some business capacity they could start a central trading business. This would bring in a number of members who were not active in ordinary propaganda work, especially women members. She thought the idea was practicable, and if carried out on practical lines something might be done in the future.

G. HINES (Edmonton) said his branch were entirely in favour of some such scheme being put into operation by means of which branches could obtain financial assistance. But this could only be done in the wholesale line in the large industrial centres. If the Party tried to conduct it from a national standpoint it would be a fiasco, but he thought that the branches in each town should put some such scheme into operation themselves.

F. H. EDWARDS (Birkenhead) thought that something might be done by co-ordinating the efforts now carried out in this direction. He would urge that speakers should solicit customers in the districts in which they worked. If this were done some headway might be made in establishing a Socialist Co-operative Stores.

S. ELSBURY (Sheffield) made an appeal for the whole-hearted support of the members of the Party in any efforts which might be made in the way of trading; and J. FINIGAN (Kirkcaldy) also supported the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to without being put to the Conference. With regard to the appointment of the Committee, it was agreed that it should consist of three members. Nominations for the Committee were to be submitted on Saturday morning, and the election to take place on Sunday.

J. BEESLEY (Coventry) moved:—

“That this Conference adopts the badge suggested by the Coventry Branch as the National one.”

The Coventry comrades had been to the trouble of getting this badge out, and offered it to the Central Office in order that the organisation might get the advantage. The resolution was put without further discussion, and carried by 93 votes to 40.

South Wales.

J. P. LLOYD (Blaenclydach) moved the following resolution:—
“That the attention of the Executive Council should be drawn to the splendid field for propaganda in South Wales, and the urgent necessity for a good speaker and organiser, and also for financial help if possible.”

He dwelt upon the need for propaganda work being carried on in South Wales. He was the only speaker in the district, and against him the I.L.P. had been able to place three organisers to

cover the same ground. If they wanted to get "gallant little Wales" on the side of Socialism they must send speakers and propagandists into the district.

W. GEARD (Battersea) supported the resolution.

J. SORRELL (Rawtenstall) asked the members of the Party in South Wales to pay for an organiser themselves, as the Rossendale comrades were doing. He asked the Conference to reject the resolution which asked the other branches to provide funds for particular localities.

The resolution was lost by 78 votes to 59.

The Conference then adjourned.

The S.D.P. and the Labour Party.

The discussion on our attitude towards the Labour Party took place on Saturday morning. The following resolutions were upon the Agenda paper:—

"That the Social-Democratic Party affiliate with the National Labour Party."—WILLESDEN.

"That in view of the resolution passed by the Hull Conference of the Labour Party declaring the ultimate object of the Party to be the realisation of Socialism, the S.D.P. reconsider its attitude towards the Labour Party with a view to re-affiliation thereto, provided it is made clear that all S.D.P. candidates shall run as Socialists."—BURNLEY.

"That this Conference of the S.D.P. instructs the Executive Council to enter into negotiations with the Executive of the Labour Party with a view to rejoining the said Labour Party as soon as possible."—ROCHDALE.

"That as the National Labour Party at the Hull Conference declined to accept the resolution moved by the Paper-stainers' Union declaring Socialism to be the object for which the Labour Party should organise and work, the S.D.P. shall not affiliate to that Party until it becomes an avowed Socialist Party."—BATTERSEA.

The Rochdale resolution was deleted, and the discussion took place on the Willesden resolution, with the Burnley resolution as an amendment thereto, whilst the Battersea resolution was treated as a negative.

F. KNEE (Wilkesden) moved the resolution. The Burnley proposition was one which might not be capable of fulfilment, and would carry us no further than we were at present. Whatever might have been our reasons for secession from the Labour Party, there was in the minds of most of the delegates the possibility that at some time or the other we should rejoin the Labour Party. The only question was, when—and he thought the psychological moment had arrived. The movement for the formation of a Labour Party, independent of Tory and Liberal, was in its inception a revolutionary act. We must recognise that the working-class movement here does not move for very long on straight lines; it wavers from a revolutionary attitude to one of revisionism. Since

the Labour Party had been formed, some of its most brilliant defenders had favoured a sort of social reform movement akin to the Liberal Party; but others had taken up a revolutionary attitude. When they got into a three-cornered fight, they must adopt a revolutionary attitude. The Labour Party could not go on for many years without the revolutionary spirit within being so pronounced that it must break away entirely from Liberalism.

R. THOMPSON (Rochdale) seconded.

L. RAPPON (Burnley) moved the Burnley amendment, which was seconded by T. CROUCH (Ilkeston).

W. S. CLUSE (E. Islington) opposed the amendment; the resolution was much more sensible. To say we would join the Labour Party under certain conditions was absolutely ridiculous. He was opposed to joining with those who were prepared to lose their seats over the Licensing Bill, but not for Socialism.

D. CARMICHAEL (Battersea) opposed the Burnley amendment because it meant nothing.

Alderman REUBEN GEORGE (Swindon) declared we should be false to our principles if we joined the Labour Party.

H. PEARCE (Mile End) opposed joining the Labour Party.

H. M. HYNDMAN (Central) thought a very great change had taken place since last year, and he supported the Burnley amendment. What had taken place was the passing of the Object of the S.D.F. by the Hull Congress. He was quite aware that the Paper-stainers' resolution was rejected, but that would have meant the exclusion of all but Socialists from the Labour Party. If we accepted the resolution in the Burnley form, we should throw the onus of refusing us upon those who would thus say they would not accept us because we were Socialists. What we must do was to set our principles before the Labour men, and we should be bound to capture them.

J. GRIBBLE (Northampton) supported affiliation with the Labour Party. He opposed the Burnley amendment because it would place their acceptance in the hands of J. Ramsay MacDonald. But there was no reason why anyone could not run as a revolutionary Social-Democrat under the constitution of the Labour Party. He wanted to be on the floor of the House of Commons because it was the finest position from which to express Social-Democratic principles. We had been calling upon trade unionists to take independent political action, and then refused to lead them.

J. MOORE, having temporarily relinquished the chairmanship, supported affiliation with the Labour Party, and congratulated those who had consistently supported affiliation with the Labour Party on having at last converted H. M. Hyndman to their point of view.

H. QUELICH (Bermondsey) denied that there was any change in the situation except for the worse. If we passed either of these resolutions we should be saying that we had been wrong for the last seven years, and that we were going in sackcloth and ashes to confess it. As a trade union delegate he had tried to secure

reforms in the Labour Party constitution, and had been denounced as a "wrecker." Referring to Thorne's position, Quelch said under similar circumstances he would sign the Labour Party's constitution, as it did not bind him to anything. Grayson's victory as a Socialist showed that it was not necessary to join the Labour Party in order to secure an electoral victory for our principles. Were they going to haul down the Red Flag? Because that was what it meant. He was amused at those who said we must either join the Labour Party or fight them—that was like saying if you don't hang yourself you must cut your throat. The Labour Party was undemocratic in character, the Parliamentary Group being the governing power; while there were good Socialists in the Parliamentary Group, that group was certainly not a Socialist instrument, and he objected to a Socialist Party being tied to the heels of a non-Socialist Party.

J. MACLEAN (Pollokshaws) supported joining the Labour Party. If we went inside we should win hands down. Our remaining outside enabled J. R. MacDonald and J. Bruce Glasier to vilify the S.D.P. and its members in Scotland.

A. H. WATSON (S.W. Manchester) contended that any alteration in the constitution of the Labour Party would have to be got through the members themselves, and the Paperstainers' resolution was rejected by a larger majority than ever before. How could they say that the Labour Party was going forward? A reference to the attitude of the "Labour Leader" on the North-West Manchester contest called forth the statement from J. SURCLIFFE (Rawtenstall) that the rank and file of the I.L.P. were supporting the S.D.P. Watson believed that joining the Labour Party would mean a serious split in the ranks of the S.D.P.

Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) said to join the Labour Party would be to tie our hands behind our backs, and the price to be paid for the return of a few members to Parliament was far too great. The Social-Democratic Party's strongest card was the incapacity and want of pluck of the Labour members. Instead of having one programme they had 32, only agreeing in playing down to the canting hypocrisy of the Nonconformist conscience.

F. H. EDWARDS (Birkenhead) urged that they should take a vote of the organisation on the whole matter. He was opposed to both propositions. He was surprised to hear Gribble talk of the game of politics. Such expressions did not describe our meaning.

J. P. LLOYD (Marxian Club, Blaenlydach) expressed surprise at Hyndman's attitude in this debate. It was not the circumstances, it was Hyndman who had changed.

The closure of the discussion having been agreed to, F. KNEE (Willesden) replied. There were those who grumbled at the want of Socialist and revolutionary character in the Labour Party, but that was because we were not there. If the Labour Party had gone back since we left it, that was an excellent reason for our joining it again, to make it go forward. He deprecated

appeals to prejudice and the talk about hauling down the Red Flag. If we joined the Labour Party we should still be upholding the Red Flag.

The vote was taken. The Burnley amendment was defeated by 103 to 31 votes, and the Willesden proposition was rejected by 130 to 30 votes.

Socialism and Religion.

H. QUELCH (Bermondsey) proposed, without speech, the following resolution:—

"That in view of the efforts of enemies of Socialism to create division and prejudice in the ranks of the workers by raising sectarian disputes, this Conference definitely reaffirms the position always maintained by the International Social-Democracy, that the Socialist movement is concerned solely with secular affairs, and regards religion as a private matter." The resolution was seconded and carried nem. con.

Decentralisation.

A. H. WATSON (S.W. Manchester) moved the following resolution standing in the names of the Ashton-under-Lyne, Blackburn, Leigh, South-West Manchester, and Tyldesley Branches:—

"(a) That this Conference, after hearing the discussion on decentralisation, affirms its acceptance of the principle, and calls for a ballot of the Party on the question.

"(b) That a special committee be formed from this Conference to consider and issue a scheme of decentralisation in the event of the above ballot being favourable, which scheme in turn shall be submitted to the branches for definite acceptance or rejection; such committee to complete its work within a period of six months."

He asked the delegates to consider the advisability of a change in the method of organisation. There appeared to be an idea prevalent that they were attempting to split up the organisation; that was untrue. They were Social-Democrats first and decentralisers afterwards. So far from desiring to "dish" the Executive, they desired to assist them. The Party to-day was controlled by a centre in London which was alien to most of the branches. It was only once a year that they could come to grips with one another on any important subject. They asked for decentralisation on the ground that they would have improved organisation in different parts of the country. They desired that local Councils should have the control of districts under their own control. That would mean a responsible secretary in each district who would devote to his work the whole of his time. If Councils were given the power to manage their own affairs they would not only have better organisation in each district, but the work would be carried on much more effectively. There were many branches which might be formed if the Councils were in a position to have paid men to attend to that particular work. It would mean economy

In arranging the lecture list. At the present time a large amount of money was wasted in getting lecturers down. Then with regard to the Executive Council. If the scheme of decentralisation were adopted the Executive would be relieved of the detail work, and would have more time to deal with the broader questions affecting the Party. They would have a much more representative Executive if the districts were allowed to appoint nominees. Each Council should appoint its own men to represent their various districts on the Executive, and they would thus have an Executive representing more fully the national and local conditions.

At this juncture a telegram was read from the Executive of the Jewish Social-Democratic League sending fraternal greetings, and calling upon the Jewish voters in North-West Manchester to support Dan Irving.

J. HORDEN (Blackburn) resumed the discussion on decentralisation. He supported the view that much work was done at the Central Office which might very well be got rid of. A large portion of the income of the Party was frittered away in unnecessary work. If the various councils were made ruling parties so far as the funds were concerned, the funds would be spent in a much better manner than hitherto. Organisers would have to be found. The Executive had been troubled year after year by branches asking for subsidies, or that an organiser should be appointed. Here they had an opportunity, without calling upon funds from the Central Office, which ought to be used for National purposes, of appointing organisers in every district throughout the length and breadth of the land. In addition they would have the branches in the various districts responsible for the organiser in that district, and there would be competition between the various localities to show the best results from their work. He hoped the Conference would give this matter the fullest consideration and pass the resolution.

F. KNEE (Executive Council) strongly opposed the arguments put forward by the previous speakers, and asked the Conference to reject the proposition. He was amused at the reiterated proposition that London men could not necessarily know anything about Lancashire. He was not a London man himself, but he did not know anything about Lancashire, and candidly, didn't want to. But it was also true that those delegates who had spoken so eloquently about the work of the Central Office didn't know anything about it. When they talked about decentralisation doing away with a lot of the work of the Central Office, he did not know what part was going to be taken away by decentralisation. It had been said that the funds were frittered away on London. The work of organisation in London had latterly been borne by the London branches themselves, and during the last 15 months £200 had been raised by the London branches for organising work. The movers of the resolution did not bring forward any scheme. Decentralisation was, apparently, to be some better land, like

Mesopotamia. Local branches would get no more attention from Council's appointed under any decentralisation scheme than they did from the present National Executive. Even if the idea were successful so far as counties were concerned, isolated branches would be starved. There was no evidence that more money would be obtained by decentralisation. They would get more money as they got more members and more branches. Branches were being increased greatly in number under the present system. Any scheme of county association would take place naturally and voluntarily. Were they going to force branches in Lancashire into a Lancashire Council? He would like to know what the Lancashire branches would have to say on the matter. The Executive were not disposed to recommend the branches to adopt a system whereby they would have the general national policy weakened. Whereas now, when they wanted a simultaneous agitation throughout the country they could get it by direct communication with the branches, this scheme would create a barrier against such effective work.

D. MENZIES (S. W. Manchester) was surprised at the action taken by the Executive on this matter. It had been said that they did not bring forward any scheme. They were prepared to bring forward a scheme so soon as the idea had been inculcated into the branches. They wanted to improve their present standing, and he claimed that this was the only way of doing it.

E. C. FAIRCLOUGH (Central Hackney) was of opinion that everything the Lancashire comrades had demanded could already be put into force under the present system. In London they already had the means established for the continued opening up of new branches, and during the last twelve months they had formed more branches in London than at any previous period. The London Committee had established a uniform method of book-keeping throughout the London branches, whereby it was possible to ascertain at any time the financial condition of any branch. With regard to special literature required by certain localities, and the issuing of which it was alleged was only possible through decentralisation, in London, that despised place, a series of such leaflets had already been issued. He maintained that everything demanded by the Lancashire comrades was already in operation in London by a voluntary arrangement, and there was no need for the scheme they put forward.

J. SURCUFFE (Rawtenstall) supported the resolution not because he was the representative of a Lancashire Branch, but because he believed in the principle of decentralisation. What they desired to do was to agree upon a scheme for propagating the principles of Social-Democracy better than they were doing at the present time.

Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) felt that if the members of the Executive were to be nominated by the various districts, it would mean that the government of the Party would be in the hands of the officials of the body, and he was strongly opposed to this.

G. HOPE (Erith) supported the resolution, and, in reply to the previous speaker, said he thought the difficulty of paid officials exercising executive powers might be overcome by stipulating that such was not to be the case.

Mrs. MURRAY (Walthamstow) supported the resolution. If they had district Councils with local autonomy it would not mean splitting up the party, but would strengthen the Party and mean an improvement in the organisation. Once they got the scheme in operation they would very soon find the ways and means.

H. PEAKER (Mile End) opposed, and G. W. HALE (Govan) supported the resolution.

H. QUELCH (Bermondsey) said that it had been said they might have a District Council for London, Lancashire, and elsewhere. He wanted to have a word to say on behalf of elsewhere. He had been instructed to vote for the resolution, but was going to speak against it. They were all animated by a desire for the benefit of the Party. What they had to guard against was the spirit of London against Lancashire, and Lancashire against elsewhere. He did not think they had the best possible organisation. He believed there was room for improvement, but that improvement had got to grow, and he believed it was a mistaken policy to enforce this principle of decentralisation on the branches. Something should be done to prevent speakers coming from London to waste three days on a single lecture.

A. H. WATSON (S.W. Manchester), in replying to the discussion, said he was not one of those who desired to set London against Lancashire and Lancashire against London. The resolution did not ask them to adopt decentralisation, but simply asked them to adopt the principle, and then the branches would be able to bring their ideas to bear as regards the details of the scheme.

The resolution was then put to the Conference and carried by 114 votes to 35.

It was agreed that the Special Committee to be formed in pursuance of the above resolution should consist of five members, and that nominations should be handed in to be dealt with on Sunday morning.

Election of Executive Council.

The result of the ballot for the Executive Council was then declared:—London Section—Elected: *H. M. Hyndman, 154 votes; Dora B. Montefiore, 128; F. Victor Fisher, 112; *F. Kne, 111; *J. F. Green, 109; F. Davey, 77. Not elected: W. H. Humphreys, 68; R. C. Morrison, 65; D. Carmichael, 57; V. McEntee, 36. Provincial Section—Elected: *D. Irving, 122; *E. R. Hartley, 116; *T. Kennedy, 89; *W. Gee, 87; A. H. Watson, 58; *J. G. Webster, 55. Not elected: Anderson, 47; *T. Lewis, 41; A. Lees, 40; *E. Lowthian, 35; J. Tamlyn, 35; J. W. Milstead, 20; J. Moor, 20; J. P. Jackson, 15; F. Scarratt, 14; J. Harris, 13; G. Gunn, 12; J. Barnes, 10; H. Cocker, 4; J. Holden, 0.

*On last year's Executive.

More Internal Matters.

E. J. PAY (Tunbridge Wells) moved the following resolution:—
“That this Conference instructs the E.C. to appoint a Correspondence Committee of three from its members for the purpose of advocating and defending the principles and policy of the S.D.P. in the capitalist press.”

There had been a good deal of correspondence in the capitalist press on the subject of Socialism, and he felt that it would be well for the Executive to appoint a small committee as suggested in the resolution.

After G. HOPE (Erith) had formally seconded the resolution,

J. HOLDEN (Blackburn) said he could not see his way to support the resolution if it applied to the United Kingdom generally. He thought the local branches could deal with the matter much better.

At this juncture the “previous question” was put to the Conference, and lost.

*H. EDWARDS (Birkenhead) wished to know whether it was intended that the committee should deal with correspondence in London papers having a national circulation.

A. S. HEADINGLEY (W. Islington) thought the resolution was technically impracticable. Committees never had and never could write articles or letters. They generally appointed one of their number to do the work. Three people together could no more write an inspired article than they could make an inspired speech.

Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) did not think the matter was looked at from the particular class interests of the parties concerned. There had been an anti-Socialist campaign in which certain Socialists had been asked to defend the principles of Socialism, but they had never gone to the chief school of Socialism, i.e., the Marxian school. The capitalist press had formed a “ring” and boycotted them.

J. CORAHE (Cowdenbeath) opposed the resolution.

E. J. PAY, in the course of replying to the discussion, said that recently representative men had replied to letters in the press. The promoters of the resolution were of opinion that this should not be left to individuals, but should be attended to by a committee appointed by the Executive Council.

The resolution was lost by 72 votes to 60.

H. BARKER (Longton) moved:—

“That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that a Central Fund be created to meet the railway expenses of delegates to Annual Conferences to enable poorer branches to be represented.”

He thought that the resolution would speak for itself. There were many branches which could not send delegates to Conferences owing to their geographical position and the cost of railway fares.

H. QUELCH (Bermondsey) supported the resolution. He thought it was most important that they should have as large a representation as possible, and this seemed to be a way of securing

It. The principle appeared to be a good one, and he hoped it would be accepted by the Conference.

S. V. AMSTELL (Enfield) supported, because he believed that a great many branches could not send delegates because of their poverty. Delegates sent by branches were not always the best men, but those who were able to pay their expenses. If branches could not afford to send delegates, the organisation should go to their assistance.

F. BRATTNEWARTE (Ashton-under-Lyne) opposed the resolution, and moved as an amendment: "That the railway fares of delegates to Annual Conferences be pooled."

This was seconded by A. H. WATSON (S.W. Manchester).

F. S. BAGGLEY (Hanley) thought that something should be done to bring to Annual Conferences a real representation of the movement.

J. P. LLOYD (Blaenychdach) opposed the resolution, and supported the amendment.

The amendment, on being put to the Conference, was carried by 111 votes to 17, and was then carried as a substantive proposition.

United Socialist Party.

W. GEARD (Battersea) moved the following resolution:—

"That this Conference reaffirms the desire for a United Socialist Party, and that the invitations to a Conference be extended to all Socialist organisations having two or more branches."

He desired it to be understood by the public generally that the Social-Democratic Party desired Socialist unity. They had, for a good many years, made efforts to obtain one Socialist Party. He knew that invitations had been issued before, with no result; but he wished it to be known that they were prepared to meet representatives of other bodies to discuss the question. They ought to give everyone the opportunity of seeing that the S.D.P. desired Socialist unity.

D. CARMICHAEL (Battersea) seconded the resolution. Those of them who had worked harmoniously alongside of the I.L.P. were prepared to work in the same manner with the S.L.P. and the S.P.G.B.

Amendments were submitted from Govan Branch and Central Hackney Branch to delete all words after "party."

G. W. HALE (Govan) supported the amendment as the resolution was impracticable, and against common sense.

F. H. EDWARDS (Birkenhead) supported the amendment. He opposed any conferring with those who had invented a new language to abuse the S.D.P. and its prominent members. Invitations should be sent out to those bodies who were prepared to work with them.

J. FRINGAN (Kirkcaldy) considered that they had made sufficient overtures to other bodies. In endeavouring to bring about fusion

they had met with insults and rebukes. The Conference should reaffirm the desire for unity, and show that they were prepared to welcome those people who showed a desire to co-operate with the S.D.P. and go forward with them for the realisation of Socialism.

H. QUELCH (Bermondsey) said he had been instructed to vote for the resolution, but when his branch considered the matter he was sure they never contemplated inviting those little knots of individuals who had no existence as organisations at all. He ridiculed the notion of calling to a Conference any two or three individuals who called themselves the Socialist Party of the Universe. He had never said anything against the I.L.P. or the Fabian Society as Socialist organisations. They differed from them on the question of tactics. But he was not prepared to recognise the others as organisations.

W. GEARD, in replying, said that when the Battersea Branch submitted the resolution he did not believe they had any idea of sending invitations to the S.P.G.B. or the S.L.P. He believed in working hand in glove with all those who were desirous of bringing about Socialism.

The Govan and Central Hackney amendment was then put and carried by 91 votes to 35. It was then carried as a substantive proposition.

Urgency was given for a resolution of sympathy with the Boilermakers in their dispute, moved by Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham) and H. QUELCH (Bermondsey). On the suggestion of H. M. HYNDMAN (Central) it was agreed to add the Railway Workers and the Engineers in the resolution, which was then carried unanimously.

An Appeal to Boilermakers.

Before the Conference adjourned for the day the following resolution was passed without any discussion, on the motion of Cr. J. JONES (S. West Ham), seconded by H. QUELCH (Bermondsey):—

"That this Conference, taking note of the fact that the Boilermakers in the Manchester district have received notice of a reduction of 3s. per week on time rates and 7½ per cent. on piece rates, such reduction to come into force on May 27th next, expresses its sympathy with the men in any efforts they may make to resist such reduction, and desires to point out to them that such attacks on the workers are inevitable under capitalism, and appeals to them to work for the emancipation of their class by helping to realise the complete overthrow of the present state of society and the inauguration of the co-operative commonwealth."

North-West Manchester.

When the Conference re-assembled on the Sunday morning, on the motion of R. THOMPSON (Rochdale) and T. LEWIS (Plymouth), it was decided to discuss the question of the election in North-West Manchester. The matter was to be discussed in

genera, members of the public and the press being excluded. It was ultimately decided, with one dissident, that the candidature should be supported.

Executive Council Report

The report was presented, and appears as amended by the Conference:—

Since the last Annual Conference four meetings of the Executive Council, and 22 ordinary and one special meeting of the London section of the Council have been held. The attendances at the Executive Council meetings have been as follows:—W. Gee, 3 (once ill); J. F. Irving, 4; T. Kennedy, 4; F. M. Hyndman, 3 (once excused); Dan H. Quelch, 3 (once excused); J. Hunter Watts, 3 (once excused); and J. G. Webster, 2. The attendances at the meetings of the London Section of the Executive Council have been as follows:—J. F. Green, 20 (once excused); H. M. Hyndman, 19 (once excused); F. Kneé, 20; H. Quelch, 19 (twice ill); J. Hunter Watts, 20 (once excused); and J. G. Webster, 18.

The following new branches have been formed during the past year:—In London and suburbs: Hackney (South), Hammermith, Hanwell, Mitcham, Norwood (South), Penge, St. Pancras (East), Sydenham, Uxbridge and Wembley; in the provinces: Ashton-in-Makerfield, Arnold and Daybrook (Nottingham), Barrowford, Basingstoke, Bath, Batley, Birkenhead, Birkenshaw, Bromley, Dukinfield, Foleshill, Garden City (Leiceworth), Hyde (re-formed), Keighley, Leamington, Leeds (Bramley), Leeds (East), Leeds (South), Liverpool (Kirkdale), Leicester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Norden, Rotherham, St. Anne's-on-the-Sea, Southport, Stalybridge, Stoke-on-Trent, Wallsend-on-Tyne, and Worcester; in Wales: Aberynon, New Tredegar (re-formed), and Treorchy; and in Scotland: Böhess (re-formed), Burnbank, Dundee, Dunfermline, Glasgow (Govanhill), Glasgow (Kinning Park), Glasgow (Partick), Glasgow (Polmadie), and Glasgow (Towhead), Kirkmuirhill, Stranraer, Wick (re-formed), and Windygates.

The Padham Socialist Party has now become a branch of the S.D.P., and the Sutton Socialist Society is an additional affiliated body. The Newcastle Socialist Society have not renewed their affiliation, but a branch of the S.D.P. is now established in Newcastle. The number of new branches formed and fresh societies affiliated since the last Annual Conference is 57—one more than the number for the previous year, which was the highest on record.

Your Parliamentary Committee have been fully occupied, since their appointment after the last Annual Conference, in considering the important question of the candidature of the S.D.P. for the next General Elections. In the report presented to the last Annual Conference, reference was made to the constituencies that had been considered as good seats to be contested if men and money were available. Since then we have transferred our comrade J. F. Green from Rossendale to South Bristol.

The following are the constituencies and candidates which we have definitely agreed to, and these candidates will receive their proportionate share from the War Chest when the next General Election takes place:—Aberdeen (N.), T. Kennedy; Accrington, Dan Irving; Ashton-under-Lyne, W. Gee; Burnley, H. M. Hyndman; Bradford (East), E. R. Hartley; Bristol (South), J. F. Green; Carlisle, A. C. Bannington; Haggerston, Herbert Burrows; Leeds (West), F. Kneé; Northampton,

H. Quelch; and Northants (East), J. Gribble. Permission has been granted the Leigh, Rochdale, Sheffield and Govan Branches to put forward Social-Democratic Parliamentary candidates on the distinct understanding that we do not hold ourselves responsible for any financial help towards such candidatures. As has been pointed out frequently before, our means for fighting parliamentary elections are very limited, and the number of constituencies we contest must necessarily be governed by these means.

In giving the number of votes polled by members of the S.D.P. in local elections, those for the urban councils and guardians which took place immediately before the last Annual Conference are included, as they were not referred to in the last Annual Report. The total number of votes polled by our candidates for their elections was 35,751, and we gained 16 and lost three seats. Among the most notable of the contests was that of Swindon, where our comrade A. H. Lee was again returned to the Guardians, after that body had declared his seat vacant because he acted as an amateur casual at the Swindon Workhouse, and that of West Ham, where our comrade J. E. Williams captured one of the seats for the Guardians rendered vacant by the sentences passed upon certain members of that Board in connection with the local scandals.

Seventy-nine members of the S.D.P. contested seats for the Municipal Elections last November. The reduction of the number, compared with that of 1900, was due to the fact that, in the previous year, the number was swollen by the contests for the London Borough Councils, which only take place once in three years. The number of votes polled at the November elections was 27,802. The net result was a gain of five seats and a loss of six.

In the Annual Report presented to the Conference at Carlisle last Easter reference was made to the results of the London Borough and County Council elections, and it was pointed out that the success of the monopolist electric and traffic companies in London would undoubtedly cause similar attempts at Americanising our politics to be made in the provinces. A strenuous attempt was made in this direction at the last municipal elections, and a vigorous anti-Socialist campaign was carried on. Despite all this, we only suffered the loss of one seat, whilst our votes, in many instances, greatly increased.

In addition to those elections already mentioned, there have been fourteen other contests in which members have stood as candidates, and have polled 2,940 votes, and gained two seats. The total number of votes polled by members of the S.D.P. since the last Annual Conference is 66,493, with a gain of twenty-four and a loss of nine seats.

We are heartily glad to have been of assistance to our Russian comrades, who, as delegates of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, met in Congress in London last May, after being refused permission to meet in Sweden. The reception given to them at less than a week's notice on May 24th, at Holborn Town Hall, attracted so large an audience that most of the would-be hearers were compelled to remain outside.

At our suggestion the International Socialist Bureau issued an appeal to the Socialists of Europe to hold demonstrations on July 14th, the date famous for the taking of the Bastille in 1789, in favour of our Russian comrades, on whose account the second Duma had been dissolved. In London and the provinces meetings were held on that day to protest against any understanding with the Russian autocracy on the part of the British Foreign Office. At the close of the meeting held in Trafalgar Square a procession was formed to make a protest outside the Foreign Office, and a violent and unprovoked attack was made by the police on the crowd. Although tacit consent had been granted, J. E.

Williams was forcibly prevented from speaking for the few moments necessary to give point to the protest and to allow of the quiet dispersal of the crowd; Williams and others were roughly handled; and thirteen arrests were made, but only two Russians were charged at Bow Street on the following morning. Williams was subsequently summoned for obstruction, and fined £2, which he has refused to pay.

The International Socialist Congress was held at Stuttgart in August. Next to Germany, Great Britain sent the largest delegation, numbering 123, and of that number the S.D.P. sent 59. A full report of the proceedings of the Congress appeared in "Justice," of August 24th and 31st, so there is no occasion to describe it at any length. The S.D.P. delegates strove to get the British vote, upon all the subjects of the agenda, in favour of the revolutionary as against the revisionist policy. The difference in tactics showed itself most markedly on the question of Colonial policy. Edward Bernstein, J. R. MacDonald, and others supported the view of the majority of the Colonial Commission, which was briefly to the effect that capitalist colonisation was not wholly to be condemned, and that Socialists should take their share in it, if only for the purpose of protecting the rights of the aborigines; whilst the S.D.P., in company with Lelebour and Kautsky, supported the view of the minority of the Commission, which condemned capitalist colonisation entirely, and urged that we should be better able to help native races by criticism and opposition than by taking part in their exploitation. This view was accepted by the majority of the Congress. Among the British delegates our attitude was supported by 67 votes to 39, but when it came to the allocation of votes in the Section, we were defeated by 14 votes to 6.

The S.D.P. has been charged by inference in certain quarters with wishing to exclude trade unions from representation at the International Socialist Congresses. We have no desire to do anything of the kind. All we have done is to support the International Socialist Bureau in maintaining the existing Socialist basis of the Congress, and we are perfectly ready and willing to accept the adhesion of British working-class organisations on that basis; but we strongly oppose, and shall continue strongly to oppose, any alteration in the basis of admission to the Congress in order to permit non-Socialist organisations to be represented without being committed to the Socialist principles and policy of these International Congresses.

We have paid particular attention to the Territorial Forces Act of Mr. Haldane. We pointed out in our last report that its failure would inevitably cause a demand to be made for conscription, and some of the Unionist organs are already hinting that unless the Territorial Forces are well supported, some kind of compulsory military service will be necessary. We have issued manifestoes and leaflets on this question, and our comrade Robert Edmondson has been of considerable help to us in this connection, especially for his expert military articles in "Justice."

In conjunction with our London Committee we have carried on a most strenuous agitation in London to endeavour to force the London County Council to put in operation section 3 of the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906. We felt it was of considerable importance that no effort should be spared in this attempt, for if the London County Council could have been forced to take this step, their example would have probably been followed by many other cities and towns. A crowded and enthusiastic meeting in support of this demand was held in the Queen's Hall, on Wednesday, January 15th; a petition was organised by the London Committee and over 21,000 signatures obtained in the course of about three hours on a bleak Saturday afternoon; and a deputation

waited upon the Education Committee of the London County Council to urge that the Council should pay attention to the resolution of the Queen's Hall meeting, and the petition submitted. The Education Committee, however, declined to receive the deputation. In addition to the foregoing, many public and Town's meetings have been organised throughout London on this matter, and resolutions carried demanding that the Government should make the Act compulsory, remove the limit of one halfpenny to the rate to be imposed, and make a grant from the Imperial Exchequer towards the cost of providing food under the Act.

Meetings of the unemployed have been regularly held at Tower Hill three times a week, addressed principally by J. E. Williams, with the assistance of R. Greenwood, J. Jones, and other comrades. A march of unemployed ex-service men was organised on December 29th, the day on which the "Daily Telegraph" gave a dinner at the Albert Hall to the veterans of the Indian Mutiny. The object of the march was to point out that many ex-soldiers and sailors were starving, and could not wait for 50 years in order that they might then be regaled with a sumptuous repast.

Considerable prominence has been given to the proceedings of the Labour Party Conference at Hull. The Paper Stainers' resolution, definitely pledging the Conference to Socialism was rejected by 951,000 to 91,000, which was a larger majority against it than on the previous occasion, whilst a resolution from the Engineers, expressing the opinion that the time had arrived when the Labour Party should have Socialism as its definite object, was carried by 514,000 to 409,000. The resolution of the Engineers is more pronounced than similar Socialist resolutions which have been carried at their Conferences as expressions of opinion.

The result of the ballot of the members of the S.D.P. on the questions of changing the name to Social-Democratic Party, and of reducing the subscription from branches to the Central Office to 1s. per year per member showed that the branches were practically unanimous in favour of the former, and by a very large majority in favour of the latter proposition. Experience showed that the greater local activities of most of the branches necessarily entailed increased expenditure, and that many branches made incorrect returns of their full financial membership in order to avoid the full payment of dues at the former rate of 3d. per month per member. The change in the rate of subscriptions from branches was made at the New Year, and branches are now charged the sum of one shilling for every membership-card issued to them from the Central Office. Already about three times the number of cards of membership have been issued than the number upon which dues were paid during 1907.

The total receipts and expenditure for 1907 are slightly less than those of 1906, but the budget of the latter year was swollen by the receipts for the War Chest in connection with the General Elections of 1906. The general receipts all show a gratifying increase, and the balance in hand at the close of 1907 is five times greater than that at the end of 1906. We regret that until the December quarter of last year a slight loss continued to be shown on the Central premises at Chandos Hall, 21A, Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C., but that quarter gave a balance of £20 towards the reduction of the deficit, and the accounts for the March quarter of this year also show a slight profit.

Again we have endeavoured to get a return of branch receipts and expenditure, and again a number of branches have not supplied the figures necessary to make the return complete. However, basing the figures of those branches which have not sent in their returns proportionately on those sent in, we find the total income and expenditure of

the S.D.P. for 1907 to be, roughly speaking, £18,000. The trade of the Twentieth Century Press for the same period is £27,000, and that of the Pioneer Book Works £3,500. The grand total is, therefore, £21,500. The number of communications received at the Central Office of the S.D.P. during 1907 was 10,157, as compared with 8,445 during 1906, and the number despatched was 28,900, as compared with 21,294 during 1906. The number of telephone calls received during 1907 was 1,267, as compared with 919 in 1906, and the number of calls made 1,164, as compared with 1,074 in 1906.

A total of 565,000 manifestoes and leaflets have been distributed by members and branches of the S.D.P. since the last Annual Conference. A special manifesto was issued on "Adult Suffrage."

The formation of the London Committee last year, and the appointment of E. C. Fairchild as London Organiser, have been more than justified by the results obtained. Since last July the membership of the Party in London and its suburbs has increased 75 per cent.

The third annual report of our Women's Committee shows that they have had a good year's work. The Socialist Women's Circles are in a flourishing condition, and there are now thirteen circles in existence. They are: Northampton, Wellingborough, South-West Manchester, Exeter and Stonehouse in the provinces and Scotland; and Bow and Bromley, Willeston, Central, Deptford, Fulham, Hammersmith, Islington and Southwark in London. The committee have issued two leaflets and the pamphlet, "Some Words to Socialist Women." The pamphlet is being translated into Dutch for the women comrades of Amsterdam. The committee is represented on the Socialist Women's Bureau. A section of the Women's Committee have continued their labours in providing the refreshments served at Chandos Hall.

We have gone most carefully into the various resolutions which were passed by the last Annual Conference at Carlisle, and have found that to carry out most of them will entail additional expenditure on the part of the organisation nationally. The matter of the Information Bureau for Speakers was referred to the Organisation Committee, who are gradually getting it into working order, but the difficulty of organising properly such a Bureau by voluntary labour is much greater than may be imagined. We have commissioned neighbouring branches to appoint responsible members to visit new branches when formed. As regards the position of the Jews in Russia, we have done our best to influence Members of Parliament to bring pressure to bear, through the Foreign Office, to prevent the repetition of the periodical Jewish massacres, and to make the Jewish M.P.'s take more active interest in the lot of their unfortunate fellow-countrymen in Russia; but it seems as if another and more horrible pogrom will be needed to rouse anything like active feeling against the Russian autocracy, even on the part of English Jews, especially those belonging to the wealthiest section.

Last autumn the National Organisation Committee considered the suggestion which had been sent in from several comrades that a "Justice" Van should be established for the purpose of carrying on Social-Democratic propaganda in the country this year. It was agreed that an effort should be made to establish a "Justice" Van Fund, but afterwards it was thought that if a National Campaign Fund were set on foot, and general appeals for individual contributions were sent out, instead of collecting cards and sheets issued, a much larger amount might be raised, a portion of which might be devoted to the construction and equipment of a Van or vans. The National Campaign Fund was started at Carlisle, and has been gladly well supported. Collecting cards and sheets have been sent out to the branches, and it is our earnest hope that

all comrades will do their best to obtain contributions from friends and sympathisers outside our ranks who are not often called upon to contribute to our funds.

If the Campaign Fund is well supported, as it deserves to be, branches and local councils can be helped to meet the expenses of speakers, weak branches can be assisted and encouraged, fresh ground broken, and new branches formed. With the help of our comrades all over the country we shall be able so to increase our membership and our branches, and more actively to carry on our propaganda work, that within a few years Great Britain will no longer lag behind the other countries of the civilised world so far as the Socialist movement is concerned. The Campaign Fund has enabled us to do a few weeks' excellent propaganda work among the engineers of the Tyne, whither comrades R. Greenwood and J. Jones were sent. The existing Newcastle Branch has been strengthened by the visit, a branch has been formed at Wallsend, and others are expected.

A section of the Unionist press has been recently carrying on a vigorous anti-Socialist campaign. Column upon column has been devoted to us. Not since 1886 and 1887 has Socialism received so much press publicity as it has been receiving. We could wish for nothing better. We who have always had to bear the criticisms and attacks of our opponents and enemies can now do a little in return. We can subject our opponents, now that they have taken the field against us with their "Black Marias," to some of the criticism which they have dealt out to us. The letters of inquiry which we have received since these press attacks upon us were instituted show what good results we are receiving from those attacks. Everywhere Socialist activity is growing and new members are joining. Socialist literature is selling as it never sold before. It remains for us then to take every possible advantage of the wide publicity now being given to our principles, and to work harder than ever to convert the mass of the people to Socialism. We appeal, therefore, with confidence to our comrades to do their best to strengthen the S.D.F.—the Social-Democratic Party of these islands—to increase the number of its branches, and to induce local Socialist societies to affiliate with the Organisation, always with a view to the unification of the real Socialist forces in this country at the earliest opportunity. We have had a weary and uphill struggle to face, but we are convinced our time is coming. Our ideas have been making way among the people to a far greater extent than was visible. Want of belief in our possibility of success held many back who are now coming forward. Twenty-five years ago Socialists were bitterly assailed because their small band constituted a nuisance; we are now being fiercely attacked because our growing numbers constitute a danger to the propertied classes. We accept the attacks of to-day as an unconscious or unwilling tribute to our success which will encourage us to go forward with renewed ardour.

T. KANE (N. West Ham) moved to censure the Executive Council for refusing to allow two resolutions from the North West Ham Branch to appear upon the agenda paper.

Next business was then moved, and carried by 46 votes to 30.

T. ANDERSON (Glasgow, South Side) called attention to the action of the Executive in refusing to allow a resolution for a Party Call to be included in the agenda.

On the motion of J. SUTCLIFFE (Rawtenstall), it was agreed to delete the paragraph in the Report dealing with Rosebade.

The reference to the Colonial policy resolution of the Stuttgart Congress was slightly altered on the motion of K. BORIS (N. Islington), and a reference to the publication of the Adult Suffrage manifesto was to be made, on the motion of Mrs. MONTEFIORE (Tottenham).

D. CARMICHAEL (Battersea) moved to add Battersea to the list of branches given permission to run Parliamentary candidates, on the understanding that the Executive were not responsible for financial support. He wanted the Conference to give the Battersea Branch permission to put a candidate in the field. They would take care that the organisation, in fighting that constituency, should be as perfect as possible. They were going to "out" Burns if possible. They asked for no financial help. They believed they had all the financial help they desired.

G. HOPE (Erith) supported. He thought that there was no greater victory to be achieved on the field of national politics than the defeat of the renegade John Burns. A man who could put forward such arguments as Burns had on the discussion on the Unemployed Bill was beneath the contempt of any man.

F. KNEE (Executive Council) asked the Conference not to waste time in discussing Parliamentary contests. As Carmichael had pointed out, there were two men who could beat Burns, and as those two men were already booked, from the point of view of Battersea, their case was hopeless. The opinion of the Executive was that in running a candidate they would be doing the very thing to keep Burns in.

The resolution was carried, on being put to the Conference, and the Report was adopted as amended.

A resolution was adopted unanimously protesting against the harsh and unjust sentences passed on the Manchester unemployed leaders, and calling on the Home Secretary to release the men at once.

On the motion of F. KNEE (Executive Council) a resolution was passed sending fraternal greetings to the I.L.P. Conference at Huddersfield; and on the motion of D. CARMICHAEL (Battersea), a similar message was to be sent to the Shop Assistants A.D.M. at Cardiff.

Next business was carried on the following resolution from the Battersea Branch:—

"That this Conference impresses on the Executive Council the desirability of starting a Socialist daily paper, and suggests that a commencement might most easily and cheaply be made with a half-penny evening paper."

Agitation for Democratic Political Reforms.

H. CURSURE (Paddington) moved:—

"This Conference is of opinion that the time has arrived when the Executive Council should commence a National campaign in favour of Universal Adult Suffrage on the basis of No Property Qualification, Automatic Registration, Pay-

ment of Members and Election Expenses, and all elections on one day."

Mrs. MONTEFIORE (Tottenham) said that, as an International Socialist she desired them to carry out the mandate from the Stuttgart Congress to make this matter one of the prominent items in their programme. She considered that Adult Suffrage was a revolutionary measure. She held that if they did not take up this question of Adult Suffrage and make it a very prominent item in their propaganda all over the country, they would be alienating some of the best women comrades in the Party. The women were looking for a lead on this question. If they desired the women to be their comrades they must give them equal rights to help forward the cause for which they stood. She was voicing the wishes and desires of thousands of working women who would come along and help them if they knew they were working for Adult Suffrage. She asked them to show that they stood for the social, economic, and political emancipation of women.

Mrs. MURRAY (Walthamstow) thought there had not been sufficient stress laid upon this subject. If the working-class women at Walthamstow had had the vote at the last election in Walthamstow, they would have had their candidates at the top of the poll. As soon as women understood the principles of Socialism they recognised that there was something in Socialism, and nothing in the ordinary political parties. She hoped the S.D.P. would take this matter up and realise that women were something more than mere drudges.

H. M. HYNDMAN (Central) spoke in support of the second portion of the resolution, which had been neglected. An effective demand should be made that this country should be placed on the same footing as other countries in the matter of payment of members and election expenses.

Mrs. CLERGE (Bradford) and J. JONES (S. West Ham) also spoke to the resolution, which, on being put to the Conference, was carried by 91 votes to 28.

Homestead Act.

The following resolution standing in the name of the Southampton Branch was carried without discussion:—

"That in the interests of the working people a Homestead Act, similar in its provisions to that in force in the United States of America, should be enforced, and an agitation undertaken to place it on the Statute Book."

Next business was carried on the following resolution from the Tottenham Branch:—

"That this Conference calls upon all Socialists and advocates of secular education to take advantage of the existing Cowper Temple Clause which does not merely mean 'simple Bible teaching,' as the capitalist press is always trying to infer; but enables them to withdraw their children from

religious instruction in public schools, thereby effectively demonstrating the growing desire for complete secular education.”

Conference, 1909.

It was agreed that the place of the Annual Conference for 1909 be next taken.

F. KNEE (Executive Council) asked that London be added to the list of places to be voted upon as the venue of the 1909 Conference, but after a brief discussion the suggestion was vetoed by 45 votes to 40.

The voting was as follows on the first ballot:—Bristol, 65; Coventry, 40; Dewsbury, 14; Hull, 27. On the second ballot Bristol received 76 votes against 62 for Coventry. The Conference of 1909 will, therefore, be held at Bristol next Easter.

The Licensing Bill.

H. QUENCH moved the following, which was unanimously agreed to:—

“That this Conference, while approving the principle of the Government Licensing Bill in so far as it affirms the right of the community to terminate all property rights and to acquire all monopolies which are being used inimically to the general well-being, is opposed to that measure on the ground that it unnecessarily interferes with the liberty of the individual on the pretext of dealing with the admitted evils of intemperance, while it only tinkers with the outward manifestation of those evils without attempting in any way to deal with the cause.

“This Conference strongly resents the imputation of the universal intemperance of the working class represented by this Bill, and is of opinion that such intemperance as exists is almost entirely due to the bad social conditions in which the masses of the people live; to the fact that the poisoning by adulteration for profit of the food and drink of the people is permitted and encouraged, and that all places of public refreshment and social intercourse have been permitted to become the private monopoly of profitmongers.

“This Conference further urges that true temperance can best be promoted by the communal ownership of all public places of refreshment and recreation, by the rigorous suppression of adulteration in articles of food and drink, by the total prohibition of the manufacture or importation of admittedly harmful drinks or foods, and by the improvement of the material conditions in which the people live.”

Education Bill.

DAN IRVING moved the following:—

“As against the ‘Education’ proposals of the present Government, this Conference calls for a national system of education, elementary and advanced, free and secular, and

under complete popular control. It further advocates the State Maintenance of all Children in the public schools, out of national funds.”

It was nearly time they stopped the squabble of the priest, parson, and minister, and attended to education. Socialists did not want to fit the wealth-producing class to be merely keener tools for competition with the workers in other lands, but they wanted to give to every human being in the community the opportunity for the fullest development of mind and body. That was impossible to-day because the educational system was lacking.

A brief but interesting discussion followed, in which H. M. HYNDMAN, F. BAGELEY (Hanley), Mrs. HYNDMAN (Hornsey), Councilor T. LEWIS (Southampton), W. F. MOSS (Northampton) and HERBERT BURROWS (Clerkenwell) took part. The latter discussed the pupil-teacher system, and urged that the present system did not give the would-be teacher the proper training. The resolution was adopted.

Labour Party's Unemployed Bill.

J. G. WEBSTER, in an interesting speech, moved the following, which was seconded by E. C. FARREHURD, and adopted:—

“That this Conference of the S.D.P. regards with dis-appointment the Unemployed Bill of the Labour Party, inasmuch as it is little more than another machinery Bill which contains no definite scheme or idea for the alleviation of the evil. This Conference further declares its strong disapprobation of the provisions of the Bill which would inflict punishment upon or assist in the transportation of the victims of capitalism without dealing similarly with the idle and worthless of the rich class. The Conference is also of opinion that any measure to be effectual must aim at the destruction of capitalism—the cause of unemployment—by the organisation of the labour of the unemployed upon a permanent basis by the provision of workshops and land whereby they may obtain adequate maintenance without degrading them as citizens.”

Secret Diplomacy.

H. M. HYNDMAN moved the following:—

“That this Conference of the Social-Democratic Party declares strongly against any continuance of the system of secret diplomacy as wholly undemocratic and dangerous, tending to the support of despotism abroad and the maintenance of corruption and intrigue at home, and as in all cases detrimental to the interests of the mass of the people.”

He gave several instances of the evil effects of secret diplomacy

—(1) The South African war. Joseph Chamberlain, at the very time when he was publicly professing peace towards the Transvaal, privately declared that if he had public opinion behind him he would have war in a fortnight. (2) The treaty with the Russian

deportism. (3) The alliance with Japan. There was also the recent business between the Kaiser and Lord Tweedmouth. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Decentralisation Committee.

The following were elected to serve on the Special Committee appointed in pursuance of the resolution on Decentralisation:—J. Sutcliffe, Jas. Burnett, A. Lees, E. C. Fairchild, A. H. Watson.

Trading Committee.

The following were elected to serve on the Committee appointed in pursuance of the resolution on trading:—F. J. Shirley, T. Anderson, and A. Lees.

The CHAIRMAN, in closing the 28th Annual Conference, said they could congratulate themselves upon the fact that the Conference was the best and most successful one that the organisation we exert ourselves during the present year. The harvest was ripe; and he felt sure that the enthusiasm displayed last year would be exhibited in all its forms throughout the length and breadth of our labour, and our enthusiasm to the work of our organisation, so that it may still lead the workers towards the realisation of our great cause—the emancipation of labour.

The Conference concluded by singing the "Red Flag," and giving three cheers for the Social Revolution and for the success of Dan Irving in North-West Manchester.

List of Branches Represented and their Delegates.

BRANCHES.	DELEGATES.
Accrington (2) ...	J. Bradley and P. H. Taylor.
Ardwick ...	J. E. Whipp.
Ashton-in-Makerfield ...	A. Ward.
Ashton-under-Lyne (2) ...	F. Braithwaite and H. Cocker.
Bacup ...	G. T. Cowpe.
Barnoldswick ...	A. Heys.
Bartons (2) ...	A. E. Ogden.
Berninsey ...	D. Carmichael and W. Geard.
Beltham Green ...	H. Quetch.
Birkenhead ...	E. A. Cannell.
Blackburn (3) ...	F. H. Edwards.
Bourne-mouth ...	J. Holden, W. Hulme and T. Hurley.
How and Bromley ...	J. G. Webster.
Bradford (2) ...	F. Davey.
British Socialist Society ...	Mrs. Clegg and J. F. Harvey.
Burnley (3) ...	S. Bale.
Chamberwell ...	L. Rippon, L. Thompson and J. T. Whitaker.
Castle (3) ...	W. A. Woodroffe.
Central (4) ...	E. Lowthian, —, Potts and W. Scott Parker.
Chesterfield ...	F. Victor Fisher and H. M. Hyndman.
Chorley ...	G. Rogers.
...	F. Froom.

BRANCHES.	DELEGATES.
Clerkenwell ...	Herbert Burrows.
Citheroe ...	F. Howe.
Clydebank ...	G. Anderson.
Colne ...	H. Moffitt.
Coventry ...	J. Beesley.
Cowdenbeath ...	J. Cornie.
Croydon (West) ...	G. H. Young.
Dewsbury ...	C. B. Gibson.
Eccles ...	F. Wroe.
Edmonton (2) ...	H. Cottrell and G. Hines.
Enfield ...	S. V. Amstell.
Erith ...	G. Hope.
Exeter ...	A. Seaton.
Fulham ...	T. Witheridge.
Glasgow ...	J. F. Reid.
Glasgow (College) ...	L. C. Moore.
Glasgow (East) ...	J. McLean, M.A.
Glasgow (Pollokshaws) ...	T. Anderson.
Glasgow S.S. ...	J. Nugent.
Gorton ...	G. W. Hale.
Govan ...	J. E. Edmundson.
Great Harwood ...	J. H. Walls.
Greenock ...	E. C. Fairchild.
Hackney (Central) ...	I. Crisp.
Hackney (South) ...	F. S. Bagley.
Hanley ...	J. S. Dinsdale.
Harpurhey ...	B. Hall.
Hastingsden ...	Mrs. Pay.
Hastings ...	Mrs. H. M. Hyndman.
Hornsey ...	H. Bielby and A. Jackson.
Hull (2) ...	T. Clough.
Ilkeston ...	W. S. Cluse.
Islington (East) ...	K. Borts.
Islington (North) ...	E. W. Marsh.
Islington (South) ...	A. S. Headingley.
Islington (West) ...	J. Finnigan.
Kirkcaldy ...	A. Guile.
Kirkdale and Everton ...	E. R. E. Jones and H. Sherry.
Kentish Town (2) ...	D. Menzies.
Kingston-on-Thames ...	Bert Kilip and S. V. Oxley.
Leeds (Central) (2) ...	W. Richardson.
Leeds (South) ...	V. Crooks and H. Rawson.
Leigh (2) ...	G. C. Swanson.
Letchworth (Garden City) ...	I. Morris.
Leven ...	Mrs. L. Williams.
Lincoln ...	J. F. Loughran.
Liverpool (East) ...	J. Blincoe.
Liverpool (West) ...	H. Barker.
Longton ...	J. P. Kirwin.
Manchester (North-East) ...	J. R. Crane and A. H. Watson.
Manchester (South-West) (2) ...	I. P. Lloyd.
Marxian Club (Blauenyddach) ...	H. Bridge.
Marplebone ...	F. Honeybone.
Merthyr Vale ...	F. Milwain.
Methil and Buckhaven ...	H. Pearce.
Mile End ...	E. W. Spackman.
Michigan ...	B. Chapman and J. Robinson.
Nelson (2) ...	D. Barratt, J. Gribble and W. P. Moss.
Northampton (3) ...	G. H. Gell.
Nottingham ...	J. E. Broadbent and H. Hall.
Oldham (2) ...	H. A. Cheshire.
Paddington

MEMBERS.

Puddham
 Plymouth
 Rawtenstall (2)
 Reading (2)
 Rochdale (2)
 Rushden and Higham Ferrers
 Sheffield (3)
 Southampton
 Southend-on-Sea
 South Salford (3)
 Southwark
 Stratford
 Stockport
 Stoke-on-Trent
 Todmorden
 Tottenham
 Tunbridge Wells
 Tyldesley and Atherton
 Walthamstow
 Waterfoot (2)
 Watford
 Wellingborough
 West Ham (North)
 West Ham (South)
 Whitehaven
 Wigan
 Willesden (2)

DELEGATES.

T. Grady.
 T. Lewis.
 J. Egan and J. Sutcliffe.
 E. Critchley and F. W. Mays.
 J. Moore and R. Thompson.
 C. H. Poole.
 R. Edwards, S. Elsbury and G. Fletcher.
 W. Walters.
 E. Holloway.
 H. F. Boardman, W. Foy and W. G. Shand.
 R. C. Morrison.
 T. Robinson.
 M. Smith.
 J. T. Tyson.
 G. Stansfield.
 Mrs. D. B. Montefiore.
 E. J. Pay.
 A. Lees.
 Mrs. Murray.
 J. Hargreaves and R. Peden.
 L. Lee.
 Mrs. B. Coles.
 T. Kane.
 J. Jones.
 J. Hanlon.
 T. Caterall.
 W. G. Hildersley and F. Knee.

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