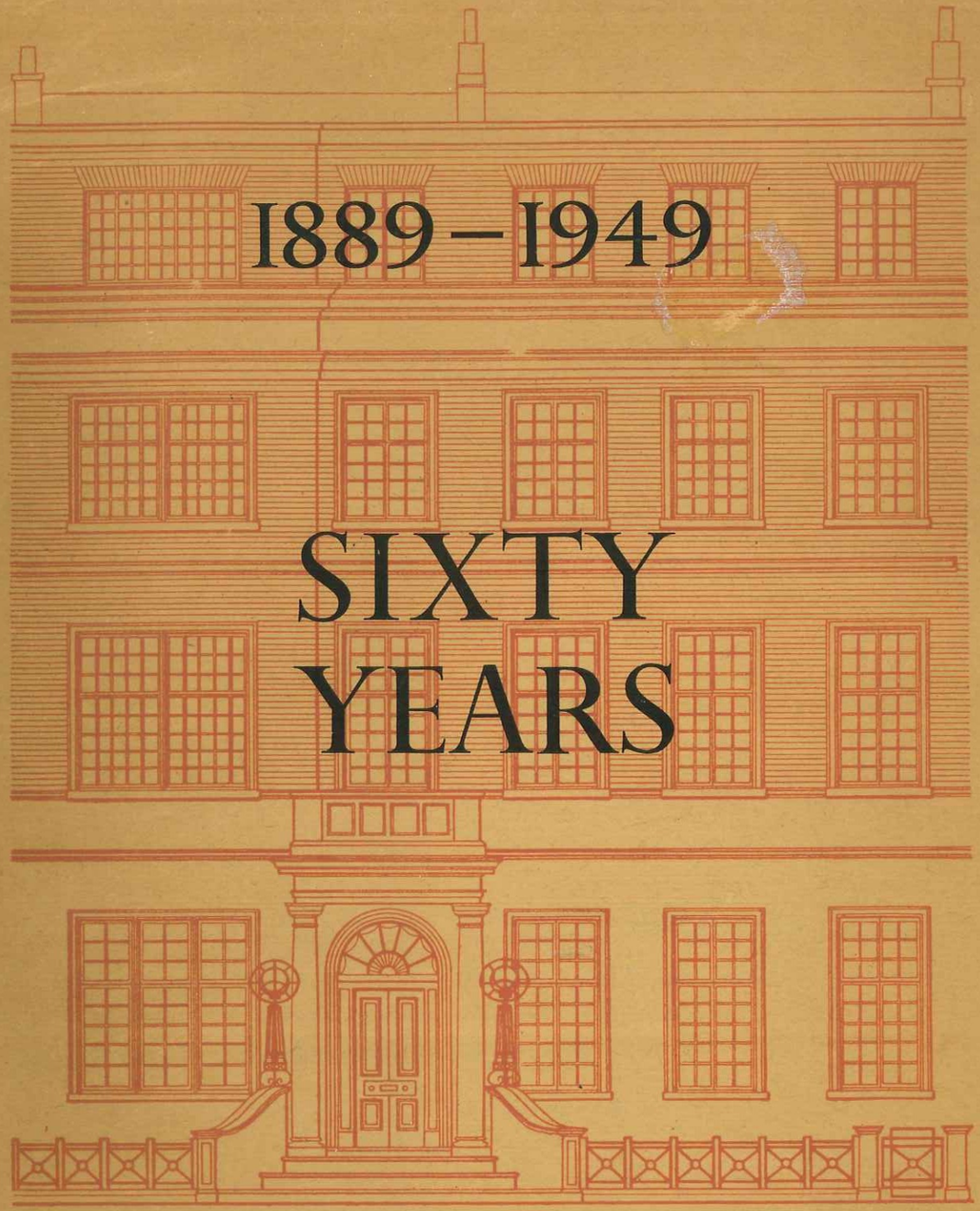
THE NATIONAL UNION OF GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS

1889–1949

SIXTY YEARS



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GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS

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SIXTY YEARS

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GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS

T. WILLIAMSON, J.P., *General Secretary from* 1946

SIXTY YEARS

of the National Union

of General and

Municipal Workers

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

Tennyson

MCMXLIX

THE NATIONAL UNION OF GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS

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Foreword

IT IS my privilege as the present holder—the third in succession—of the principal administrative office of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers to commend to the present generation of Trade Unionists this SOUVENIR publication. It is the record of a unique achievement in Trade Union organization. Mere survival of the chances and changes of sixty years is not such an exceptional event in the history of trade unionism as to justify special recognition. There are older Unions than ours. Other Unions have maintained their existence over a longer period of time with no greater resources, and in circumstances of equal difficulty. But our Union's achievement of its sixtieth birthday is nevertheless an outstanding event, as a triumph of organization in a field where it was confidently predicted no permanent success could be secured.

Sixty years ago it was almost an article of faith amongst Trade Union organizers and propagandists that the so-called general worker was unorganizable. Earlier attempts to organize general labour seemed to prove the point that the basis of union was the possession of a craft, and that mere employment in every kind of manual labour, at rates of wages and working conditions which varied literally from job to job, constituted no strong bond of union. The record of our Union as set forth in these pages proves, on the contrary, that there is a solidarity of labour lying deeper than the consciousness of craft, and that a sense of human need combined with aspirations for a better way of life will unite men and women in a strong and permanent organization which no changes in the conditions of employment can undermine. The story of our Union as told in these pages is one of manifold change in the various industries; it is the story of new industries, evolving out of older ones, and the picture we see as the tale unfolds is of a Union whose roots are deep in all the industries and in all the public services.

I hope younger Trade Unionists throughout the Movement will read this story of our Union that has made so substantial a contribution to the Movement's history in both its political and industrial fields. The story has a special value for the younger members of our own Union; some idea of what we as Trade Unionists today owe to the founders and pioneers of our Union can be gleaned from this brief record.

On behalf of the Union's General Council and National Executive I wish to express thanks to all who have contributed to the production of this SOUVENIR, including particularly Bros W. E. Potter, H. R. Roberts, and C. M. Scott; Mr Alastair Shand and the Staff of the Shenval Press, and Mr H. Tracey of the T.U.C.

February 14, 1949

TOM WILLIAMSON

The N.U.G. & M.W.

SIXTY YEARS are almost the normal span of a man's life. They may not count as much in the history of a Movement or an institution. A Trade Union has no prescribed limits of life. It goes on from one generation to another. Its birthdays are but milestones on a road which stretches endlessly ahead. A Union cannot be said to have reached its destination at its sixtieth milestone. Before it lies a still untravelled road.

Yet the sixtieth birthday of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers is a notable event. It marks the close of an epoch in the development of working-class organization to which the Union has made a unique contribution. No other Union in comparable circumstances can boast of a prouder record. It has raised the status of a vast number of wage earners who were regarded by trade unionists of an older generation as unorganizable and incapable of union among themselves. It has revolutionized their conditions of life and employment. It has improved the wages and conditions for general labour to a proportionately higher level than that of any other body of wage earners, even in the most strongly organized trades.

Weekly time rates for workers on roads, sewers and pavements in 1886—three years before the Union was formed—were barely 20*s.* a week. Gasworkers were considered to be well paid if they earned as much as 27*s.* 2*d.* a week. Labourers employed in waterworks earned less than 25*s.* a week. The twelve-hour day, and even longer working hours, were prevalent in industry. In the engineering and shipbuilding trades, as late as 1912, the labourers' wages were still no more than 20*s.* a week on the average for a working week of 54 or 55 hours. Labourers employed by local authorities in non-trading services in 1914 earned less than 27*s.* a week.

Improvements in wages, working hours, and conditions of employment are not the only achievements which stand to the credit of the Union. No other Union can claim to have given so many able and distinguished men and women to the service of the community. Many of its leaders have risen to high office as Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and as Lord Mayors, Mayors, Aldermen and Councillors, Magistrates, and leaders in Local Government in all parts of the country.

The Union has contributed much to the wider Labour and Trade Union movement and has played an influential part in the building up of the Trades Union Congress, the Trades Councils and the International Federations of Trade Unions. In the political field the old Social-Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party, the Fabian Society, and the Labour Party itself, drew heavily upon the Union's resources for organizing and propaganda work. Its leading personalities became well known for their gifts of oratory and knowledge and judgment in industrial and political affairs.

Few men in their time exercised on the

platform, in council, and in social relations, more brilliant gifts of wit, humour, eloquence, and shrewd judgment of men and affairs than such men as Will Thorne, J. N. Bell, John R. Clynes, Jack Jones, Arthur Hayday, Peter Tevenan and many others who could be named. The Union's representatives in public life, both men and women, have differed markedly from one another in their characteristics and in their gifts, but all of them worked to give the Union an unassailable position as a pioneer organization of the wage-earning class. They all rose from the ranks and came to the forefront unaided by any circumstances or opportunities other than those which the Union provided in its growth. They were made leaders by the force of their personal inspiration, the strength of their own characters, and the needs of the working people whose interests they served.

The rise of Trade Unionism among the general workers drew the dividing line between the old Unionism and the new. The year 1889 is a significant date in the political history of the working-class movement. For all practical purposes it marks the turning point between the politics of the older generation of working people who clung to the traditions of Gladstonian Liberalism, and the rising generations who were beginning to respond to the Socialist propaganda set in motion by the Fabian Society (founded in 1884) and the more rough and ready agitators belonging to the Social-Democratic Federation (formed in 1885), followed a decade later by the I.L.P.

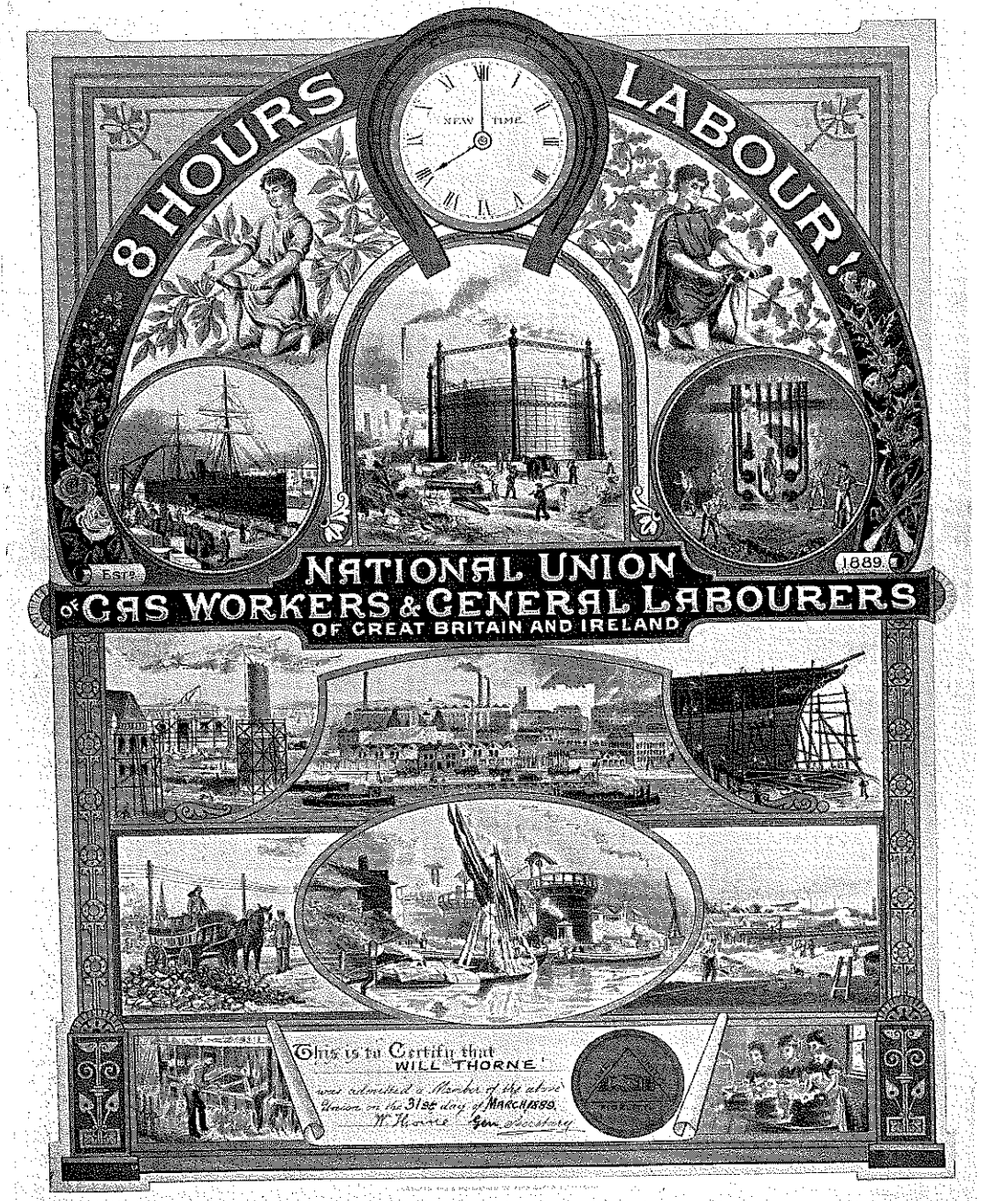
The general expansion of Trade Unionism in the last two decades of the nineteenth century was inspired by militant trade unionists who identified themselves with the unorganized masses of general labour. Pioneers of the New Unionism who helped to bring the Union into existence in the spring of 1889 were not all of them men who had risen from the ranks of the unskilled. Some of them, like John Burns and Tom Mann, belonged to the craft Unions, but they were out of sympathy with what they regarded as the restrictive and short-sighted Friendly Society obsessions of the older Unions. John Burns, for example, considered that these older Unions were recklessly assuming 'the duties and responsibilities that only the State or the whole community can discharge in the nature of sick and superannuation benefits'.

The real business of the Unions, as the founders of this organization defined it, was to fight for better wages and working conditions until the working people gained control of the State which would then do the rest.

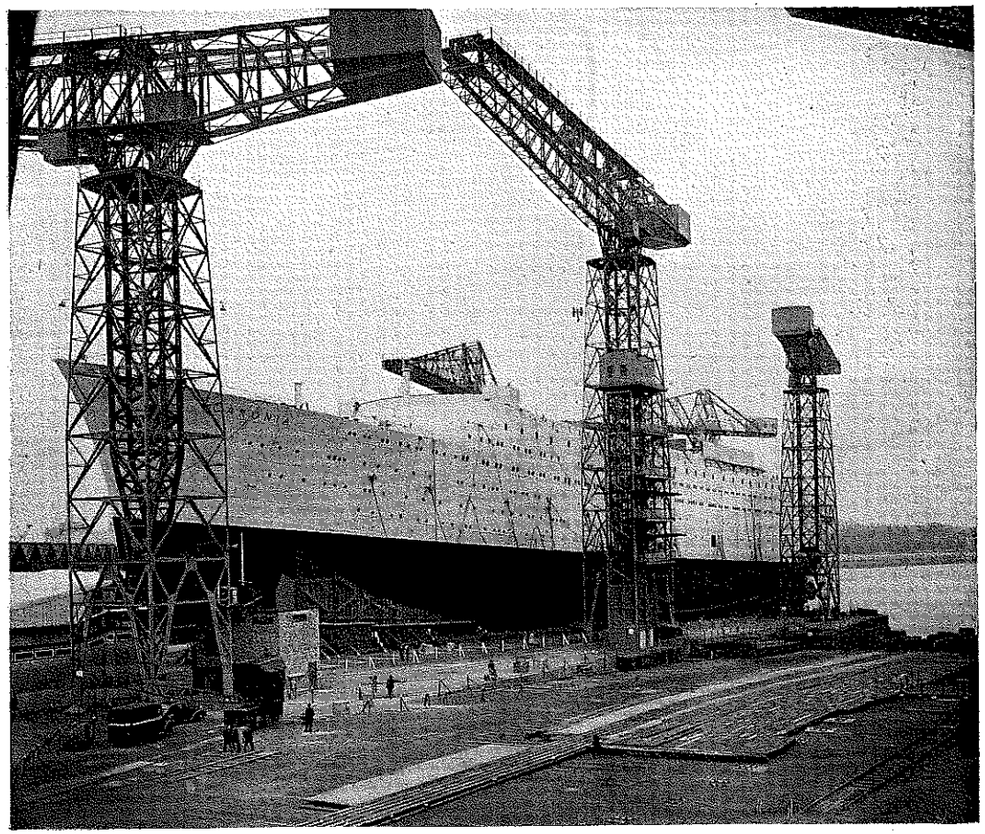
It is important at this stage to record that the present title of the Union, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, was assumed when the three main Unions, i.e. the National Union of General Workers, the Municipal Employees' Association, and the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, came together as a result of an amalgamation in 1924.

Whilst in actual fact March 31, 1889, was the birthday of the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers of Great Britain and Ireland (afterwards known as the National Union of General Workers), the National Amalgamated Union of Labour was also formed in 1889 and the Municipal Employees' Association as such in 1894. This latter Association grew out of several of the old Parish or Borough Council organizations, many of which were in existence long before 1889.

Side by side with our own original Unions in 1889 half a dozen other Unions



Will Thorne's original certificate of membership



Many of our members were employed in the building of S.S. 'Caronia'

of General Labour came into existence. These included a Union of Gasworkers, Brickmakers, and General Labourers, which achieved a membership of about 4,000; the Labour Protection League with less than 3,000 members; the National Amalgamated Labourers with not many more than 3,000 members; an organization calling itself the Knights of Labour (in Durham) which never came to anything, and a Scottish organization, the National Labourers, which fluctuated between 1,000 and 2,000 members.

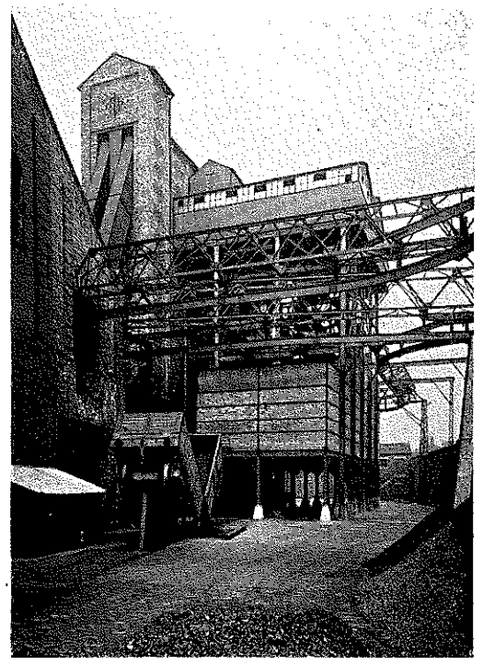
Trade Unionism began among general workers in the employment of Government and Local Authorities about 1889. There were Unions in existence amongst the labourers in the Royal Dockyards at Chatham, Devonport, Sheerness and Portsmouth between 1889 and 1894. As many as thirty Unions competed for the support of the employees of Local Authorities at the beginning of the present century. They had an aggregate membership of less than 40,000. Included amongst them was a

Birmingham Union of public works' labourers which later called itself the Amalgamated Society of Gas, Municipal and General Workers, which linked with us in 1921. Employees of the Corporations of Hull, Bolton, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow and several of the London boroughs formed Unions in this decade.

In July 1917, eight Unions formed a Federation which was called the National Federation of General Workers. Included within that number were our own National Union of General Workers and the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, the Municipal Employees' Association becoming attached at a later date; others attached to this Federation were the Dockers, the Workers' Union, the Navvies and General Labourers, and the Enginemen, Firemen and Mechanics. Two of our own officials played a prominent part in that Federation, namely, J. R. Clynes and J. N. Bell, who for many years acted as President and Vice-President respectively.

The Unions of general labour formed a massive group in the Trades Union Congress from 1890 onwards. At the Liverpool Congress of that year, the aggregate membership of the affiliated Unions was about 1,800,000. Among them there were Unions of dockers, carters, labourers of all kinds, gasworkers and municipal employees, forming nearly one-fifth of the total affiliated membership in the Congress.

Many spirited discussions took place in the Trades Union Congress in the decade 1889–1899 on the question of Labour Representation in Parliament. The voice of the Union was heard often in these debates. There could be hardly a clearer indication of the influence our Union exercised from its earliest days than was afforded by the election of Will Thorne as a member of the



Gasworks: Coke and coal handling plant

Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C. in 1894. To have reached this position within six years from the formation of the Union is striking evidence of the vigour and vitality of the Trade Union organization which sprang so suddenly into existence amongst the general workers.

Exactly ten years after the foundation of the Union the decisive step was taken in the Trades Union Congress of 1899 to unify the industrial and political activities in which the pioneers and founders of our Union were so prominent. The 1899 Congress, it was, that adopted the resolution which brought the Labour Party into existence, as an alliance of the Trade Unions with the Socialist Societies and other working-class organizations.

Public Hall, Canning Town, covers the spot where the first contributions were collected

The commanding position held by our own Union amongst these organizations of general workers is demonstrated most clearly by its representation in the famous London Memorial Hall Conference which, by forming the Labour Representation Committee, brought the Labour Party into existence in 1900. The list of delegates from our Union in that inaugural Conference contains many honoured names.

The Early Days

THE FIRST MEETING of the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers was held on the spot where the Canning Town Public Hall now stands. An earlier attempt to form a Union of Gasworkers in London's East End was made in 1884. This 'Association', as it was called, lasted only a few weeks. Another attempt was made in the following year, but this too was unsuccessful. Fear of victimization, and the certainty that if they lost their jobs they and their families could starve, proved a strong deterrent to Trade Union organization. It called for courage, faith and hope for men to risk the livelihood of their families by becoming marked men in Trade Union and Socialist agitation.

There were men who dared to take these risks. Among them was Will Thorne. The Union honours his name and his memory. He was the very incarnation of the class of wage earners to whom he dedicated the labour and devotion of a long life.

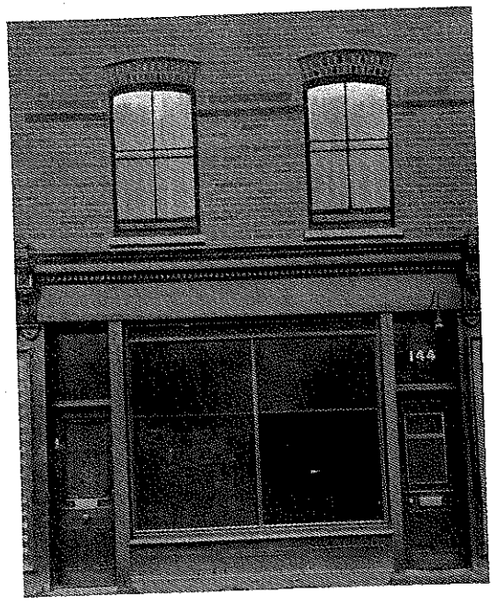
Will Thorne started work at the age of 6, turning a wheel in a Birmingham rope works for 2*s.* 6*d.* a week. He never went to school. How he learned to read and write he was never able to recall. He worked for twelve hours a day for five days a week and ten hours on Saturday, at an age when children of our generation, even in the homes of general workers, are happily at school, provided with school meals, milk and medical care as well as skilled teaching.

Conditions were no better when Will Thorne, during the Franco-Prussian war of 1871–2, worked in a metal rolling mill in Birmingham. Hours of labour were from six in the morning to six at night. He later obtained employment at the Saltley Gasworks, then under the control of the Birmingham Corporation, where the hours were even longer—from six in the morning until six at night on a seven-day week, working alternate fortnights on day and night shifts; while on the change-over from day to night work, the practice was to work from six o'clock on the Sunday morning to six o'clock on the Monday morning.

Wages were then about 5*s.* a day for a seven-day week; though earnings in some gasworks might be no more than 27*s.* a week.

There was no effective Trade Union organization among the gasworkers, and when they had grievances to rectify, they met and deputed one of their number, usually Will Thorne, to state their claim to the chief engineer. One such grievance was the long shift on the change-over from day to night work. The Gas Committee of the Birmingham Corporation finally agreed to abolish Sunday work from six a.m. to six p.m. but the men on the day shift then lost 5*s.* of their wages as they were not working on the seventh day.

Other grievances, injustices, and hardships produced a rebellious spirit amongst the gasworkers at Saltley. Methods of carbonizing coal changed. The work of charging and drawing the retorts grew



144 *Barking Road, London, E our first Head Office*

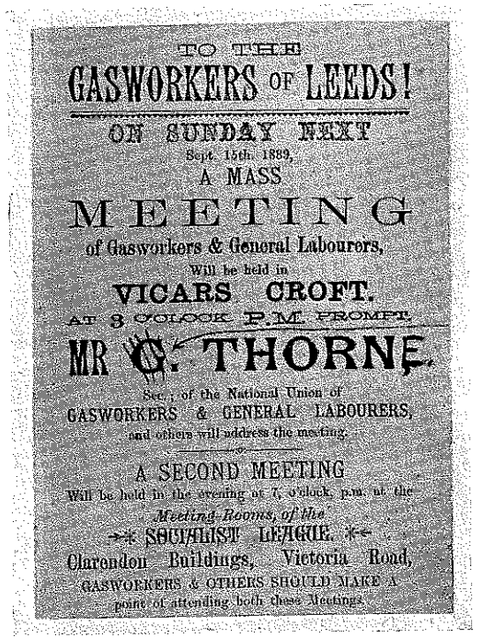
heavier, with the introduction of the 'Iron Man'—a compressed-air machine. It was the last straw on the camel's back. Will Thorne led a strike. It resulted in him having to walk from Birmingham to London to find a new job, and to an undreamed-of eminence in the service of the Trade Union and Labour Movement

The jobs he found in London—first at the South Metropolitan Gasworks in the Old Kent Road, and then at the Beckton Gasworks—were no better than in Birmingham. Hours of work were still twelve on a day or night shift. But rates of pay were slightly better: 5*s.* 3*d.* a day for the front men, and 5*s.* 8*d.* for the scoop drivers. Most of the workers at Beckton lived at Canning Town. Will Thorne had then been married for nearly ten years. Neither he nor his wife could write; yet somehow he learned to write by the time that the secretarial work of the Union fell into his hands.

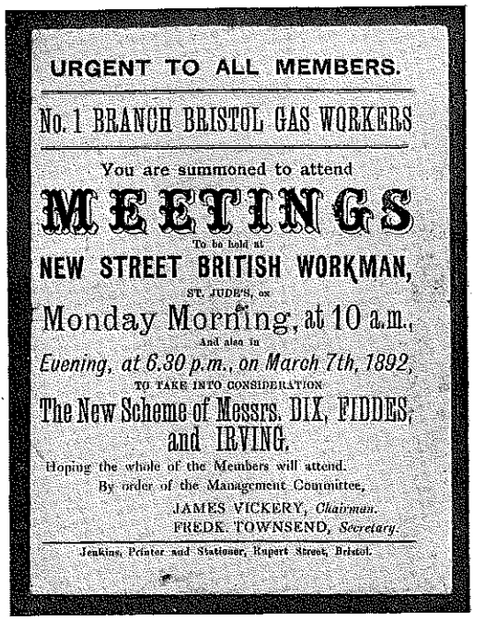
London's East End seethed then with political agitation. The leading propagandists of the Social-Democratic Federation gathered many recruits in the area. But there were only fourteen members in the S.D.F. Branch at Canning Town when Will Thorne joined it and presently became its secretary.

In those days thay had to fight for free speech and the right of public meeting. Hundreds of the men, who were later to join the Union when it was formed, were in Trafalgar Square in the winter of 1886 at the great unemployment demonstration which ended in tumult and the arrest of H. M. Hyndman, John Burns, H. H. Champion, and Jack Williams; they were later acquitted at the Old Bailey of charges of sedition and conspiracy. Months later, in November 1887, another great demonstration was planned to assemble in Trafalgar Square, which had become the constant meeting place of London's unemployed. The authorities prohibited the Trafalgar Square meeting; nevertheless large contingents from various parts of the East End converged upon the Square and were repulsed by the police. In the mêlée a number of people were injured and John Burns and Cunningham Grahame were arrested, were tried at the Old Bailey, and were sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.

In such conditions of political excitement, the holding of one more Sunday morning meeting in London's East End might have meant very little. But the meeting in Canning Town, on the lovely sunny morning of Sunday, March 31, 1889, was


TO THE
GASWORKERS OF LEEDS!
ON SUNDAY NEXT
Sept. 15th, 1889,
A MASS
MEETING
of Gasworkers & General Labourers,
Will be held in
VICARS CROFT.
AT 3 O'CLOCK P.M. PROMPT.
MR G. THORNE,
Sec., of the National Union of
GASWORKERS & GENERAL LABOURERS,
and others will address the meeting.
A SECOND MEETING
Will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock, p.m. at the
Meeting Rooms, of the
SOCIALIST LEAGUE.
Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road,
GASWORKERS & OTHERS SHOULD MAKE A
point of attending both these Meetings.

Advertising Will Thorne's first visit to Leeds (note correction of spelling)

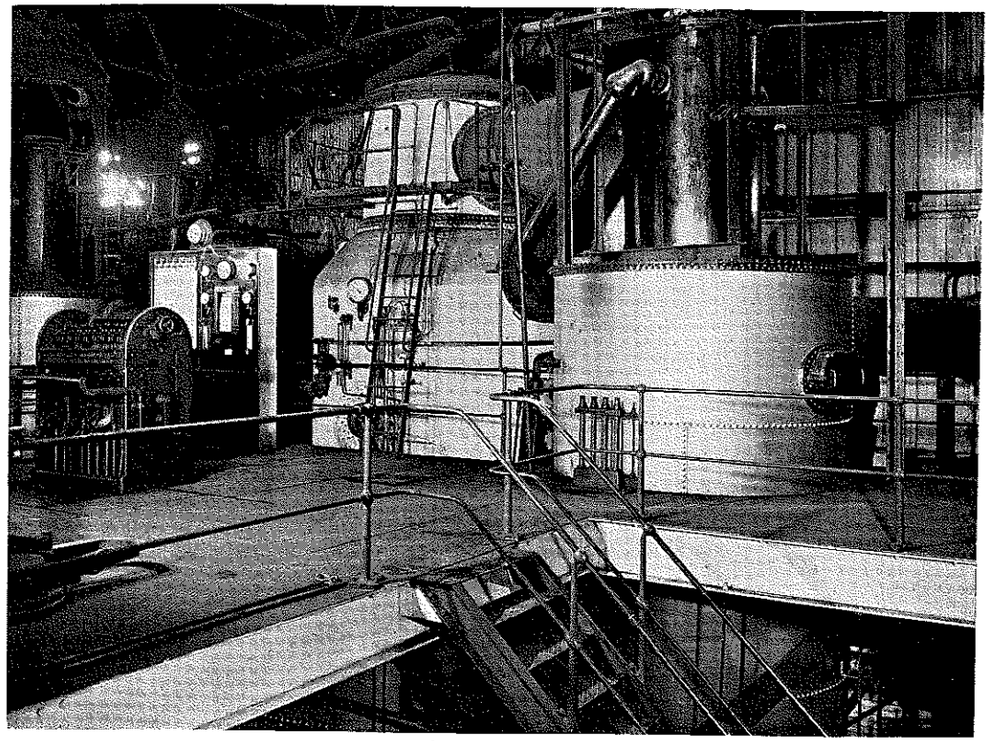

URGENT TO ALL MEMBERS.
No. 1 BRANCH BRISTOL GAS WORKERS
You are summoned to attend
MEETINGS
To be held at
NEW STREET BRITISH WORKMAN,
ST. JUDE'S, on
Monday Morning, at 10 a.m.,
And also in
Evening, at 6.30 p.m., on March 7th, 1892,
TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION
The New Scheme of Messrs. DIX, FIDDES, and IRVING.
Hoping the whole of the Members will attend.
By order of the Management Committee,
JAMES VICKERY, *Chairman.*
FREDK. TOWNSEND, *Secretary.*
Jenkins, Printer and Stationer, Rupert Street, Bristol.

Early propaganda activity of Bristol Gasworkers

not just another meeting, it was a demonstration of working people in revolt against intolerable terms of employment. The introduction of the 'Iron Man' at the Beckton Works had produced the same reaction that had taken place amongst the labourers in the Saltley Works at Birmingham. Lacking Trade Union organization, the Beckton workers received scant consideration from the foreman of the works. He would not listen to representations from the men when he had fixed the number of retorts that had to be charged and drawn for the day's work. He was intolerant of protests against the practice of 'speeding up' one shift against the other, and drove them to put extra charges in; he was indifferent to objections when men were required to put in extra charges before finishing work on Sunday morning—which meant that instead of finishing at 5.30 the men had to work through until ten or eleven o'clock without food.

So the time came when the need for union protection broke down all the hesitations and fears that prevented the establishment of effective organization amongst the gasworkers.

On that bright Sunday morning many processions converged upon the meeting place in Canning Town. Will Thorne's contingent from Barking was headed by a band (paid for out of his own pocket). Many of the workers in the processions had



Gasworks: Water gas plant

been working an eighteen-hour shift. In fact Will Thorne stated his belief at the meeting that the resident engineer at the gasworks had deliberately kept many working late because he knew the meeting had been arranged.

The voice of bitter experience spoke when Will Thorne told his fellow workers at that meeting:

'You will never get any alteration in any of your conditions or wages unless you join together and form a strong Trade Union.

'Then you will be able to have a voice and say how long you will work, and how much you will do for a day's work.

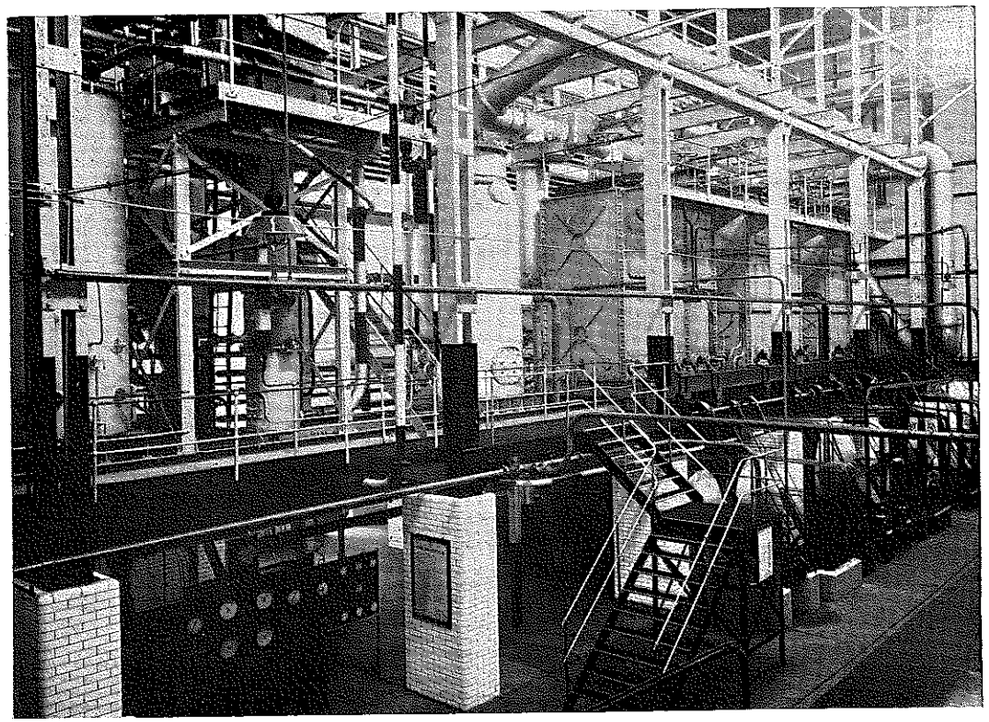
'In my opinion you have a perfect right to discuss all these matters with your employer through your chosen spokesman.

'All this can be altered if you will join together and form a powerful Union, not only for gasworkers, but one that will embrace all kinds of general labourers.

'I pledge my word that if you stand firm and don't waver, within six months we will claim and win the eight-hour day, a six-day week, and the abolition of the present slave-driving methods in operation all over the country.

'Now will you do this?'

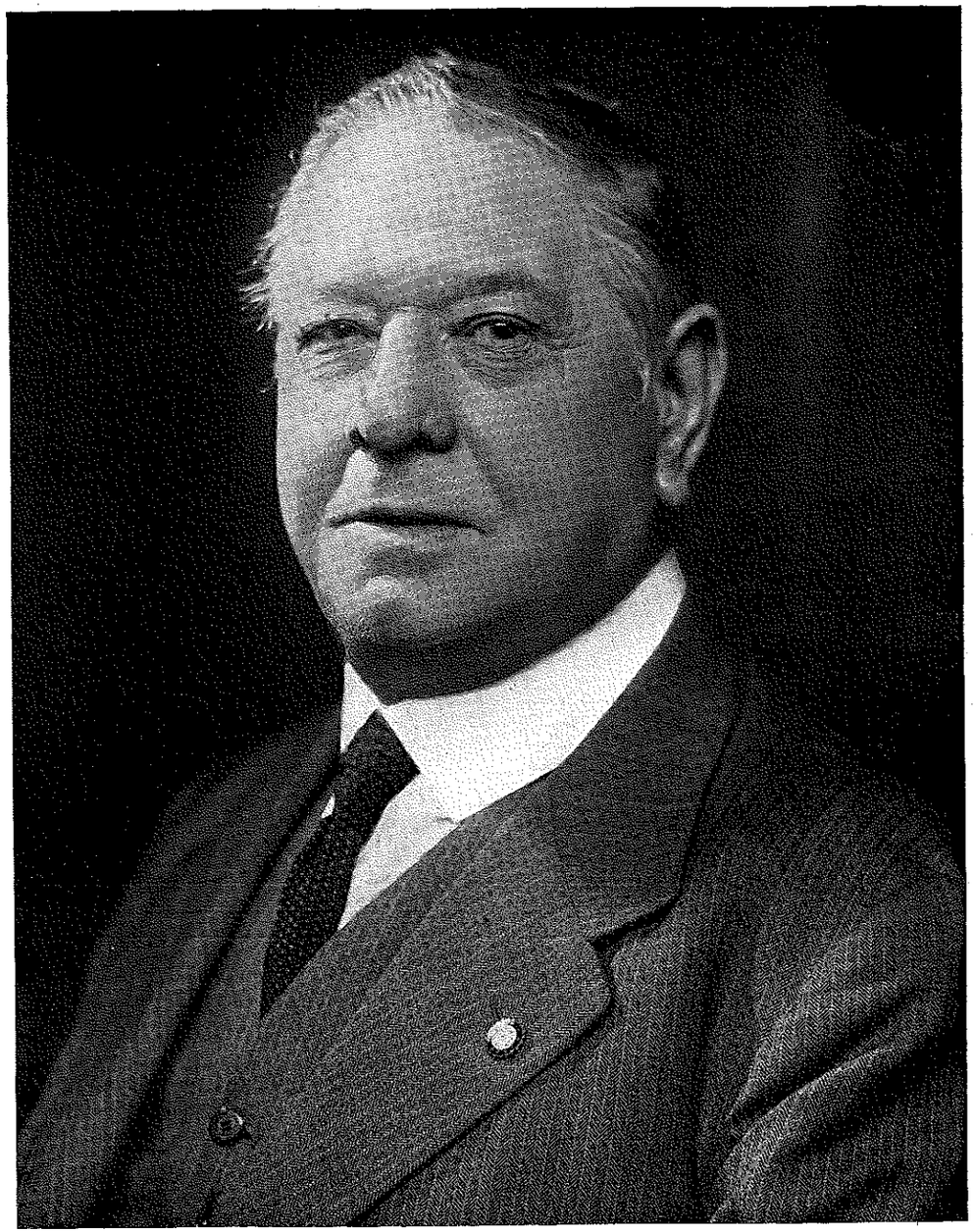
Eight hundred men joined the Union



Gasworks: Benzole plant

that morning. That was the meeting's answer to Will Thorne's question. His appeal had been reinforced by Ben Tillett, then the General Secretary of a very small Union of Tea Workers and General Labourers, to which Will Thorne and other pioneer members of our own Union belonged prior to this inaugural meeting. On the platform with Thorne and Tillett was another remarkable personality, Clem Edwards, later to become well known as a barrister, and as a militant journalist. Harry Hobart, a member of the highly-skilled union of printing trades craftsmen, the London Society of Compositors, and a member of the S.D.F., Jack Walsh, a gasworker, and George Angle, these were other speakers at this meeting. The last-named was chosen as secretary of the organizing committee which the meeting forthwith decided to elect.

The immediate enrolment of 800 recruits to the new Union was a remarkable demonstration of the spirit which prevailed. Each one of them had to pay an entrance fee of 1s. They paid it mostly in pennies. Buckets had to be found to collect these pence. Capable men were identified immediately for the task of organizing the Union.



WILL THORNE, C.B.E., *General Secretary* 1889–1934

Will Thorne and Ben Tillett constituted themselves a provisional committee to draft Union rules and frame a constitution. In this task they were assisted by William Byford, who had experience in Trade Union organization as secretary for many years of the Yorkshire Glass Bottle Workers' Association. He had come to live in London and had opened a temperance bar in the Barking Road: he became the Union's first Treasurer, and Will Thorne's father-in-law through the latter's second marriage. George Angle, Mark Hutchins, Dick Mansfield, Jack Mack, Jack Welsh, Owen Crummy, with others too numerous to name, were the backbone and ribs of the new Union.

Recruitment went on from that first Sunday morning meeting, even before contribution cards or anything else were printed. The first recorded minutes of the Union Executive refers, amongst other matters, to the authorization given to the Secretary to pay £3 5*s.* for the printing of contribution cards. Another payment for 4*s.* 6*d.* was to be paid to Jack Mack 'for the Woolwich Bill printing out of the Propar Gandy Fund'.

There was some difficulty with the Chief Registrar over the title of the new Union. It was proposed to register it under the name of the short-lived Amalgamated Association of Gasworkers of the United Kingdom established in 1887; but eventually it was agreed that it should be registered as 'The National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers of Great Britain and Ireland'.

Recruitment of the Union proceeded at a phenomenal pace; within a fortnight over 3,000 members joined up. Contributions were fixed at 2*d.* a week. The Union took as its slogan 'One Man, One Ticket and Every Man with a Ticket'. Will Thorne was elected General Secretary by ballot, in which he polled 2,296 against the 69 cast for Ben Tillett.

In justice to Ben Tillett it should be recorded that he accepted nomination because some members of the new Union thought he had a better knowledge of clerical work and bookkeeping, and because he had given so much help in starting the Union off. He did not really wish to turn from his self-imposed task of organizing the dockers and riverside warehousemen. New life was injected into his Tea Workers' Union by the rise of our Union. Their organization had fallen from about 800 to 300 members, and had almost flickered out. A strike at Tilbury Docks for a wage advance of 1*d.* from 4*d.* to 5*d.* an hour failed from lack of unity; but the Union still existed when the great Dock Strike began in the autumn of 1889 at the South-West India Dock.

Our own Union throve mightily without much notice. Between March and July in its first year the energy and enthusiasm, plus the organizing skill of its leaders, established 64 branches, 20 of them in the provinces, and 44 in London and there were between 15,000 and 20,000 members paying contributions. The Union was financially strong enough in its first half-year to pay £150 to members on strike for eight weeks at Silvertown, £50 to the dockers involved in the Great Strike, and £25 to men on strike in Shoeburyness. But the Union's first great victory—a notable one in the social history of this country—was won without a strike.

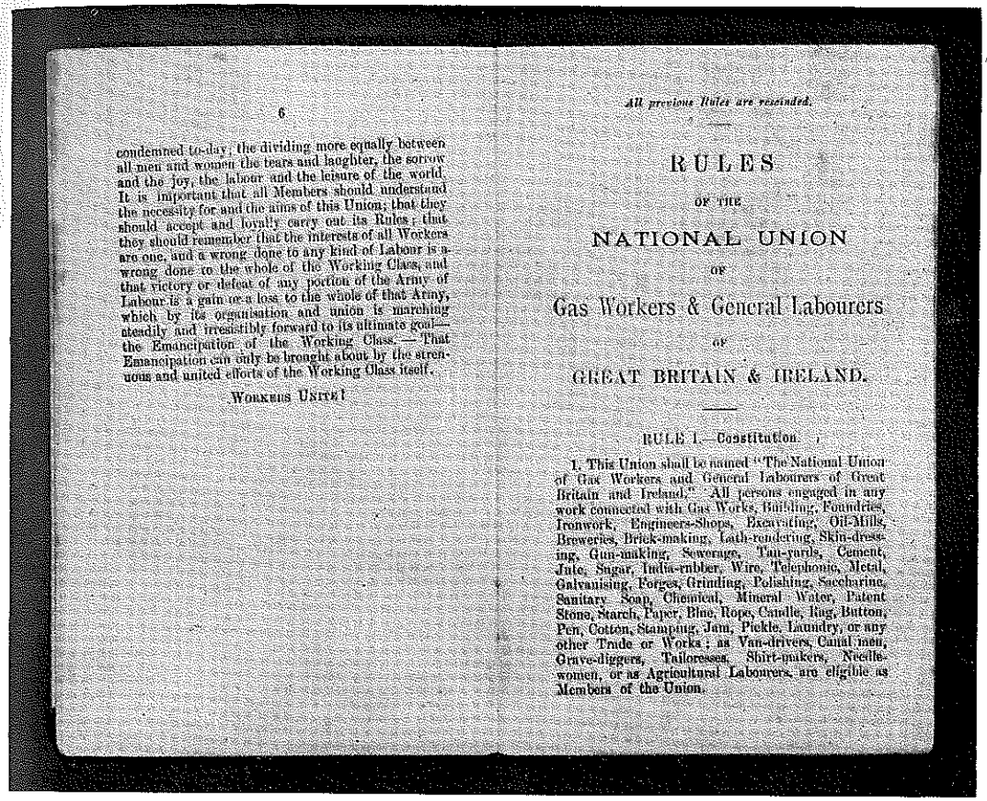
In his summons to the workers at the meeting which decided to form the Union, Will Thorne had pledged himself to win the eight-hour day and the six-day week within six months. The winning of the eight-

'Defence not Defiance' is the slogan on the back of the first card

hour day has been described by economic historians as a much more important event 'though less talked about' than the Great Dock Strike, or the strike of the London match girls which occurred at that time.

The twelve-hour day, one historian writes, had survived through inertia and the administrative difficulties of a three-shift system in a few continuous-process industries, of which gas was the most important. Unorganized workers could not insist upon the three-shift system. The Union built up by what the historian Professor J. H. Clapham in his *Economic History of Modern England* describes as 'one most able insider, Will Thorne', with the aid of outside Socialists, secured this reform with remarkable speed.

By June, that is three months after the Union was founded, the South Metropolitan Gas Company conceded the eight-hour day. Early in August the other principal companies came into line. As trade was good, the market rising, and some of the directors at least not unsympathetic, the shortened day was actually accompanied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condemned to-day, the dividing more equally between all men and women the tears and laughter, the sorrow and the joy, the labour and the leisure of the world. It is important that all Members should understand the necessity for and the aims of this Union; that they should accept and loyally carry out its Rules; that they should remember that the interests of all Workers are one, and a wrong done to any kind of Labour is a wrong done to the whole of the Working Class, and that victory or defeat of any portion of the Army of Labour is a gain or a loss to the whole of that Army, which by its organisation and union is marching steadily and irresistibly forward to its ultimate goal—the Emancipation of the Working Class.—That Emancipation can only be brought about by the strenuous and united efforts of the Working Class itself.

WORKERS UNITE!

All previous Rules are rescinded.

RULES

OF THE

NATIONAL UNION

OF

Gas Workers & General Labourers

OF

GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND.

RULE 1.—Constitution.

1. This Union shall be named "The National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers of Great Britain and Ireland." All persons engaged in any work connected with Gas Works, Building, Foundries, Ironwork, Engineers-Shops, Excavating, Oil-Mills, Breweries, Brick-making, Lath-rendering, Skin-dressing, Gum-making, Sewerage, Tan-yards, Cement, Jute, Sugar, India-rubber, Wire, Telephonic, Metal, Galvanising, Forges, Grinding, Polishing, Saccharine, Sanitary Soap, Chemical, Mineral Water, Patent Stone, Starch, Paper, Blue, Rope, Candle, Rag, Button, Pen, Cotton, Stamping, Jam, Pickle, Laundry, or any other Trade or Works; as Van-drivers, Canal men, Grave-diggers, Tailoresses, Shirt-makers, Needlewomen, or as Agricultural Labourers, are eligible as Members of the Union.

The first Book of Rules

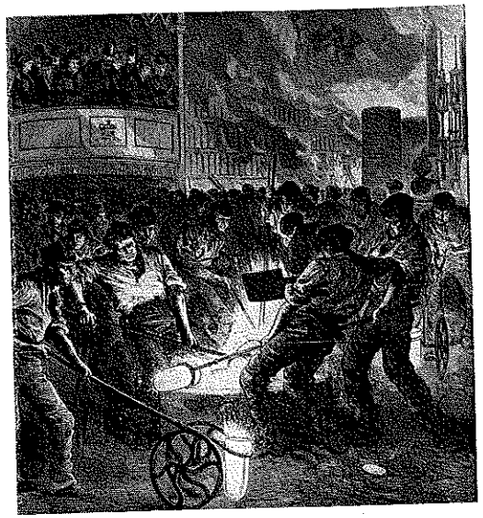
by an increased wage. It is true that the gas companies held that actually the carbonizing shift meant only six hours' work, although requiring twelve hours' duty: but they admitted that the twelve-hour shift at retorts was severe. It is true, too, that the South Metropolitan Gasworks at the end of the year reverted to the twelve-hour shift. There was a strike over this—but the victory had been won and the eight-hour day became general throughout the industry.

In his first half-yearly report and statement of accounts Will Thorne told the members that this victory was evidence of 'what can be done by combination'. The gasworkers, he said, had shown the workers of the world a grand example. It had to be admitted that the example of the Union inspired the members of other organizations, among them the dockers, but he challenged anybody to show where any of the working classes demonstrated more effectively than the gasworkers.

The Union, indeed, had become so powerful that the employers became

alarmed. After the eight-hour day was secured, attempts were made to weaken the Union. Among other methods of inducing men to leave it, a bonus scheme was introduced by the South Metropolitan Gas Company. It was a profit-sharing scheme under which the men were to receive one per cent on their year's wages for every penny reduction below 2*s.* 8*d.* per thousand cubic feet of gas. The Union opposed it for many reasons. One reason was that the bonus payments were to accumulate and bear interest at 4 per cent, but none could be withdrawn by the men except in case of death.

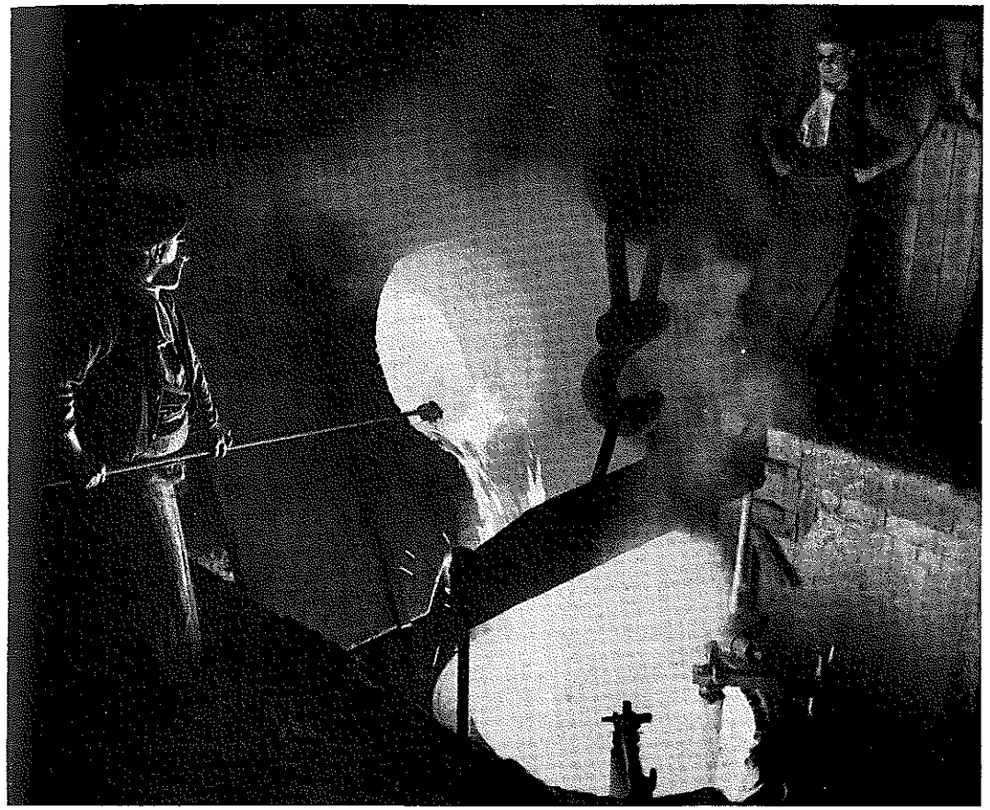
In Manchester another method of breaking up the Union was tried. The Gas Committee there offered better wages and conditions to all who would leave the Union. Both in London and in Manchester strikes were provoked by these manoeuvres. These involved the infant Union in great expenditure, but did not prevent the Union making headway.



Casting steel ingots 1875

Expansion

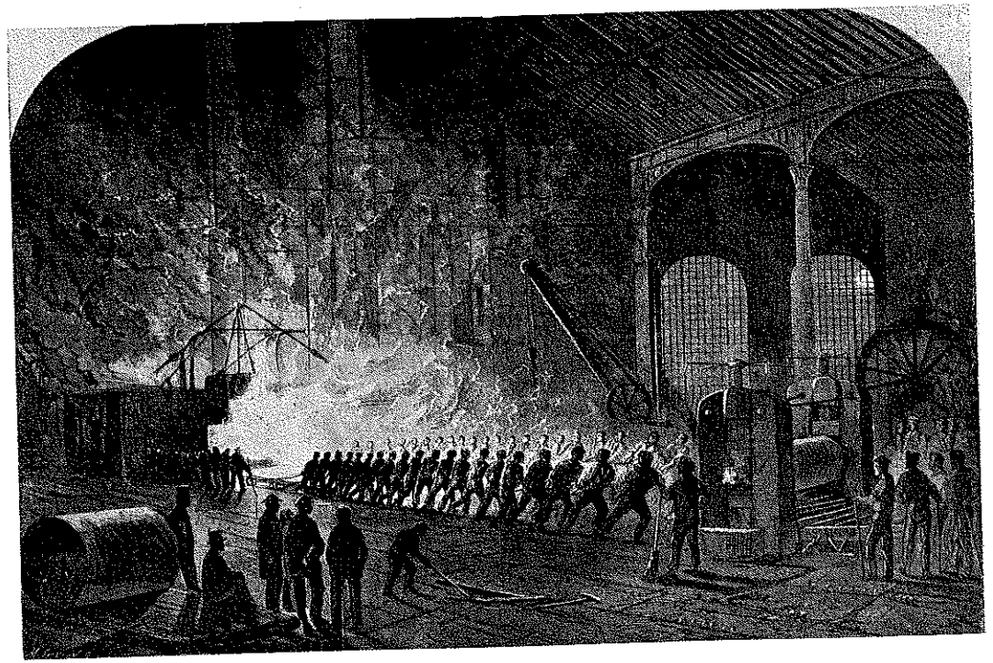
AN EFFICIENTLY organized Trade Union, when it is well established, achieves its purposes of defending and advancing the interests of its members by adapting itself to the course of trade and the growth of its own industry. This process of adaptation can be seen in the development of our own Union. The opportunity which the Union grasped so firmly to organize municipal workers arose out of the expansion of municipal gas enterprises. These grew very rapidly between 1890 and 1913. Between those years municipal gas plants increased by 80 per cent and private companies by 28 per cent. There was, however, in the same period a much greater increase in the number of consumers served by private gas companies as compared with the consumers of municipal gas; and, as might be expected, the gross takings of the private gas companies at the end of this period of years were nearly twice those of the municipalities. An important factor in the increased consumption of gas was the invention of the Welsbach incandescent gas burner which was patented four years before our Union was formed. For more than half a century people had been content with the comparatively low illumination of the open burner, and were hardly aware of the need for gas of a better quality. After the invention of the Welsbach gas mantle, old style gas was not much made. Gas fires, gas cookers, more useful than the primitive gas ring, and various types of gas water heaters came into use. In these new conditions governing consumption, the gas companies, both municipal and private, naturally throve.



Steelworks: Tapping a High Frequency Electric Furnace

Competition from electricity was only just beginning to make its impression upon the gas industry at the time our Union was formed. In the 'eighties the use of electricity for purposes of illumination and for driving machinery had hardly started. Lord Kelvin, a pioneer scientist, lit Cambridge College by electricity. An electric pump was working in an English coal pit. A pit in Scotland had been lighted by electricity. But the impact of a new competitor for the gas companies was signalled by the passage of two Acts of Parliament, in 1882 and 1886, called the Electric Lighting Acts. The more enlightened and enterprising of the gas companies then began to encourage research, to advertise, and to economize in production costs, by making profitable use of their by-products. Within a decade the by-products industries connected with gas manufacture provided the gas companies with greatly enlarged resources.

Another consequence, for our own Union, was the opening up of a new field

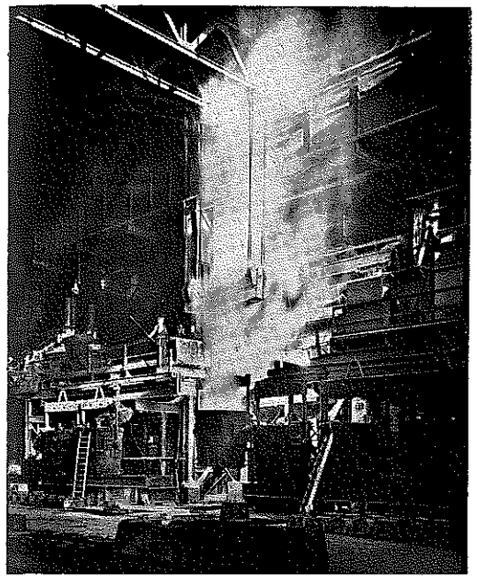


Rolling armour-plates 1861

of organization. It entered the chemical industry. In primitive gas making one of the most valuable by-products, ammonia, was wasted. Coke and tar were sold off cheaply, almost as a waste product too. But by the end of the decade in which our Union was founded, sulphate of ammonia was a standard product of the gasworks. It cost, in 1850, when it was called 'Ammonia water', 3*s*. for a thousand gallons. In 1889-1900 it was sold at 40*s*. Coke also rose in value—far more quickly than the coal from which it was derived. The value of tar fell—but by this time well-managed gasworks were extracting from the tar not only benzol and toluol, but many other by-products including substances used in cosmetics, medicine, and so on.

Industrial users of coal likewise found it profitable to utilize its own by-products. Thus, the great modern chemical industry, allied to the gas and mining industries on the one hand, and to the paint, soap, explosives and many other trades on the other, extended the Union's field of organization.

The 1907 census of production showed that in less than a score of years the output of coal-tar products of all sorts was valued at £3,860,000. Nearly two-thirds of this revenue was accounted for by the sale of pitch, tar-oil, and creosote. Coal-tar dyestuffs accounted for no more than £373,000 in the total, which was less than half of the value of our imports of dyes from Germany. Our export of the sulphate of ammonia produced by the gasworks' coke ovens in



Steelworks: Tapping a 25 ton Electric Arc Furnace

1911–13 was worth more than double the value of our imported synthetic dyes.

Another industrial development of the period was the rise of the heavy chemicals industry. Here again our Union found a wide field of organization. This industry was originally based upon the salt deposits of Cheshire. Its products were mainly soda and chlorine. It had lost its place in the world market. But a new and more adaptable salt industry was founded around Middlesbrough when the new ammonia process made it possible to produce a cheaper soda which competed with the prevailing production by the Le Blanc process. So the conversion of waste into wealth as the outcome of researches, inventions and new processes laid the foundations for a great range of industries. At their very centre our Union took its stand. Planted in the gasworks, its organization expanded as the heavy chemical and allied industries grew up around them.

With what exalted aims, yet with a hard-headed appreciation of methods and means, our Union entered upon its expansive phase is clearly indicated in the address that Union rules laid down as having to be read to members applying for admission to the Union. As this address was originally framed in 1889 it read:

> 'The principles of Trade Unionism in other directions have effected a great good. Every body of workmen combining for their mutual benefit have, in measured proportion to the individual and collective interest taken, been a power and social lever to raise the workers to a position of strength in an industrial sense. It has quickened and given life to feelings of a broader sympathy and brotherly trust, has increased the intelligence, elevated the moral tone, and brightened the life of all who, having regard for themselves and love for their fellows, being promoted to action by their conviction, have thrown in their lot in the battle of labour against capital. . . . You are asked to yield a cheerful obedience to all our laws and be guilty of no act tending to injure the harmonious working of our organization; to stand by your fellows in all disputes, that their interests may be your interests, and your interests theirs; to respect all in any place and at any time, while, at work, in discussion and assembly.'

In strong and shapely sentences the same message was conveyed to the members of the Union in the preamble to its Rules framed in 1892. After emphasizing that every form of labour was then organizing—

'even what is called "unskilled" labour; by far the most numerous, important and essential of all'—this preamble declares the immediate objects of the Union to be:

'The improvement of the material conditions of its members; the raising of them from mere beasts of burden to human beings; the making brighter and happier the home of every worker; the saving of little children from the hard, degrading bitter life to which they are condemned today; the dividing more equally between all men and women the tears and laughter, the sorrow and the joy, the labour and the leisure of the world.'

These eloquent and moving words have an accent of unforced sincerity. They are the words of men who kept their feet upon the ground; men who were not swept away by the tide of enthusiasm which carried scores of thousands of general workers into the Union. In this preamble to the Union Rules it was insisted that every member should accept the obligations of membership with full knowledge of what membership implied:

'It is important that all members should understand the necessity for and the aims of this Union; that they should accept and loyally carry out its Rules; that they should remember that the interests of all workers are one, and a wrong done to any kind of Labour is a wrong done to the whole of the working class, and that victory or defeat of any portion of the army of Labour is a gain or a loss to the whole of that army which, by its organization and union, is marching steadily and irresistibly forward to its ultimate goal—the emancipation of the working class.'

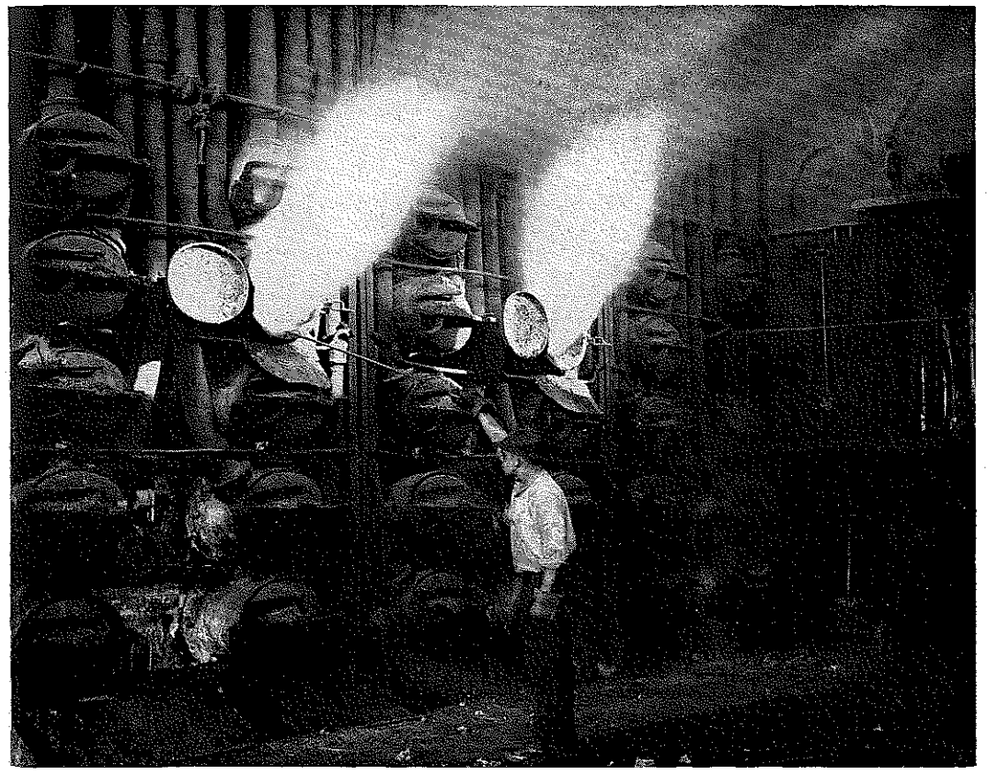
These words speak faith in the brotherhood of man.

Pioneers

AMONG Will Thorne's contemporaries in the early days of the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers were men like J. R. Clynes, Arthur Hayday and Pete Curran who gave yeoman service to the movement.

John Clynes joined the Union soon after its formation, when he was invited by some labourers in Oldham to assist them in forming a local branch. He was then a piecer in one of the cotton mills, and had helped to found a union of piecers. The Branch of the Union which he formed made him its chairman, and soon after (in 1892) he became District Organizer for the Union and later its Lancashire District Secretary.

Arthur Hayday joined the Union soon after its formation, being then 20 years old, with family connections that made him at home at West Ham. His father worked there as a labourer. As one of a family of 14 children Arthur Hayday started work at the age of nine or ten, and before he was out of his teens had earned wages as a kitchen boy, as a labourer, as a stoker on an Atlantic liner. After he joined the Union he became a leading figure in the Trade Union and political Labour Movement in West Ham, an organizer for the London District, Secretary of the local Trades Council, and an Alderman of the West Ham Corporation. Like Pete Curran he carried on a vigorous propaganda for Trade Unionism among the general workers, scattered over an area extending as far south as Plymouth, and as far north as Derby and Nottingham. On the formation of the Midland Area of the Union, as a separate district for organizing purposes, he became the District Secretary, having charge of the interests of about 3,000 members of the Union in 15 branches.

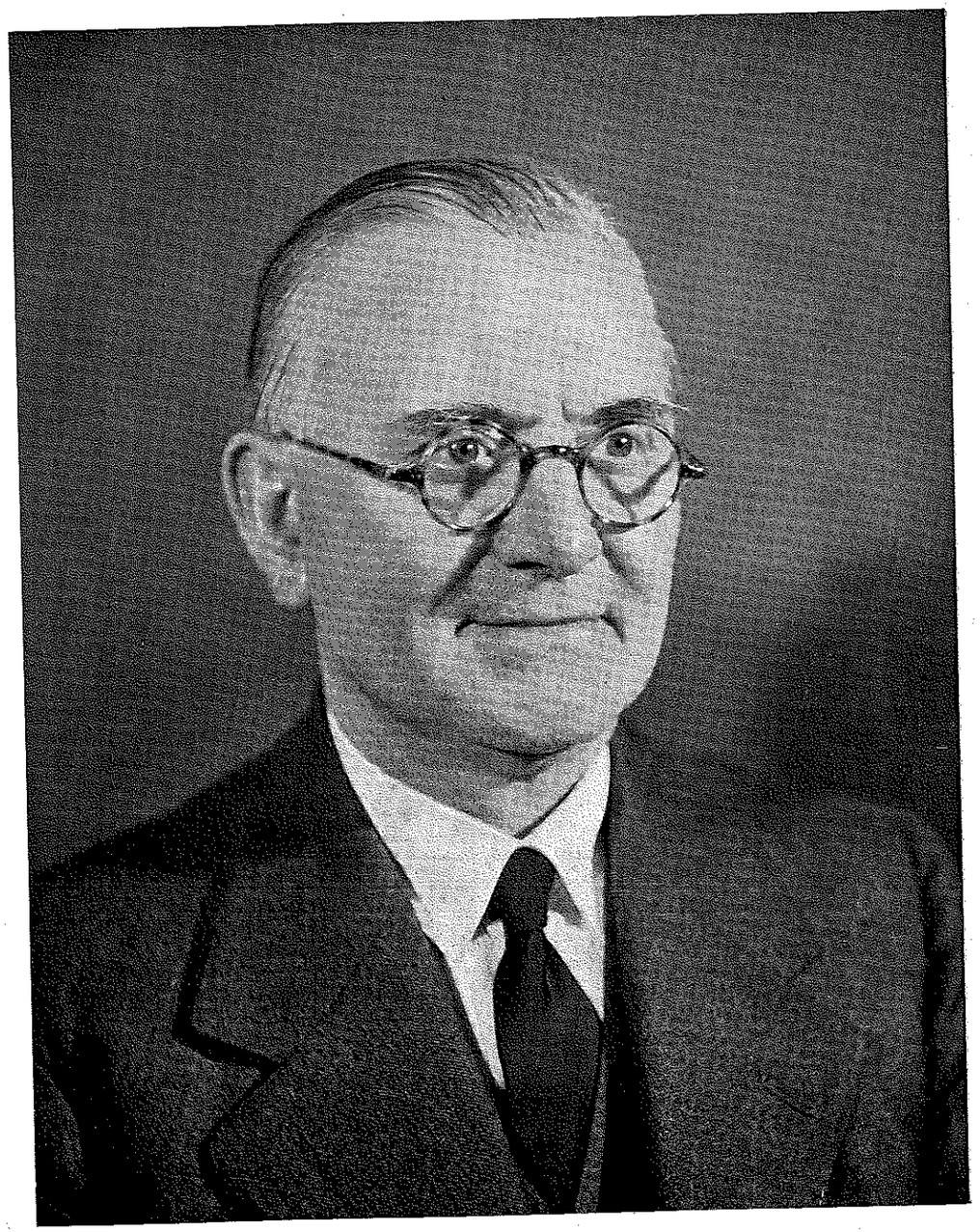


Gasworks: Retort House

Pete Curran had joined the Union when he was working in the Silvertown rubber works, driving a steam hammer on the night shift. Later he became an organizer of the Union, and afterwards the District Secretary for the West of England, with headquarters in Plymouth.

A little later in our history came Jack Jones, who was identified for all his active life with the work of the Union. He was a national officer for many years, dating his association with the Union in this capacity from the year 1918—which was the year in which he also became Member of Parliament for Silvertown. Around Jack Jones, as Trade Union official and Parliamentarian, there has grown up a legend of his skill and experience in the work of Socialist and Trade Union propaganda. Endless stories are told of his sharp tongue and sharper wits in dealing with hecklers, in the House of Commons, in conference halls, and in the open air.

There were other outstanding personali-



CHAS. DUKES, C.B.E., *General Secretary* 1934–1946

ties who gave exceptional service to the movement—like Will Sherwood, who held for many years a foremost place as President of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions, and found time and energy for numerous Government Committees and other bodies, as well as the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. Will Sherwood was a permanent official in the Northern District at the beginning of the present century. He came up to the Union's head office a score of years later to undertake duties of a national character, having established his reputation as an able negotiator and administrator in the north.

Closely associated, too, with the organization was George Dean, one of the first Labour Members of the East Ham Borough Council. He had the distinction of becoming Mayor of the Borough when he was still the only Labour member, and he was actively associated with the Corporation for nearly a generation. Few men in Local Government had anything like his expert knowledge of municipal matters. He specialized in the study of Local Government superannuation schemes, and his experience and skill were of great value to the Union in dealing with cases before courts of arbitration and similar tribunals.

Lancashire District

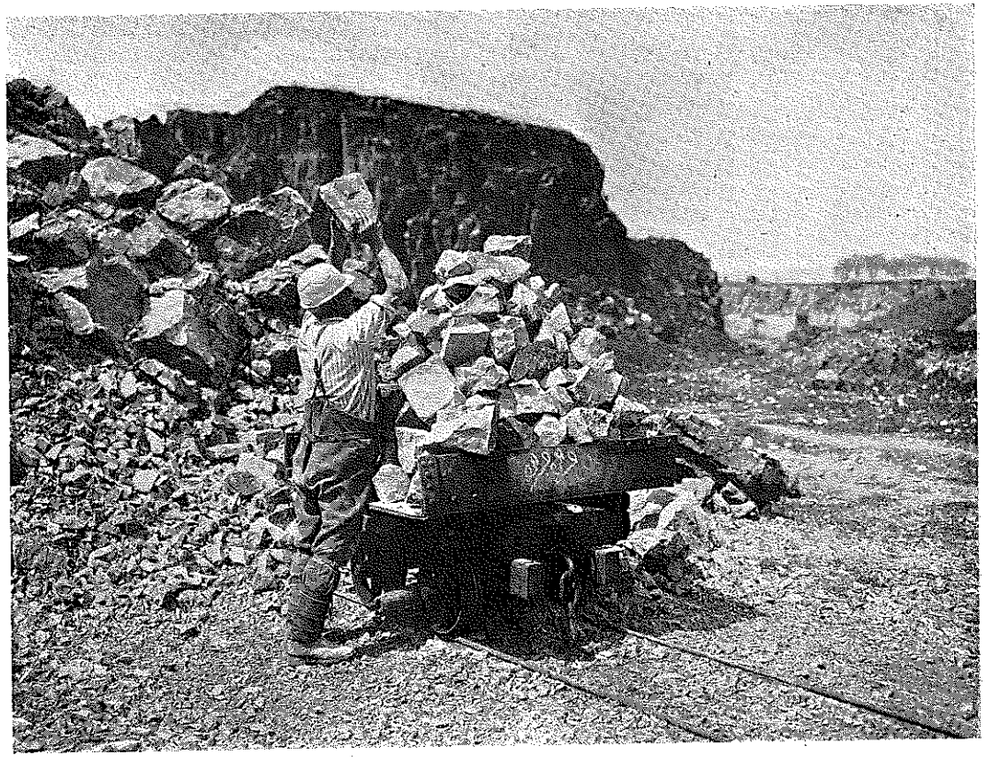
NO UNION offers a more striking example of spontaneous and almost unplanned growth than our own. Its development was spontaneous and unplanned in the sense that it was at first not directed from a unifying national centre. How the organization spread is revealed in the records of the various districts which came into existence by local initiative.

Thus, a few months after the Union was formed in London, a Labour journal in Lancashire carried an advertisement stating that a Gasworkers' Union had been started by Will Thorne in London. The notice attracted the attention of a worker in Lancashire, Tom Prince. He belonged to the Manchester and Salford Brickmakers' Society. He began at once to form a branch in the Lancashire District.

In the growth of the Lancashire District can be seen the process by which the Union gained strength through amalgamation. There was an amalgamation during the war years, 1914–18, with the Machine and General Workers' Union of Bolton. It brought into our Union's administration Robert Tothill, who represented Bolton in Parliament. In the same period there was an amalgamation with the British Labour Amalgamation, whose general secretary, Ald. Tom Fox, likewise gave his talents to the building up of our Union. He, too, achieved public eminence through his Union connections, becoming by unanimous election the first Labour Lord Mayor of Manchester, winning also a seat in Parliament, and the chairmanship of the National Executive of the Labour Party in 1914.

Other amalgamations in the Lancashire District broadened our Union by the incorporation of a small Manchester Union of Gassers, Doublers, Winders and Kindred Trades, and a local union of Clay Tobacco Pipe Makers. The former of these two bodies had the distinction of a woman, Mrs Grundy, serving as its Secretary, and she became an active officer of our Union on the District Organizing Staff.

The Union's national leaders supple-

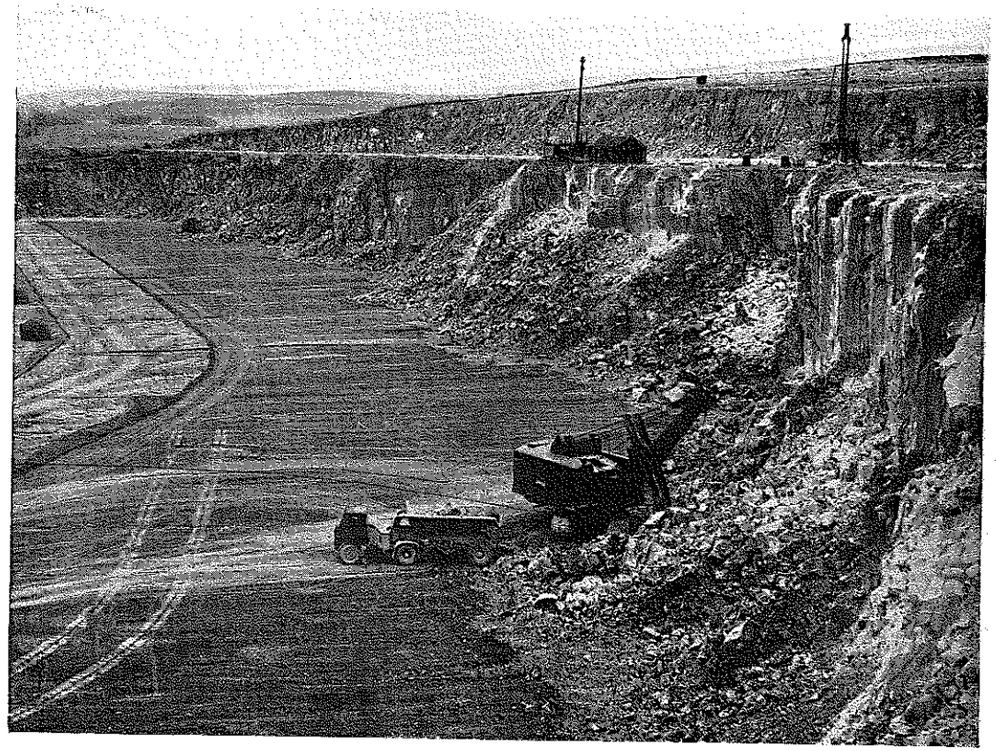


I.C.I. Quarries, Buxton: Loading 1935

mented by their own organizing activities in all parts of the country the initiative of our local people in promoting district amalgamations. A Union of quarry workers sprang into existence in the Buxton quarries. It felt the need of attachment to a powerful national Union. An approach was made to Will Thorne who sent along Pete Curran and J. R. Clynes to a meeting of the Buxton quarrymen. At this meeting it was unanimously resolved to come over lock, stock and barrel to our Union, and Tom Hartle, who had acted as secretary, became another valuable member of the organizing staff of the Lancashire District.

J. R. Clynes held the position of Lancashire District Secretary for nearly thirty years (1889–1918), relinquishing it only upon his becoming a member of the Wartime (1914–18) Government as Food Controller. He was followed in the District Secretaryship by Fleming Eccles, who held the position until his death in 1925. Thereupon Charles Dukes was elected to the position, relinquishing it only to succeed Will Thorne in the general secretaryship on the latter's retirement in 1934.

From 1934 until his retirement in 1943



I.C.I. Quarries, Buxton: Loading 1948

the District Secretaryship was held by Arthur Seabury and he was succeeded by Tom Eccles the present District Secretary.

Arthur Seabury was appointed organizer in 1919, prior to which he had seen much service in the Union, principally in the Warrington branch.

At the age of 16 he was indentured to the coopering trade, and it was not long before he successfully led a strike of apprentices. He became a collecting steward in the Union in 1908, and he played a big part, in conjunction with the late Bros Dukes and Harrison, in the formation of the Warrington branch.

During the period 1915 to 1934 he occupied official positions in the Warrington Trades Council, and at one time acted as the secretary. In a varied political career he was a member of Warrington Council for twelve years. He served on the National Executive of the Union from June 1934 until his retirement in 1943.

Tom Eccles has spent the whole of his working life in the Union, having served under each of the four preceding District Secretaries, firstly on the clerical staff and later as an organizer.

T. ECCLES, J.P., *Lancashire District Secretary*

He was absent during the period of the 1914–1918 War in the course of which he was badly wounded.

The valuable knowledge he gained on the administrative side, particularly in the sphere of Workmen's Compensation, has proved of inestimable value to the District since he became the Chief Officer.

He has played his part in Local Government, serving for a period as a Borough Councillor at Stockport.

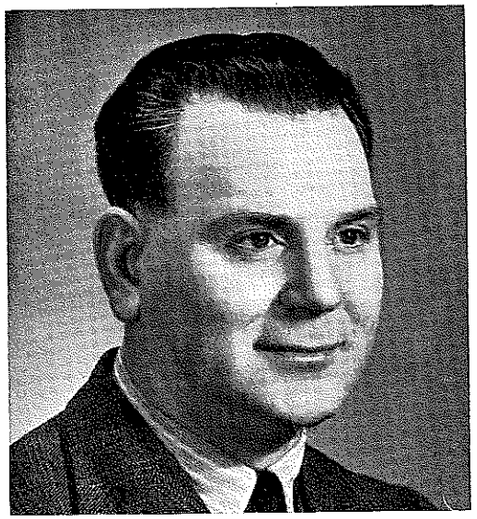
He is a member of the National Executive of the Union and for some time was Secretary of the Workers' Side of the Electricity N.J.I.C.

London District

THE PICTURE of Trade Union organization presented by the records of the early days in many of the districts is that of numerous local Unions, living an independent and somewhat turbulent life of their own. Quite a number could describe themselves as branches of the Union, formed under the inspiration of the London Movement amongst the general workers in 1889. Others originated spontaneously under the stress of local conditions, maintaining a more or less tenuous connection with other Unions of general workers, which were developing simultaneously on a regional basis.

District organization had very shadowy geographical boundaries in the earlier years. A separate district was not formed even for London before 1909. Yet the Union spread very rapidly within the Greater London area for a score of years preceding the establishment of the London District. Not until 1937 was it decided to carve out of the London District a separate Southern District comprising London south of the Thames, Berkshire, Cornwall, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Wiltshire, Devonshire and Somersetshire, and also the Channel Islands.

At one time the territory of the London District was the largest in the country. It spread from Great Yarmouth on the East Coast, right across the South and Southwest of England, down to the extreme west of Falmouth in Cornwall. Much of the burden of organization fell then upon the broad shoulders of S. J. Wright, who held the position of District Secretary from 1909 to 1937. He was undoubtedly an outstanding personality and many will remember his thoroughness in handling difficult negotiations and that his chief concern always was to obtain the best terms possible for those he represented. He was ably seconded by many active members who served as branch secretaries, chairmen, col-



J. COOPER, *Southern District Secretary, Acting London District Secretary*

lectors and committee men. Merely to record their names would fill pages. The Union owes much to such men as H. Baker, who rose from the ranks to be a branch secretary in the London District and later an official of the Union. For many years the chairman of the London District was A. P. Borgia, who had become Secretary of the King's Cross branch within a year of his joining the Union (in 1890), and who held that post until he died. Arthur Whiting, C. E. Knight, R. H. Smith, A. H. Keeley, T. Wooder, W. H. Martin, E. Edwards, A. Winfield, G. Deighton—these are the remembered names of men who gave unstinted effort to the building up of the Union organization in the London District.

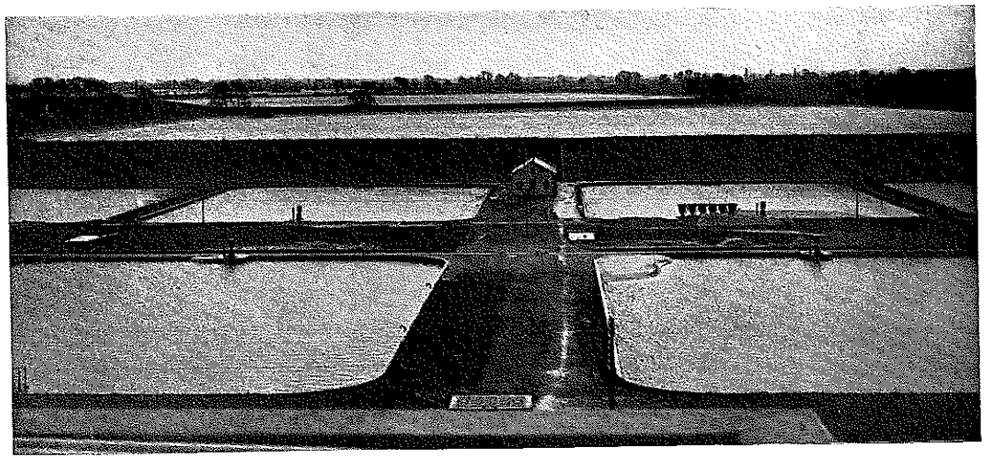
In July 1937, Bro E. V. Watering was elected Secretary of the newly-formed London District. He had been elected as an official in 1920 and after serving in London for a few months he worked in the Eastern Counties until he was transferred to Plymouth in 1931, where he remained for six years.

After a lifetime of service he retired in 1948, and at the time of writing this story Bro J. Cooper is the acting London District Secretary.

Liverpool District

AMONGST THE general workers in the Liverpool District, the nucleus organization which was created in the first decade of the Union's history spread rapidly to the Scaling and Ship-repairing industries, Seed Crushing, Chemical, Sugar, Glass, and other industries of Merseyside and surrounding areas. In the first five years of the present century the Union established about a dozen branches with some 1,300 members, and it was in 1905 that T. Williamson, sen., was elected official delegate of the Merseyside District of the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, succeeding A. McEwen.

Organizing work in those days was carried on under great difficulties, there being a lack of office accommodation and clerical assistance, and organization was made more difficult on account of the existing low-level wages and working conditions. It was a great achievement, for example, to raise weekly wages from 18*s.* to 25*s.* and to establish a code of working rules for the first time in the Scaling and Ship-repairing industries. Organization proceeded steadily, however, up to the outbreak of the First World War, and extended geographically, with



Water supply: Filter Beds and Reservoirs

Liverpool as a centre, to Bootle, Birkenhead, Wallasey, St Helens, Widnes, Runcorn, Chester, and down to North Wales; linking up with Belfast, Northern Ireland, where a separate district organization of the N.A.U.L. had been established.

During the First World War, membership of the district expanded considerably and took in the Match industry, Safemakers, and Municipal Employees, which necessitated the election of assistant district organizers. At the end of the First World War the Merseyside District of the N.A.U.L. was one of the largest of that Union.

The Municipal Employees' Association began to organize the Corporation workers of Liverpool in June 1917, in face of fierce opposition from the officials of the Corporation and keen rivalry of other trade unions. With the support of the Liverpool Trades and Labour Council, however, the Municipal Employees' Association rapidly made headway, and by the end of the year had organized six branches in the City of Liverpool. Within those few months a claim was made for a war bonus of 20*s.* a week for Corporation employees, which was countered by an offer of 12*s.* to 16*s.* a week from the Corporation. This was refused and the dispute was referred to arbitration set up by the Committee on Production. The result of the arbitration was the granting of the full increase of 20*s.* a week to all classes of workmen in the Corporation's employ.

It was at this time that a separate District in Liverpool was inaugurated by the M.E.A. under the District Secretaryship of W. J. Daniels. Great progress had been made by the time the District organization was merged with that of the National Union of General Workers and the National Amalgamated Union of Labour upon the amalgamation in 1924.

From then until 1936 the Liverpool District was under the leadership of T. Williamson, sen. He was succeeded by A. Basnett, the present District Secretary.

Bro Basnett joined the Union in 1917

A. BASNETT, J.P., *Liverpool District Secretary*

when he was employed in the gas industry. About that time he and a number of his workmates decided to join a trade union, and a deputation met the management to discuss anomalies. The attitude of the management to this step was looked upon as a threat, but had the effect of rallying all the departments to trade unionism and achieving one hundred per cent organization which still remains at this works to this day.

Bro Basnett was elected shop steward in 1917, and branch chairman in 1919. In 1921 he was appointed Branch Secretary. He served as a member of the Liverpool District Committee and District Council and was a member also of the General Council and National Executive Committee. In 1933 he was appointed as a full-time branch secretary and an organizer in 1934.

Prior to 1936 there was a separate District of the Union in Northern Ireland. The N.A.U.L. gained a foothold in Belfast as early as 1890, when the first branch was formed. Membership increased to nearly two thousand by 1894, and from that time organization expanded to other towns in Northern Ireland.

The M.E.A. began organization in the same territory soon after the 1914-1918 war, and made substantial headway under the District Secretaryship of John Malcolm. In 1924, when the District was merged, John Malcolm seceded the District Secretaryship to Sam Bradley, who since 1919 had been Official Delegate of the N.A.U.L.

Under the reorganization scheme of 1936, Ireland ceased to be a separate District, and became part of the Liverpool, North Wales and Irish District.

Midland and East Coast

THE UNION'S organization in the Midland and East Coast District developed under vigorous local leadership such as was given by Arthur Hayday, when he was released from duty as London District Organizer to take over the Secretaryship of the District. Our Union in this district owes its origin to the gas-workers in Nottingham, who formed a branch under the secretaryship of William Lane. He held the position for more than forty years.

Many bitter battles had to be fought in this region before the Union was recognized. Its pioneers had to contend with violent hostility: and they had to overcome the apathy of workers whose wages at the time barely sufficed to keep body and soul together. There is on record an appeal that Arthur Hayday made to workers in Nottingham who (in 1913) were employed by a Government contractor at a wage of 17*s.* 3½*d.* a week. When he asked them

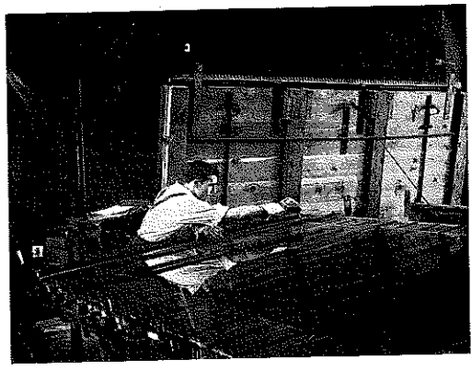
why they did not organize, they said they were too poor. He said 'Will you join the Union if, in a month, it gets your wages raised by 2*s.* a week?' They answered that they were afraid to become associated in any way with the Union which had Arthur Hayday as its District Secretary. This spirit of hostility and political timidity was overcome in due course. Organization spread from the gas-workers to the labourers in the engineering industry, to the brewery workers, cotton workers, and a variety of other trades.

The extension of this District linked it geographically with the East Coast, until a separate district was formed there early in the present century with W. Eyre as District Secretary. District organizations in those expansive phases of the Union's history overlapped one another. Branches of our Union existed, for example, in Hull, before the East Coast District was formed.

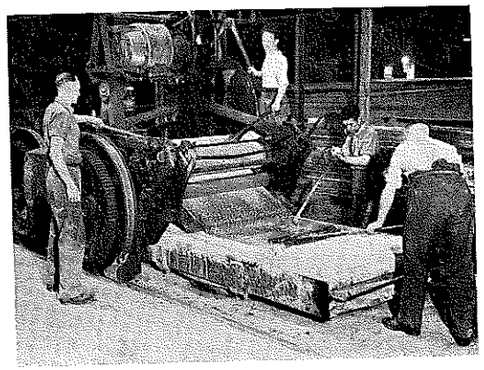
The Hull gas-workers started a branch of the Union within a few months of its inauguration in 1889, but did not begin to make real progress until they achieved their first local amalgamation in 1896, with the membership of the Hull and District Labour Union. Vigorous and enterprising trade unionists thus allied themselves with our Union, including the late Alderman R. H. Farrah, who became District Secretary, after the amalgamation of the small Union he had helped to build. Another active member was Brother Tobieson who was elected Secretary of the first branch of the Union in Hull.

Bro Farrah continued as District Secretary until his death in 1932 when he was succeeded by Bro Tom Kerry.

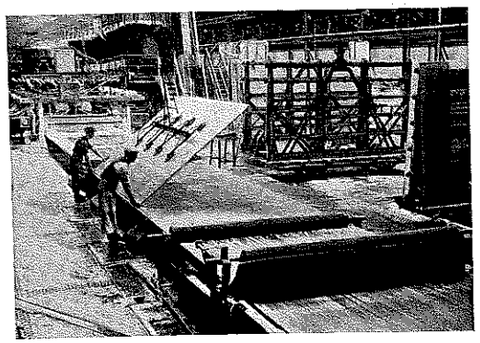
Bro T. W. Kerry was employed in the engineering industry when he joined our Lincoln Boiler Shop Workers Branch in



Glass making: Trimming edges of flat drawn sheet



Glass making: A rolling-machine



Glass making: Grinding and polishing plate glass

1906. After holding various branch positions he became full-time secretary of the Lincoln area in 1912.

Early in 1920 he was elected District Organizer for the East Coast District. At that time he was a member of the Lincoln Board of Guardians, and also President of the Lincoln and District Trades Council.

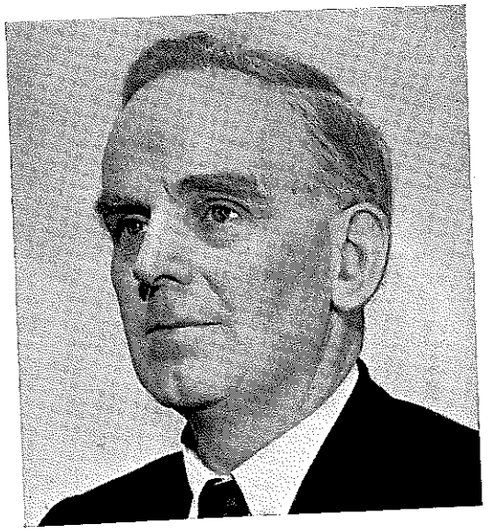
During May 1923, he took up residence in Hull, where he carried out his duties as a District Organizer until the death of his chief (Ald. R. H. Farrah) in 1933, when he was elected to the position of District Secretary.

Whilst living in Hull he took an active part in public affairs and after serving for a time as councillor, he was elected to the aldermanic bench, on which he remained until he left for Nottingham. This move was made in consequence of the reorganization scheme under which Bro Kerry became responsible for the larger district which was created by the merging of the Midland and East Coast Districts. He continued his public duties in Nottingham, and for a time was a member of the City Council.

At the Congress in July 1945 he succeeded Bro Fred Marshall, M.P., as Chairman of the Union, which position he retained until he retired from Union service in 1948. His place as Midland and East Coast District Secretary was taken over by Bro Matt Lowe, and as Union Chairman he was followed by Bro W. E. Hopkin, O.B.E.

Bro Matt Lowe became an official of the Union in 1931, and during the ten years prior to commencing his duties as District Secretary he was responsible for the legal work in the District.

He has been active in the Derby Trades Council, and the Derby Labour Party. Of both these bodies he has been chairman and



M. LOWE, *Midland District Secretary*

member of the executive for a number of years. He has been a member of the Derby Town Council continuously since January 1929.

Birmingham and West Midlands

EACH DISTRICT has its honoured names of pioneers and organizers of the Union. As with other Districts, local amalgamations in Birmingham brought into the service of the Union many able and vigorous men and women.

Sam Larkin, who joined the Union in 1889 whilst employed as a bricklayer's labourer, immediately took an active part in organizing the various industries in and around that great city. When a separate

Local Authority: Collection of waste food

District was formed in Birmingham in 1891 he became the first District Secretary, in which office he served until his death in 1910.

The Amalgamated Society of Gas-Workers, Brickmakers and General Labourers was founded in 1889, and was very active in the Birmingham area for over 25 years. In 1915 it joined forces with the Birmingham District Municipal Employees' Association and in 1921 the combined organization became part of the National Union of General Workers.

Birmingham was the centre of a strike, called by the National Federation of Women Workers in 1911, which startled the whole country by exposing the appalling conditions in the Chain Trade under which women were working. The women in the Hollow-ware Trade also struck in the following year. Their hours of labour were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a miserable wage of between 5*s.* and 6*s.* a week. The National Federation of Women Workers joined forces with the National Union of General Workers in 1921.

Space does not permit the full story of the part Birmingham has played in the

Local Authority: Sorting of waste food

organized Trade Union struggle. From 1910 to 1920 the office of District Secretary was filled by Joseph Firth and he was succeeded by Bro T. Hurley who had the distinction during his long period of service of never missing a meeting of the District Committee, District Council or General Council up to his retirement in 1937. Bro J. C. Mason, who had been an Organizer since 1913 succeeded Bro Hurley.

Bro Geo. Matthews became District Secretary in January 1941. Prior to his election as a District Organizer in 1934 he had a very wide experience in the gas industry. He had taken an active part in Union affairs since 1919, particularly in the city of his birth, Burton-on-Trent, where he was Chairman of the No. 1 Branch, and Secretary of the Divisional Labour Party, and Secretary of the Trades Council. In 1931 he was elected District Chairman. For many years he was, and still is, a very active member of the Co-operative movement.

Bro Matthews left the Union's service in February 1949, to become Deputy Chairman of the West Midlands Region of the Gas Board, and his position as District

W. PERRINS, M.P.
Birmingham District Secretary

Secretary was taken over by Bro Wesley Perrins, M.P.

Bro Perrins began to play a part in the Trade Union Movement as soon as he entered industry. In 1935 he acted as Secretary for several of our branches in the Black Country, and he was also part-time Secretary of our Approved Society in that area. His service as an officer started in 1936.

He was elected a member of his local Town Council in 1928, which membership remained unbroken until he resigned in 1946. He was elected Member of Parliament for the Yardley Division in 1945.

Southern District

MENTION HAS been made on an earlier page of the formation of the Southern District in 1936. This, therefore, is the youngest District of the Union, although organization on the south side of the Thames began as early as 1889 when Branches were established at Battersea, Bromley (Kent), Croydon, Deptford, Greenwich (East and West), Kingston, Nine Elms, Old Kent Road, Plumstead, Richmond, Rotherhithe, Sydenham, Wandsworth and Woolwich.

The first Officer appointed for the Southern Counties was Bro G. H. Young. He became a District Organizer in 1911, and worked from an office at Southampton. His area comprised most of the Branches situated in Southampton, and as far west as Cornwall.

Several Unions had established themselves in Southern England before the close of the last century, among them the Newington Vestry Employees' Society, later known as the Southwark Employees' Labour Union, and the L.C.C. Employees' Protection Society, which embraced a number of very small organizations in other vestries, which amalgamated to form the Municipal Employees' Association in 1894.

The National Amalgamated Union of Labour reached this part of the country in 1890 when its first Branch in the Metropolitan area was opened in Battersea with T. E. Smith as the first Branch Secretary. He later became a full-time official and operated from Gravesend as the Organizer responsible for the London, Thames and Medway area of the N.A.U.L.

There were also numerous localized organizations in Municipal and National Government such as the Government Dockyard Workers on the South and South-East Coast. Such small Unions as the Chatham Government Labourers' Union, formed in 1889, and similar Unions in

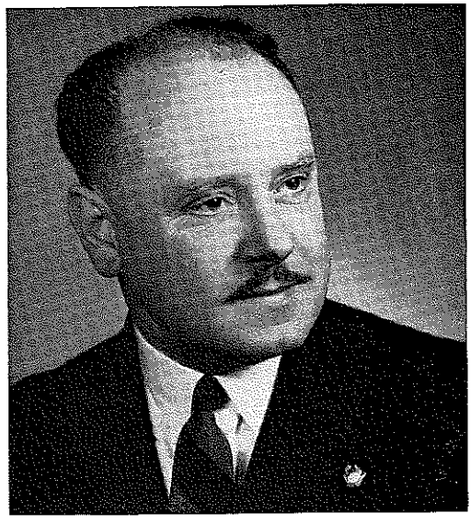
Road making: Bulldozer levelling site

Sheerness, Devonport and other Government Dockyards, found mutual support by creating the Federated Council of Government Employees. All of these organizations ultimately came into our own Union.

Bro T. Cochrane was the first District Secretary of the newly-formed Southern District. Prior to the amalgamation in 1924 he was a District Secretary in the M.E.A., first in Lancashire and afterwards in what was known as the Southern District of the M.E.A. Following the amalgamation, he was attached to the London District as Organizer working at Brighton.

He was appointed as a National Industrial Officer in 1935, and Southern District Secretary in 1936. After a period as the Southern District Secretary he returned to Head Office as a National Industrial Officer and his place was taken by Bro J. Cooper.

Bro Cooper entered the Lancashire District office in 1928 as a clerk. His particular duties at that time were concerned with Workmen's Compensation, and his other



A. W. INMAN
Acting Southern District Secretary

administrative work included the periodical audit of branch books. In 1933 he was appointed as a District Organizer and remained in Lancashire where his chief interests were concerned with our membership in the municipal service. In November 1936 he was elected to the Manchester City Council which was the first Labour success in that Ward. In August 1942 he was appointed a National Industrial Officer and succeeded Bro T. Cochrane as Southern District Secretary in 1944.

As previously mentioned, following Bro Watering's retirement, Bro J. Cooper took charge of the London District and Bro A. W. Inman became the Acting District Secretary of the Southern District.

Commencing with a membership of about 40,000 the District has grown to 92,000 to become one of the four largest Districts in the Union.

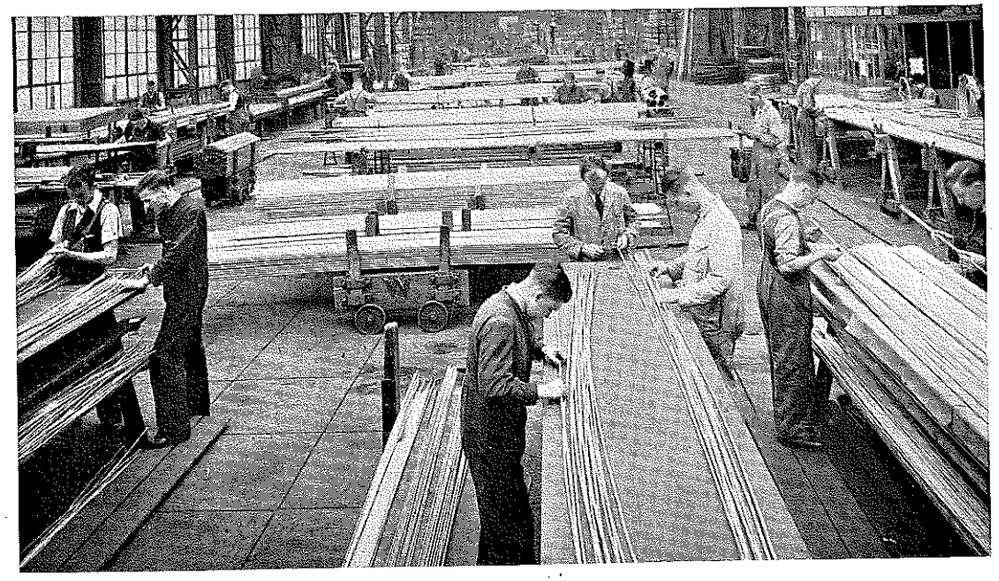
South-Western

OUR RECORD in the South-West area starts with the opening of a branch in Swansea in 1889. It was the nucleus of our present South-Western District. From that branch, which has the distinction of being called Swansea No 1, the Union spread to branches at Gowerton, Pontardawe, Llanelly, and later to Cardiff, Newport and the centres of industry in Monmouthshire.

The first Secretary of the first branch in the area, Swansea No. 1, was Hopkin John, a man of remarkable talents. He combined editorship of a journal, the *South Wales Industrial Times*, with the responsibilities of an official position in the Tinplate industry and the creator of the Welsh Artisans Organization. Other members with organizing gifts made their appearance—the late Victor Morgan, for example, who became the first District Secretary in 1900. He remained in that office until 1920, when he was succeeded by William E. Hopkin, O.B.E., the present District Secretary.

On the amalgamation of the Municipal Employees Association, the National Amalgamated Union of Labour and the National Union of General Workers in 1924, our South-Western branches constituted the major organization in South Wales for the employees in the gas, electricity, water and non-trading departments of the municipalities. In 1934 the amalgamation of Hopkin John's Welsh Artisans Organization fortified our Union in the steel, tin and foundry industries of the Principality.

As in other Districts, this building up of the Union by the process of amalgamation, reinforced our organizing and administrative resources. Such men as Rees Llewelyn, J. Gunter, R. G. Lewis, J. Owen, R. G. Evans, E. E. James, Fred Clark, Harry



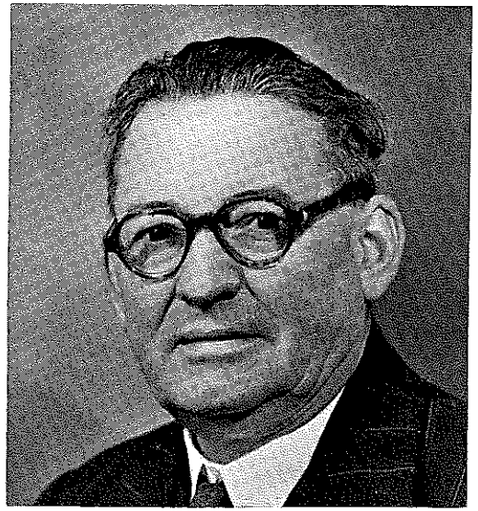
Copper works: Inspection of finished products

Orchard, F. Bennett, R. Smith and many others are names that remind us how the responsibilities of administration and leadership fell on the shoulders of men well able to carry them.

It requires no effort of imagination to realize that many difficult problems of organization had to be solved in all our districts in these formative years. South Wales certainly had its share of difficulties. A solution of some of them was not found until much later in the Union's history—for example, the relationship of thousands of our members employed as surface workers in the mining industry. These were transferred, to a total of 7,000, in 1934, to the miners' organization.

Organization amongst the steel and tinplate workers, and the copper workers, presented a complicated organizational problem in the earlier history of our South-Western District. It must be remembered in studying the records of these earlier years that other Unions which sprang into existence at the time our Union was formed in 1889 were building up their resources side by side with us. Among them the Dock, Wharf and Riverside Workers in which Ben Tillett's leadership was a potent factor and the Union organization developing in the iron and steel trades under the far-sighted and statesmanlike leadership of John Hodge, Arthur Pugh, and other notable personalities of the National Movement, were formidable competitors.

Our work was complicated at times by the existence of still other Unions in the same field. Thus among the copper workers, tinplate workers, steel smelters, millmen, and dockers, there were thousands who were potential recruits to our Union. But they owed, many of them, a prior allegi-



W. E. HOPKIN, O.B.E.
South-Western District Secretary

ance to such an organization as the Tin-Platers' Union. It was years before the jurisdictional and demarcation difficulties arising out of this situation could be straightened out.

Bro Hopkin, the oldest in service of our present District Secretaries, has been in charge of the South-Western District for twenty-nine years. He commenced his Trade Union work in the District Office in 1911. In his early days with the Union there were no elected Organizers in the District, and he personally undertook the organizing of many of the Branches in South Wales.

He saw service in the Royal Navy during the 1914–1918 war, and took part in many engagements both in home waters and abroad.

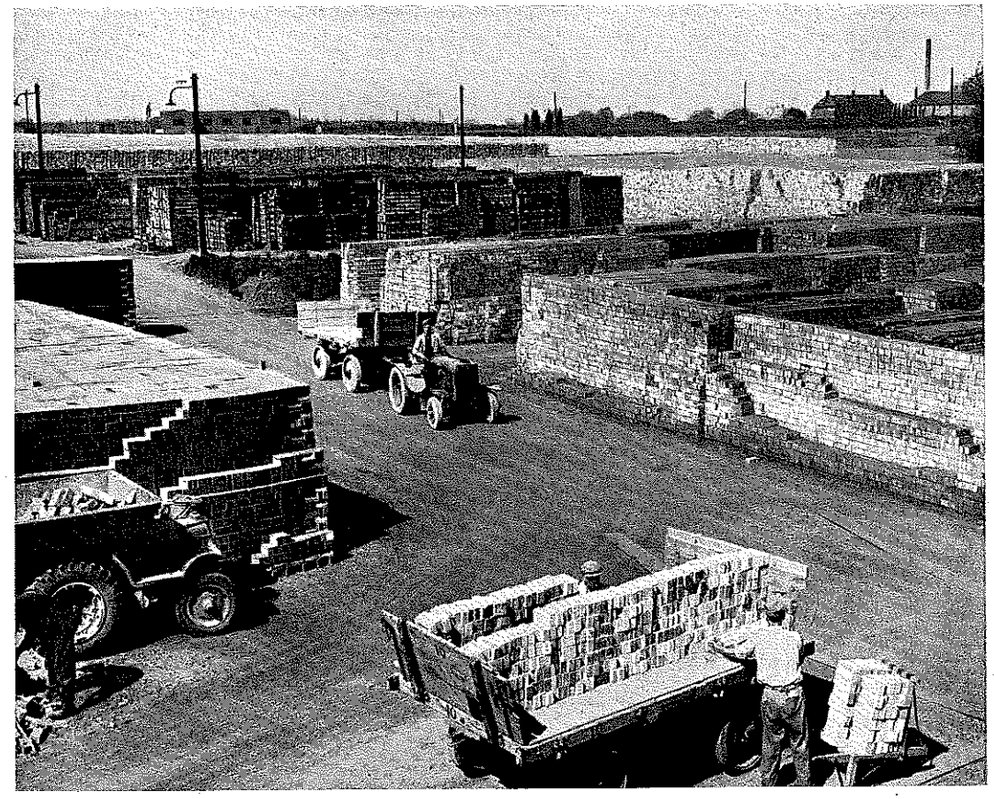
During the second World War and since, Bro Hopkin has played his part in the industrial life of the country of his birth—Wales—serving on the Regional Boards for Industry, Civil Defence, Ministry of Information, T.U.C. Advisory Committee, and the South Wales Regional Council of Labour Executive. He was awarded the O.B.E. in 1947.

Northern District

THE SITUATION in the Northern District, during the Union's early years, illustrates rather vividly the nature of the competition in overlapping spheres of Trade Union organization. Our Northern District is one of the oldest in the Union. We had a branch in Sunderland established in the Union's first year. Its appearance was coincident with the general spread of trade unionism on the North-East Coast. Whilst our branches were multiplying—at Middlesbrough, North and South Shields, Jarrow, Stockton, Durham—in what was then our Sunderland District, other Unions of general labour were also being formed on the North-East Coast.

The Tyneside General Labourers' Union, for instance, which later changed its name to the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, was founded early in 1889, and became a powerful influence in the Northern area. Even earlier an organization came into existence among the Tyne watermen. Side by side with these were the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Miners' Association, and the organization among the quarrymen, and iron ore miners. One after another the Union gathered them in as the result of negotiations for amalgamation.

Thus the Cleveland miners and the quarrymen decided upon amalgamation in 1931, and gave our Union such leaders as



How many bricks make a house?

Harry Dack and W. Mansfield.

The Cumberland Iron Ore Miners, which amalgamated with us in 1929, was founded in 1884 and by 1888 had become well established under the title of West Cumberland Workmen's Association, with Mr Isaac Fisher as Secretary. At the time of this amalgamation Bro Gavan Duffy, who had more than a local reputation, was the Secretary, and his addition to our organizing staff was an asset to the Union. As with other districts, so with the Northern, and we could catalogue many names of prominent and efficient personalities. In a very brief list we must include Bros J. Tarbit, W. Kitching, J. Burns, W. V. Stokoe, Tom Boggon, W. A. Bloomfield, J. M. Gibson, and, of course, one who for more than forty-one years was an outstanding figure, Bro Hugh Lynas. He retired in 1937, having first assumed office in 1896, and during his long term of activity he saw the District grow from 2,000 to 55,000. The present District Secretary, Jack Yarwood, succeeded Hugh Lynas in 1937.

Bro Yarwood's first union was the

J. YARWOOD, *Northern District Secretary*

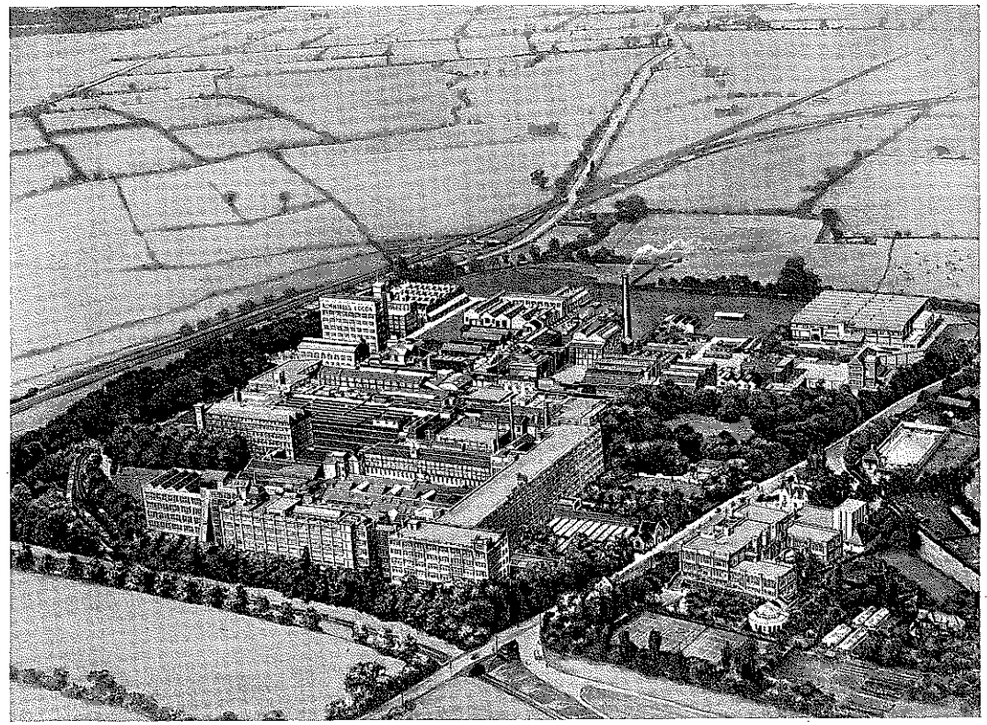
National Union of Cooks, Bakers and Butchers. But he was none of these, in fact, he was a steward on a freighter. After a spell of unemployment he got a job on the railway as a platelayer and joined the N.U.R. Following the General Strike, as a consequence of which he was out of work again, he obtained employment as a builder's labourer and joined our union, and when that job was finished Bro Hugh Lynas offered him, and he accepted, a temporary job as a clerk at the District Office, and he has been there ever since.

He was elected District Organizer in 1932; was Trades Council secretary in Newcastle for seven years; and for the same period secretary of the Tyneside Federation of Trades Councils. He was a member of Newcastle Board of Guardians for three years.

Another prominent personality, who, whilst a national leader, will always be linked with the Northern District, was the late J. M. Bell, the General Secretary of the National Amalgamated Union of Labour. He helped to build up that organization and was active also in the development of the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Representation Committee in the days before the Labour Party came into existence. He held a seat in Parliament as representative of the Newcastle West Division, and it is indicative of his influence on Tyneside that he won his Parliamentary seat although actually disabled by sickness during the election. Incidentally, his wife, Mrs Harrison Bell, represented women members of the Labour Movement on the National Executive of the Labour Party on the nomination of the Union with which she and her husband were so long connected. Another highly respected leader of the Movement on Tyneside, Ralph Spence, succeeded J. N. Bell in the general secretaryship of the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, and gained distinction nationally after the amalgamation as Assistant General Secretary of the larger Union.

Yorkshire and North Derbyshire

FOR MANY years in Yorkshire the centre of our Union organization was in Sheffield. The Union's first paid Trade Union official in the Sheffield district, Tom Hough, was identified originally with a local Union which had been formed in Sheffield under the title of General Labourers and Navvies, which organization linked up with the National Amalgamated Union of Labour in 1891. Sheffield became a district of the N.A.U.L. in 1893, with Tom Hough as



Rowntree's Factory, York

chief official, in which office he was succeeded by Bro A. J. Bailey in 1896. On the amalgamation in 1923 Bro Bailey continued as the District Secretary and retained that position until his retirement in 1937.

Associated with A. J. Bailey as Chief Assistant was the late Fred Haigh, who previously had been District Secretary of the N.U.G.W. in Sheffield in succession to C. H. Blackburn. The latter held that position for nearly a score of years, until his death. In that period he saw the Union membership rise in the District from 1,700 to over 30,000 members.

Part of this growth was due, as in other districts, to the absorption of local organizations such as the Cabinet Case Makers, in the Sheffield District. Strong influence in these local amalgamations was exercised by the late Alex Laing, whose knowledge of the local crafts, as a full-time official of the N.A.U.L., was a potent factor in bringing the Cabinet Case Makers and other small Unions into our amalgamation.

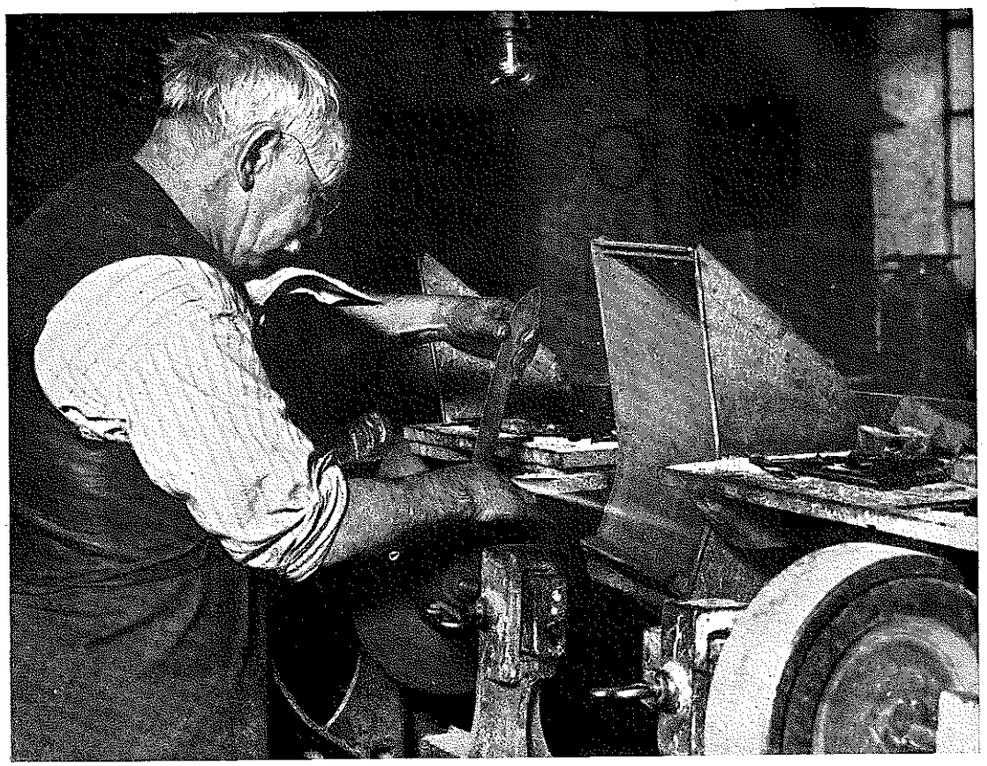
In some respects the title of our Union in its formative years was hardly descriptive of the breadth of our organizing field. In the Sheffield District the organizing activi-

Packing Terry's Chocolate

ties of our pioneers brought many highly skilled artisans engaged in the cutlery trades, such as the Spring Knife Workers, within the fold. With this phase of Trade Union organization is connected the name of W. Cooke, for some years whole-time secretary of the Spring Knife Workers, and later an elected district official of our own Union.

In 1937 two of our Union districts, previously known as Sheffield and West Yorkshire, were amalgamated to form our Yorkshire and North Derbyshire District. But within the county of broad acres there were embryonic districts like the one at Leeds, which was formed at the end of 1889 with William Cockayne and Tom Paylor as District Secretary and Organizer.

This District spread out of the first branch formed in Leeds among the gasworkers, whose struggle in the last decade of the nineteenth century for better wages and shorter hours was an historical event, signalized by fierce battles with blacklegs who were brought in to break the Leeds gasworkers' strike. In the ferment of these industrial conflicts marking the birth of our own Union organization in the Leeds district, came other Unions formed among the



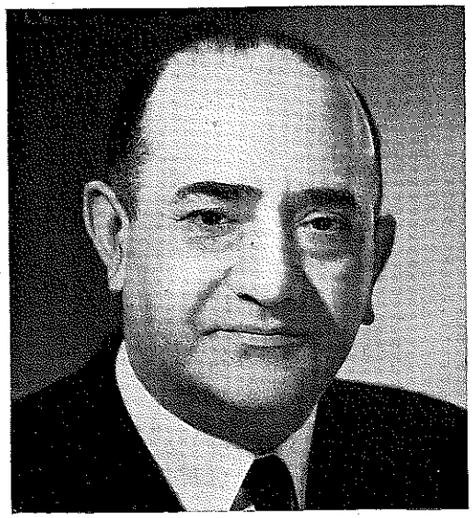
A Sheffield cutler

garment workers. These included the Jewish Tailor Pressers, the Jewish Tailors, Slip Makers, Tailors' Machinists, and others whose identity is now merged in the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

The largest branch of our Union in the country was built up at York in the first decade of the present century. It began amongst the labourers in the York flour mills, and gathered strength among the employees of the great firm of Rowntrees —great in the sense that our Union organization in the Rowntree firm was strengthened by the activities of as many as 50 shop stewards under the control of the chief shop steward, F. Hawksby, who was chairman of the branch.

At the time of his death in 1947 F. Hawksby was a member of the General Council and National Executive of the Union, and he was succeeded by C. Smith who has been secretary of the York Branch since 1936.

From our Leeds organization has come more than one able leader of our Union. Prominent among them were W. Cockayne and T. Paylor, one time District



J. D. S. HIGHMAN
Yorkshire District Secretary

Secretary and Organizer; J. Moss, who served for many years on the Executive of the Municipal Employees Association and rose to be Vice-Chairman of our own Union's General Council and National Executive. Another valiant fighter in the Leeds district, Riley Willans, became Chairman of the District with a long record of Trade Union membership behind him as a member of the Leeds No. 1 Branch. From the Municipal Employees' Association in the Yorkshire area came also our present Secretary of the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire District, J. D. S. Highman.

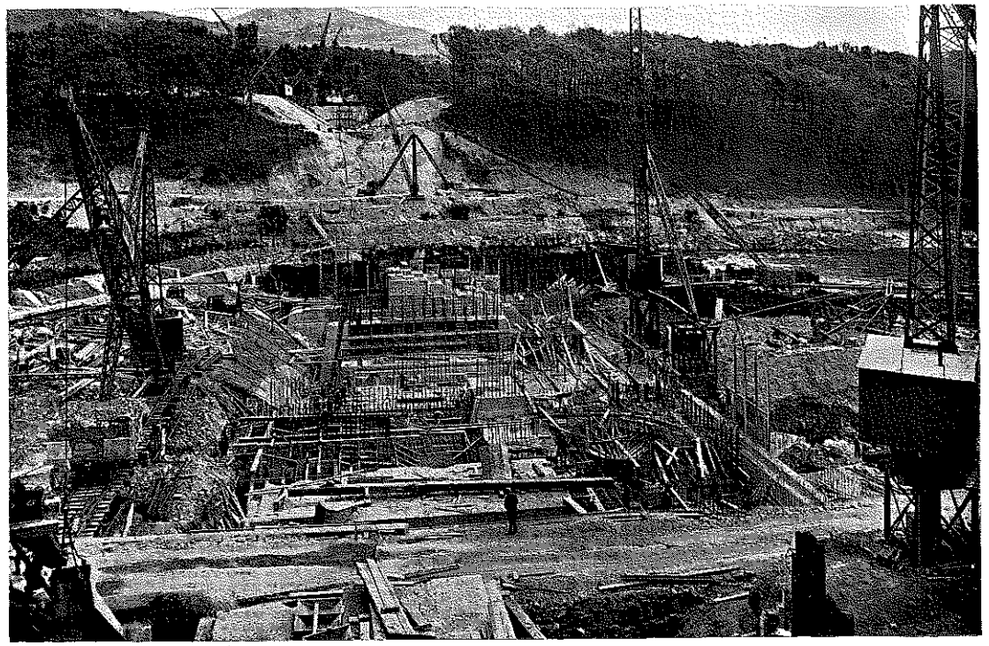
One of the changes consequent upon the reorganization of the Union in 1936 was the merging of our Sheffield and Leeds Districts into what is now known as the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire District. When that merger was effected Bro Highman was placed in charge.

Bro J. D. S. Highman is another long-service District Secretary, having occupied that position since 1924. He joined the Municipal Employees' Association when he entered local government service in 1910. After serving in the armed forces during the 1914–1918 war, he became an official of the M.E.A. in 1919, and until they amalgamated in 1924 he specialized in the organization of local government officers in Yorkshire and the adjoining counties.

Scottish

THE FORMATION of a separate District for Scotland was first mooted at our Sunderland Congress in 1912. At that time, however, Congress limited itself to recommending the establishment of a District Official in Scotland for six months, after which the Executive Council would consider the establishment of a separate District. Bro J. McKenzie was thereupon appointed as

W. MCGINNISS, *Scottish District Secretary*



Hydro-electric Project: Pitlochry Dam and Power Station

Officer in Scotland, attached to the Northern District, but so successful were his efforts that in the quarter ending September 1913 the Scottish District was established, and Bro McKenzie became the first District Secretary, in which office he continued until his retirement early in 1946. The present strength of the Scottish District is due in no small measure to his efficiency and negotiating ability.

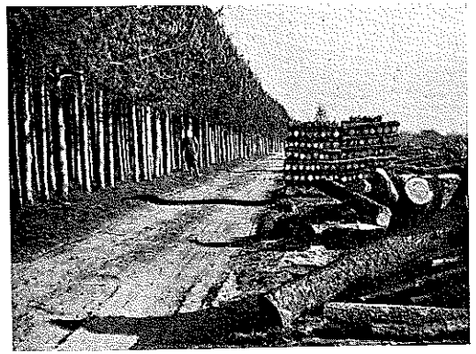
Prior to his appointment as a District Organizer, Bro McKenzie was secretary of the Ballachulish Branch of the Slate Quarriers, which had previously amalgamated with our Northern District.

On his retirement he was an active member of the National Executive Committee, in which office he must hold the record for long service. For more than thirty years he journeyed from Scotland to London, attending National Executive and General Council meetings, as well as special meetings of all kinds.

The first Quarterly Balance Sheet revealed 33 branches with a membership of 8,871. The District improved in strength with the able assistance of the organizers at that time, Bros J. Addison and G. Pettigrew. As time went on Bros D. C. McKenzie and J. McVicar joined the organizing staff, as did Bros P. Campbell, M. J. McKenna, J. Rodger, Ben Smith, F. Callaghan, P. Flanagan and A. McQuater, with the amalgamation of 1924.

Bro McKenzie was succeeded by Bro William McGinniss, who entered the

Forestry: Scottish timber men



Forestry: Twenty-year-old plantation

service of the Union in August 1920, when at the age of fourteen he was sent by the Labour Exchange with a green card to fill the post of Scottish District office boy. Prior to his appointment as organizer in 1933 he had acted as Minute Secretary to the District Council and District Committee, and as private secretary to Bro McKenzie.

Bro McGinniss is a member of the General Council of the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Organization among Women

THE UNION'S women officers form a distinguished group. In the Union's first annual report Will Thorne expressed the hope that '*all members, male and female, will do their utmost to make our Union one of the strongest in England, and I am glad that we have the females with us*'. The Union stated as one of its objects the principle of equal pay for equal work.

The Secretary of the first Annual Conference of the Union was a woman, and a remarkable personality among women—Eleanor Marx-Aveling, the daughter of Karl Marx. She stood at the head of the poll in the early election to the Executive Committee of our Union.

Much could be written about the women leaders of our Union. The story starts in our birth year, 1889. It could almost be said that the 'New Unionism' started with the strike of match girls in London's East End. Annie Besant, then a member of the Fabian Society, took a leading part in that strike, and Eleanor Marx-Aveling slaved night and day to assist the match girls to organize.

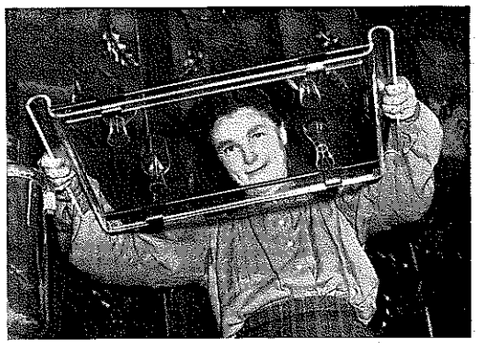
Later in the Union story comes the name of Mary Macarthur—a Scotswoman who came south with the fire of Socialism and Trade Unionism in her heart. With other women, among them Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, the daughter of a clergyman, with distinguished social connections, Mary Macarthur helped to found the Women's Trade Union League and the National Federation of Women Workers. Miss Tuckwell's family connections—she was a niece of Lady Dilke, whose husband, Sir Charles Dilke, rendered much help to the Trade Union Movement in its early days—were a considerable asset to these two women's organizations. She came to London in the early 'eighties and worked for a time as an elementary school teacher. As secretary to her aunt, Lady Dilke, she came into contact with an earlier organization of women, the Women's Protective and Provident League founded by Emma Patterson, a working woman belonging to the printing trades.

This body was transformed into the Women's Trade Union League in the early years of the present century. Mary Macarthur became its secretary. A few years later (in 1908) the National Federation of Women Workers was formed. Mary Macarthur became secretary of that body too, which affiliated to the Trades Union Congress.

The aim of these pioneer women was to gain popular support for unorganized women workers. So we find them taking the lead in propaganda showing the conditions under which women worked in the sweated trades. The Women's Trade Union League did not aspire itself to be a Trade Union, but rather to organize women workers in attachment to branches of existing Unions. The League's leaders were active in strikes which arose in all parts of the country among women workers, with no Trade Union organization behind them. Out of their strikes came their association with such Unions as our own. Frequently the militant spirit among women workers inspired men to form Trade Unions. More than one of our Union branches came into existence among men who had been stirred to organize by the example of women.

The most effective demonstration of women's militancy was the skilfully organized agitation among the chain makers at Cradley Heath and among the workers in the hollow-ware trades, as well as the gar-

Making torch batteries



Furniture you can see through

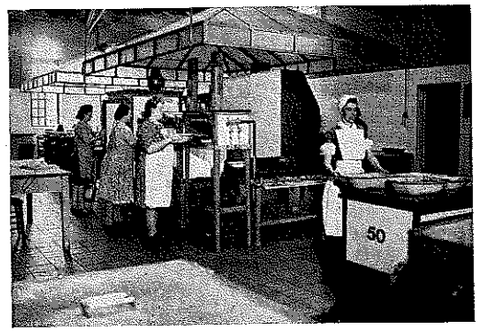
'Sewing' by heat

A noble profession

ment trades and other sweated trades in London's East End. This agitation brought into existence the Anti-Sweating League. For years Mary Macarthur, Margaret Bondfield, Miss Tuckwell and others seemed to be able to keep up an incessant activity simultaneously and continuously in the Anti-Sweating League, the Women's Trade Union League, and the National Federation of Women Workers.

In the first decade of the present century the conscience of the community was awakened by these women agitators. In one campaign after another they exposed the intolerable conditions under which women and girls were working, and the low wages they were paid—as little as 1*d.* or 1½*d.* an hour was a common wage for women in those days. How low the standards of wages were for women is illustrated by wages agreements made under the Trade Board legislation at the end of the first decade of the century: a minimum wage of 10*s.* for tin box workers, 12*s.* for box makers, from 10*s.* to 14*s.* for metallic capsule makers, and 12*s.* for bottle washers; school cleaners were paid no more than 5*s.* a week; laundry workers got about 7*s.* a week. Very many factory women did not get more than 7*s.* or 8*s.*, and the average was under 13*s.* a week. The wages which the match girls rebelled against were as low as 4*s.* and the average was between 6*s.* and 8*s.* It was, moreover, a dangerous industry.

It was the work of a quarter of a century to bring women's wages generally up to the standard of the rates laid down by the first Trade Boards, and those rates were



Canteen workers

Laundry workers

2½*d.* an hour, for a 52-hour week! Grown-up women on Government work were paid no more than 1¾*d.* an hour. The Trade Board rate for the box trades was agreed at 14*s.* 1*d.* for a 52-hour week, and 13*s.* a week for adult women in the sugar confectionery trades.

It is no matter for surprise that under these shocking conditions the impulse to organize grew strong amongst working women workers when the Women's Trade Union League and the National Federation of Women Workers became active amongst them. Our own Union was actively involved in the struggle to raise the wages of women workers. The clearest evidence of the Union's interest in the organization of women was the amalgamation achieved in 1921 of the National Federation of Women Workers. Simultaneously the Women's Trade Union League was transformed into the Women's Group of the T.U.C. General Council.

Under the terms of the amalgamation of the National Federation of Women Workers with our Union, Mary Macarthur became secretary of the Union's Women's Section. She did not live to carry on her work, which had found its triumphant culmination in the entry of 40,000 organized

Aircraft propellers to saucepans

women into our Union.

Her work passed to Margaret Bondfield. She had been assisting in the work of the Federation for many years prior to the amalgamation. For more than half a century Miss Bondfield was active in the Trade Union and Labour Movement, and held official Union positions for more than 40 years. Her trade union career started with the Shop Assistants' Union, of which she became assistant secretary in 1897. For ten years she held that position before joining Mary Macarthur and the other pioneer women in the administration of the National Federation of Women Workers.

It was during her service as the Union's Chief Woman Officer that Miss Bondfield became, on two occasions, a Minister in the Labour Governments. Her remarkable abilities seem in retrospect to have been almost equally divided between Trade Union and political work. She entered Parliament as Member for Northampton in 1923, and became Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour. She was in that year Chairman of the T.U.C. General Council. Her Association with the T.U.C. began when she was selected in 1917 as a Member of the Parliamentary Committee. On her appointment to a position in the Government she had to retire from the T.U.C. General Council, having had the distinction of being its first woman chairman, although without becoming the first woman President

of the Congress. From 1926 to 1931 she represented Wallsend in the House of Commons, and in the 1929–31 Labour Government she attained Cabinet rank as Minister of Labour.

Miss Bondfield's association with the Union as its National Woman Officer came to an end in 1938 by operation of the Union's age limit rule. She was succeeded in the work of the Department by Miss Dorothy Elliott, who held the position until the summer of 1946; the Union then granted Miss Elliott leave of absence to undertake a Government appointment as Chairman of the National Institute of Houseworkers. This Institute exists to train domestic workers in the techniques of housekeeping. Miss Elliott accepted the appointment as Chairman, as she told the Union's Biennial Congress at Colwyn Bay, as an opportunity to tackle a new task for trade unionism. She reminded the delegates at Colwyn Bay that the Union had written the first chapters in the history of the organization of general labour, and of trade unionism among women workers; but she believed that still another chapter had to be written on the women's side. Unless the position of the woman in the home, and of the domestic worker in the home, was assured (she said) the whole structure which the Union sought to raise would lack a firm foundation.

In her association extending over 25 years with the Union, Miss Elliott left her mark upon the women's section. At our Biennial Congress in Ayr in 1938 she presented a Wage Charter for Women, embodied in a resolution which she moved as the Union's National Woman Officer. This resolution pledged the Union, as one of the premier organizations for women, to initiate and carry out in all possible wage negotiations, through Joint Industrial Councils, Trade Boards and direct Union negotiations, a wage charter resting upon a minimum time rate for women on the basis of a 40-hour week, with proportionate adjustments for young workers and appropriate adjustments on time rate for piece-work.

The Charter was framed to serve as a point of focus in the organization of women. The number of organized women in our Union at the time was about 80,000, a substantial increase which reflected the women workers' appreciation of the Union's policy on their behalf. Miss Elliott testified in our Biennial Congress in 1941 to the growth of a sense of Union responsibility among women workers, especially among the younger members. She had been impressed with the number of young women shop stewards and collectors up and down the country, who took their full responsibility side by side with men in Union affairs in the factories. Never in her experience of the Trade Union Movement had she seen a better generation of women than the young women of 20, 21 and 22 who were organizing and holding together the membership for which they were responsible in the workshops.

This tribute was timely in connection with the task the Union was then grappling with, arising out of the substitution of women for men in war-time work. The Union's policy in relation to women's work in war-time was clearly stated at the 1941 Biennial Congress, when the following principles were laid down to govern Union negotiations carried on in conjunction with other Unions, in regard to the substitution of women for men:

(1) that the substitution of adult male labour by female labour in each industry was to be treated as purely a war-time

expedient, and that there should be an immediate reversion to normal practice at the end of the war;

(2) that no woman was to be employed on work normally done by adult male labour until all suitable available male labour had been absorbed;

(3) that there was to be no objection from the Union to the extension of the employment of women on work normally done in the industry by women;

(4) that where women took the place of adult male labour to perform any operation without assistance or supervision, they should receive the appropriate time or piece rate; and

(5) where women were put on work previously done by men but requiring supervision or assistance, the wage rates should be the subject of negotiation having in mind the amount of assistance or supervision that had to be provided.

The Union was successful in drawing up a number of agreements on these lines in the engineering, gas, chemical, electricity, cable, and other main industries.

Miss Alice Horan joined the National Federation of Women Workers in 1916, when organization was started by Miss Margaret Bondfield at the factory of Waring and Gillow where Miss Horan was engaged making war equipment. Miss Horan was in turn shop steward and assistant branch secretary, and in 1920 she started a two-year course at Ruskin College, where she obtained an Oxford Diploma for Political and Social Economics. When she returned to London, the Women's Federation had amalgamated with the General Workers, and she became secretary of the Shadwell Women's Branch. She was a member of the London District Council and District Committee, and also of the General Council of the Union in 1923–24.

After a short spell at the Head Office, where she assisted Miss Bondfield, she went to Lancashire as a women's organizer in May 1926. She remained in that District until she was appointed in 1946 as the National Woman Officer in succession to Miss D. Elliott. Whilst in the Lancashire area she was a member of the Manchester City Council for three years.

Charles Dukes

THERE CAME a change in the secretaryship when Will Thorne retired after an honourable career in public life and in the service of the Union. He held the general secretaryship for forty-five years. He had been for forty years a leading personality in the Trades Union Congress, with an experience extending over both its old Parliamentary Committee and its General Council, on which he had retained continuous membership from 1894 to 1933. His Parliamentary experience was of equal duration as member for the same constituency throughout the whole of his parliamentary life. His departure from the office he had held for so long brought into control of the Union, Charles Dukes, who became the Union's first representative in the House of Lords!

Charles Dukes was 53 years old when he became the Union's General Secretary. He could claim, like many others of our Union leaders, to be self-educated. He left school before he reached his twelfth year. He started work as an errand boy. Before becoming a Union officer he had worked at many other trades, including that of forge worker, navvy, and builder's labourer. He was elected to the secretaryship of the

Hurdle making

Warrington Branch of the old Gas Workers' Union in 1909. By that time he had become active in the Labour Movement and recognized as a coming man.

As Secretary and later President of the Trades and Labour Council at Warrington he brought his dominating personality into the work of the Trades Councils and reached the secretaryship of the Lancashire and Cheshire Federation of Trades Councils and Labour Parties. His relationship with the political organization of Labour in the North-Western area, including long membership in the I.L.P., and (somewhat paradoxically) in the British Socialist Party, formed an introduction to parliamentary activity. He contested the Parliamentary Division of Warrington in 1923, was successful, but lost the seat in the 'Red Letter' General Election of the following year. He regained it in 1929, and combined Parliamentary and Trade Union duties during the lifetime of the second Labour Government. He became District Organizer of the Union in the year before the First World War. His strong convictions made him a conscientious objector during the First World War; but he lost none of the respect and admiration of his fellow trade unionists by his intellectual independence and self-respect; and he assumed additional responsibilities in his Union after the war when he was appointed District Secretary for the Leeds area.

In 1925 he went back to Lancashire as District Secretary. For many years Charles

Dukes was a conspicuous figure and a considerable personal force in the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference. He was a member of the General Council of the T.U.C. for a dozen years, 1934 to 1946. On his retirement under the Union age limit from the General Secretaryship of the Union, he was offered a peerage and took his seat in the Upper House as Lord Dukeston. In the last years of his life he gave much of his time and devotion to the work of the United Nations, and had a leading part to play in framing the U.N. Charter of Human Rights. His name stands high on the Union roll as one who achieved a place of high distinction in public life whilst retaining the original faith and purpose of his Trade Union associations.

HEAD OFFICE, 5 *Endsleigh Gardens, W.C.*1

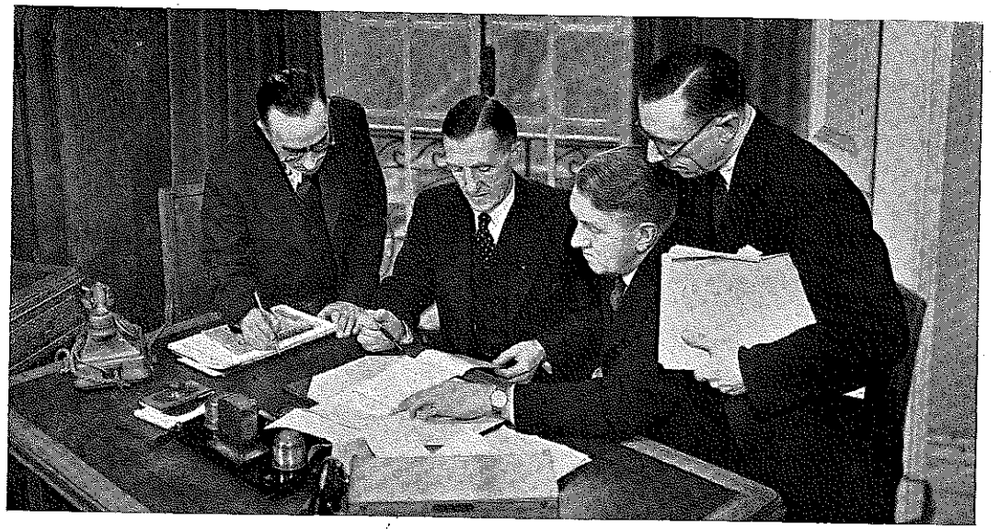
Tom Williamson

TOM WILLIAMSON, the Union's present General Secretary, has had a varied career packed with industrial and political experience.

Born in St Helens in 1897, he has vivid recollections of the 1906 General Election when he helped as a card boy in the Election Campaign to return Tom Glover, Miners' Agent, to the House of Commons, defeating Sir Henry Seton-Carr. This was the first time St Helens was won for Labour, and it was during this election and subsequently that he was inspired by attending meetings addressed by such giants of the cause as Will Crooks, Tom Mann and Jimmy Sexton. In those days political meetings were an event, and large halls were packed to overflowing due, to some extent no doubt, to the absence of such modern attractions as radio and cinemas.

Bro Williamson was the collector of the Labour Party contributions, and it was his duty in this capacity to visit every Saturday the dozen or so members who comprised the membership of the Ward Labour Party, to collect the 1*d.* contribution which was always readily paid by those few stalwarts of the organization.

Following service in the First World War, including two years on the battlefields of the Somme and Ypres in the West Lancashire Divisional Royal Engineers, he devoted his time to industrial and political activity in St Helens and the Liverpool area, and studied hard at Liverpool University on Industrial History, Local and Central Government, Social Economics, Trade Union History and Law. His interest in this field of adult education carried him into the Honorary Secretaryship of the local branch of the Workers' Educational Association.



Tom Williamson with Bros Potter, Scott and Roberts

In the background of his trade union career lies the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, which he joined in 1913 whilst in his 'teens, and, leaving St Helens to reside in Liverpool in 1925, he added to his trade union responsibilities by winning a seat on the Liverpool City Council against the then Chief Conservative Whip.

Soon afterwards he was appointed a Justice of the Peace for the City, and must have been at that time one of the youngest Labour men in Local Government to hold the positions of City Councillor and City Magistrate. His experience as Deputy Chairman of the Rating Committee, and membership of other important Committees of the Corporation, was an invaluable apprenticeship to his future career.

Following Bro Williamson's election as a District Organizer of the Union, he was appointed to the position of National Industrial Officer of the Union and left with his family for London to take over, amongst other duties, the secretaryship of the Trade Union side of the Gas Industry relinquished by Arthur Hayday on his retirement from active duty. His early political training and experience brought him to a leading position in the National Labour Party as an elected Trade Union member of its National Executive, serving as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and a member of the International Press and Publicity Committees, and on certain special Committees which drafted the Party's policy preparatory to the 1945 General Election, and embodied in the policy document 'Let us face the Future'. Inevitably he became associated with the international, political and Trade Union organizations, and visited many European capitals.

A few weeks before the 1945 General Election a vacancy arose unexpectedly for a Parliamentary Candidate in the Brigg Division of Lincolnshire, and Bro William-

son was chosen to fight the seat, which he won by a majority of 8,164. Following his election as General Secretary of the Union, Bro Williamson resigned his seat in the House of Commons after serving during what will always be regarded as the most memorable period when Labour was implementing its policy of social security and nationalization.

In 1947 Bro Williamson was elected to the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, following in the steps of the late Bros Thorne and Dukes.

Few men in the Labour Movement have acquired a broader and richer experience of the industrial and Political Movement, or traversed a more varied road of responsible office to one of the highest positions in the Trade Union Movement.

More Pioneers

FROM THE amalgamation in 1924 Ralph Spence and Peter J. Tevenan, who had been General Secretaries of the National Amalgamated Union of Labour and the Municipal Employees' Association respectively, served as Assistant General Secretaries in the larger organization.

Bro R. Spence as a young man in 1888 helped in the formation of the Tyneside and District Labourers' Association (later to be known as the N.A.U.L.).

He was then working as a shipyard labourer at an average wage of 12*s*.–14*s*. per week. After filling most positions from Branch Officer to National Executive member, he was appointed Corresponding Secretary of the N.A.U.L. in 1898, and this position he retained until he succeeded his old friend J. N. Bell as General Secretary in 1922.

Bro P. J. Tevenan, who started work in the coal mines at a very early age, joined the South Yorkshire Miners' Association in 1870. When he later left the mines for the railway service he became a member of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, in which organization he served on the Executive Committee, and in 1893 he was elected Secretary of their Irish District.

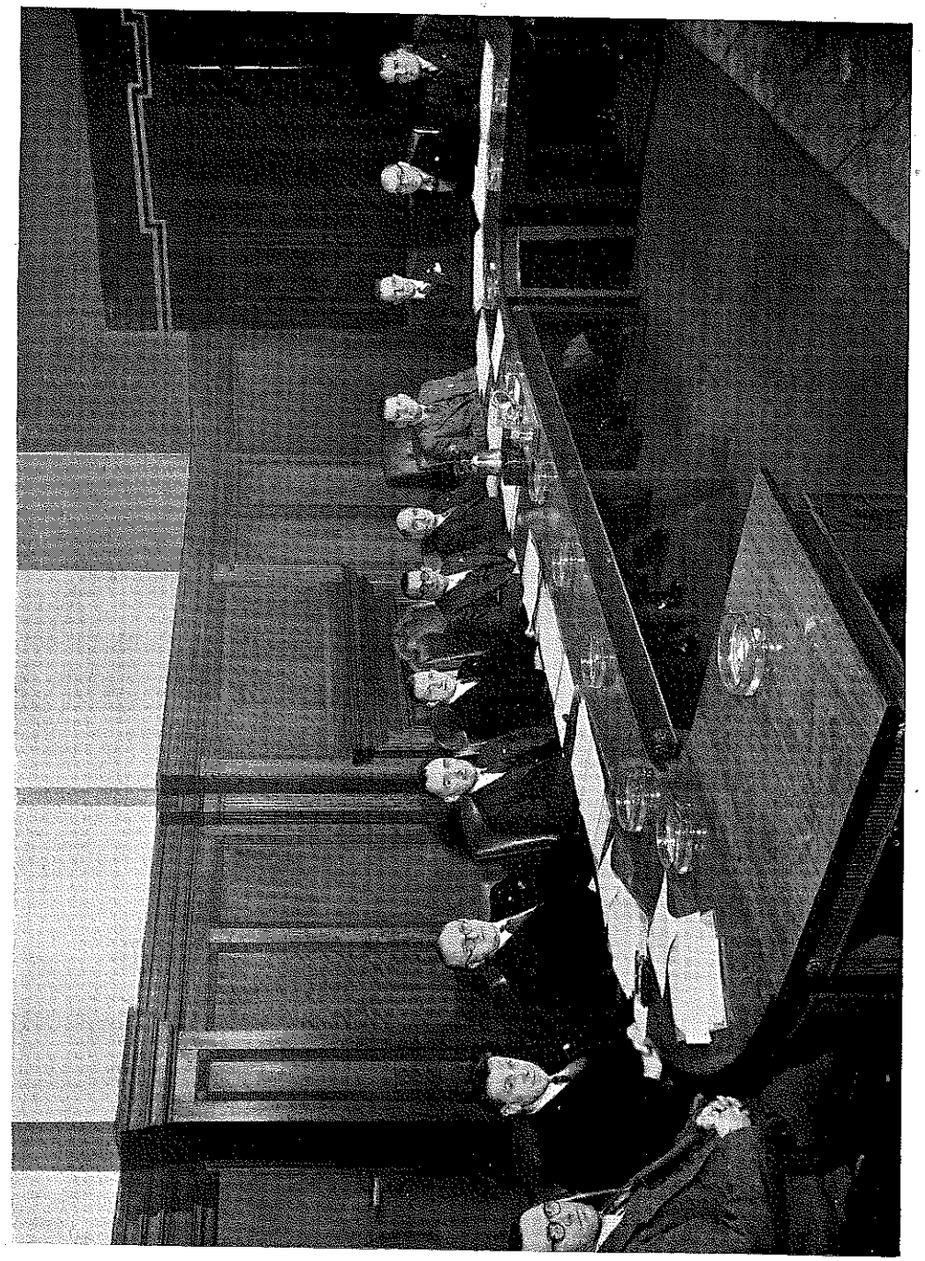
Some time later he went to Stockport and became an Organizer in the M.E.A. He was General Organizer of that Association until 1908, and from 1913 to 1924 he was General Secretary.

When he died in 1943 he had a record of no less than 73 years of Trade Union membership.

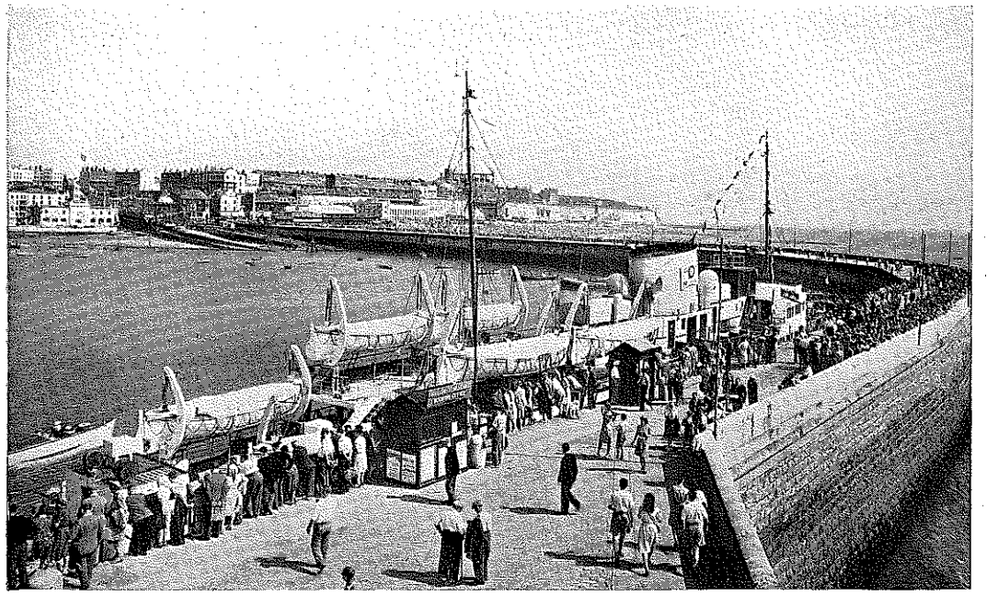
Contemporary with Peter Tevenan was Alderman W. H. Girling, J.P., who, for many years, was President of the M.E.A. Both he and his wife are very well known in the Borough of Shoreditch, where they have devoted a lifetime of service to Local Government, and where they have acted individually for more than one term of office as Mayor.

Reorganization

THE SOMEWHAT complicated pattern of our Union's district organization was simplified between 1934 to 1937. The successful achievement of important amalgamations with the Municipal Employees' Association and the National Amalgamated Union of Labour led to the reorganization of the districts in 1924. But the arrangements then made were not entirely satisfactory. The twelve districts formed in 1924 varied in membership from about 87,000



THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE, 1949: *T. Eccles, G. Davison, J. Yarwood, C. Smith, T. Williamson (General Secretary), W. E. Hopkin, O.B.E. (Chairman), G. Dempsey (Vice-Chairman), J. Cooper, F. Ward, C. Welch and W. McGinniss*



Docks and harbour municipally owned: Ramsgate

in the largest to about 7,000 in the smallest. This was a somewhat disproportionate balance as between one district and another.

Reorganization completed in 1937 resulted in ten Districts being formed by the amalgamation of some and the subdivision of others.

The former London District, for example, was divided into two with the River Thames as its boundary; the area north of the Thames retaining the title of London District, whilst the area on the south side of the river became known as the Southern District.

The Sheffield and West Yorkshire Districts were merged into one, as were also the Midland and the East Coast Districts. The Irish District was merged with the Liverpool District. The South Wales District was transformed into the South-Western by the transfer from the Birmingham District of branches in the Bristol area; whilst on the other hand, branches in the Hereford area were transferred from the South Wales District to the Birmingham District. The Lancashire, Northern and Scottish Districts were left undisturbed.

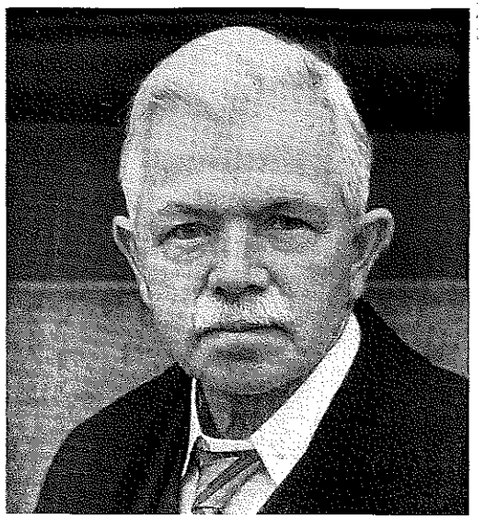
All these geographical re-alignments involved a considerable amount of discussion in the Districts themselves. They involved, too, alterations in the scheme of Union representation in the new District Councils and Committees. Under the old arrangements the District Councils elected the Union's General Council consisting of 28 representatives. Under the new arrangements the General Council was constituted with 24 representatives. From them the Union secured its National Executive, consisting of 10 members.

The official personnel of the Union was affected not only by this reorganization but by the operation of the Union's age limit rule. Our Biennial Congress, in 1936, fixed the retirement age at 65, and stipulated that Union officers still in active service over that age should retire in the period up to the 1938 Congress. One effect of this decision was the retirement of the Union's President, Bro J. R. Clynes, and of three Head Office officials—Bros G. P. Dean and W. Sherwood, and Miss Margaret Bondfield. Seven District Secretaries, ten District Organizers and seven whole-time Branch Secretaries likewise wound up their long-term services with the Union.

Bro Clynes did not actually terminate his official service with the Union until the end of 1937. The presidency was up to then a whole-time occupation. Under the new administrative scheme the functions attaching to the office of President were transformed, and a new Rule came into operation. Under this rule the Congress of the Union elects its Chairman who also acts as Chairman of the General Council, the National Executive and other Union meetings for a period of two years following his election. The position of the Union's Vice-Chairman came under review at the same time, and a new Rule calling for the appointment of the Vice-Chairman by the delegates at Congress was adopted.

After the retirement of Bro Clynes, which fell in the interval between two Congresses, the General Council and the National Executive unanimously chose Bro Fred Marshall, M.P., to act as its Chairman. Bro Marshall was then an Official of the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire District.

Prior to these far-reaching changes the work of the Industrial Departments at

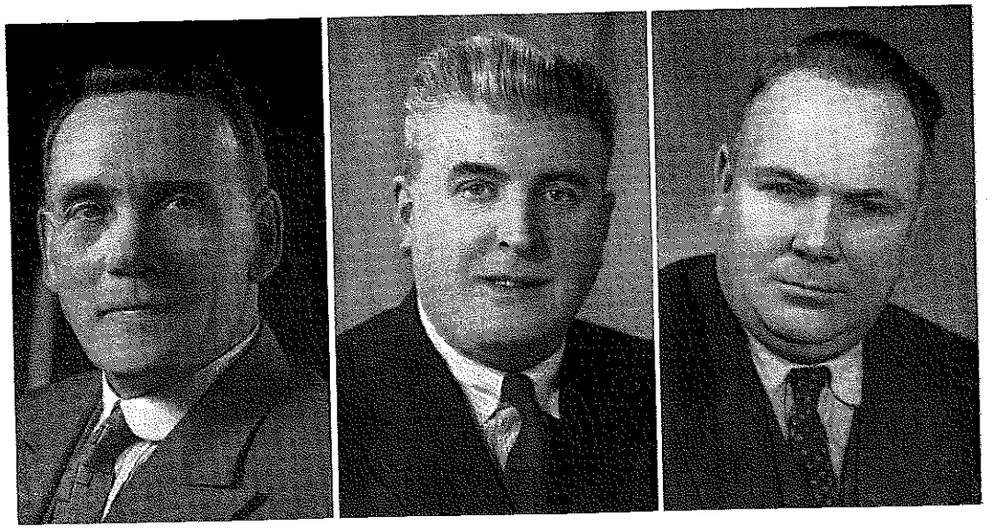


Rt. Hon. J. R. CLYNES, P.C.,
President 1912–1937

Head Office was developing, and this necessitated the appointment as National Industrial Officers of Bros H. L. Bullock, H. N. Harrison, and T. Cochrane (who on reorganization took over the Secretaryship of the newly-formed Southern District).

Bro Bullock joined the Union in 1917, and in 1926 he became a full-time Branch Secretary of the Bristol General Branch, which at that time was the largest in the Union. He was a member of the Birmingham District Council and Committee, and for some years was the President of the Birmingham District. Prior to his election as a National Industrial Officer in 1935 he had been for five years a member of the General Council and National Executive of the Union.

Since 1937 Bro Bullock has been one of the Union's representatives on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress.



H. L. BULLOCK | MARK HEWITSON, M.P. | H. W. CRANE, O.B.E.

National Industrial Officers

He has attended many conferences of the International Labour Office as the British Workers' Delegate, and this has necessitated journeys to various parts of the world, including India, Canada and the U.S.A. In 1948 he attended the annual convention of the American Federation of Labour in Cincinnati, Ohio, as one of the two elected representatives of the Trades Union Congress.

Bro H. N. Harrison, O.B.E., was born in Workington in 1884 and joined the Union in 1902 whilst serving his apprenticeship as a tanner. The labourers, who were only being paid 17*s.* to 18*s.* for a 56-hour week, and many of whom were married and had families, wanted to join a trade union. Bro Harrison wrote to Will Thorne who sent the late Bro Lynas over and formed a Branch. Bro Harrison agreed to act as the Secretary and when this became known to the firm he was given the alternative of ceasing as Branch Secretary or having his indentures cancelled. He continued to act as Branch Secretary and was dismissed from his employment. He obtained work at Liverpool and in 1913 was elected as the Liverpool and Warrington District Organizer of the Tanners' Union.

At the same time he kept his membership with the General Workers' Union, and in 1915 the Tanners' Union merged with the N.U.G.W. In 1919 Bro Harrison was elected Organizer in the Lancashire District.

For about six years he was a member of the Manchester and Salford Labour Electoral Committee. He was Vice-President of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and was for eight years secretary of the Manchester District Committee. From 1914 to 1935 he was a delegate to and Executive member of the Warrington Trades and Labour Council, and from 1917 to 1921 a member of the Preston Trades and Labour Council and

its Executive Committee.

In 1937 he was elected a member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and was one of the Trade Union representatives on the National Joint Advisory Council to the Ministry of Labour set up at the beginning of the war. He was elected President of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions in 1942–43.

As a member of the Anglo-Soviet Commission he made the hazardous trip to Russia in June of 1943, and the same year, with William Bayliss of the Miners' Union, attended the 63rd Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labour, held at Boston, Massachusetts. His services to the country were recognized by the award of the O.B.E. in 1944.

These strenuous years told heavily on his health, and he passed away in hospital on December 21st, 1947.

In 1937 Bro M. Hewitson, M.P., and Bro T. Williamson were appointed as National Industrial Officers.

Much responsible work in connection with the gas industry was taken over from Bro Arthur Hayday by Bro Tom Williamson as the Workers' Side Secretary of its National Joint Industrial Council, for which he continued to be responsible until he was elected as General Secretary of the Union.

Bro Mark Hewitson had been a member of the Union since 1914, and, as with most of our National Officials, he had graduated through the various offices in Branch and District. He had been in turn shop steward, branch secretary, several times a delegate to the Union's Congresses, a member of the Northern District Council and District Committee, and an elected district official. He was granted a resident scholarship at Ruskin College in 1923, and before coming to London in 1937 was for ten years a member of the Durham County Council.

As a National Official he has represented the Union on both the Public Services and Factory Workers' Internationals and is President of the latter. He volunteered for service in the last war and was commissioned as a Captain. Since the 1945 General Election he has represented the Hull Central Division in the House of Commons and is a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party.

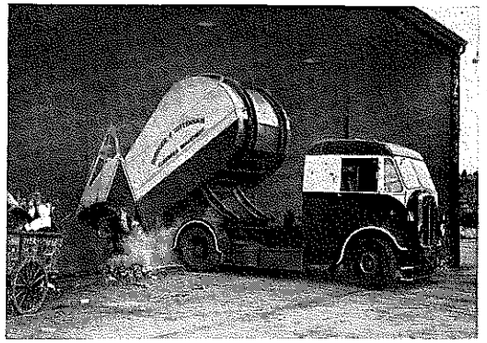
In a surprisingly short time reorganization both in the Districts and at the centre was accomplished smoothly and without any interruption.

Far-reaching changes in Union structure, leading personnel, and head office administration, enabled the Union to face the Second World War with a reinvigorated and highly efficient organization. The Union has sustained the shattering impact of two World Wars. The cumulative effects of war were felt by every one of the numerous industries with which the Union is connected.

Negotiating Machinery

PERHAPS the major result of the First World War (1914–18) was the establishment in many of these industries of a stronger system of wages negotiating machinery. Industrial legislation bearing upon the creation and extension of wage fixing machinery, has had a profound influence upon the work of our Union in particular. Something has already been said in earlier pages about the part our Union played in

Dust collection: The old method



Dust collection: The new

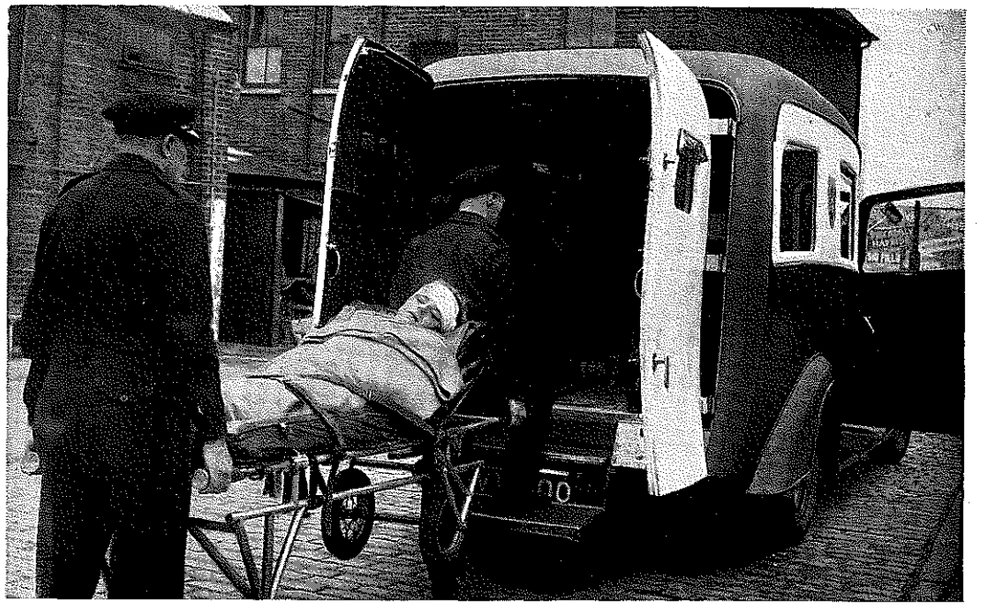
the first two decades of its existence in agitation and propaganda for the improvement of conditions in what were called 'the sweated trades'. Out of this agitation came the Trade Boards Act of 1909 which introduced the first modification of the voluntary principle in the regulation of wages.

Subsequent legislation, beginning with the Munitions of War Act of 1915, extended this system of wage-fixing machinery over a much wider field. Trade Union organization during the First World War was affected to some extent by the 1915 Munitions of War Act under which strikes and lockouts were made illegal. Methods of arbitration on a national basis were then developed. In the middle of the war the whole question was examined by the Whitley Committee, whose report formed the foundation of all later developments in this field. The Whitley Committee was appointed in 1916, under the chairmanship of J. H. Whitley, M.P., who was then Speaker of the House of Commons.

One of the principal recommendations of this Committee, which issued altogether five reports, was that in well-organized industries there should be set up Joint Industrial Councils, representing both employers and workpeople, the object being to give regular consideration to matters affecting the progress and well-being of the industry, from the standpoint of all those engaged in it, 'so far as this is consistent with the general interest of the community'. In respect of the less efficiently organized trades, an extension of the system of Trade Boards was recommended.

The Whitley Committee made no detailed recommendations as to the establishment of Joint Industrial Councils for individual industries. Following upon the recommendations of the Whitley Committee these joint bodies multiplied rapidly and the union is represented on many of them. There is practically no industry or trade in the country that it does not touch. Certainly there is no joint negotiating body, in any of the major industries and trades, with which our Union is not connected. In many of the Joint Industrial Councils we are, indeed, the only representative body speaking for the employees' side.

The reorganization which was effected in 1937 as explained in earlier pages, therefore, represented a necessary adaptation of

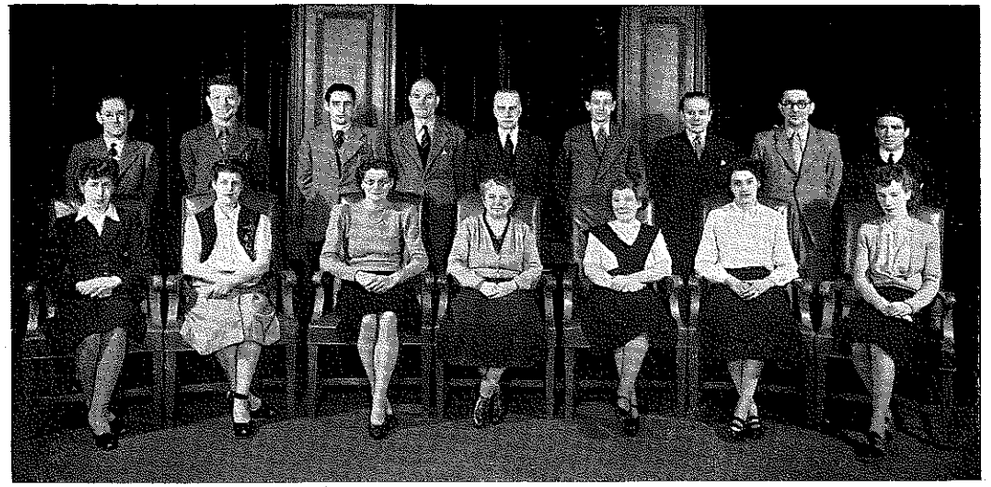


Ambulance service: The patient is loaded

our machinery to the newer responsibilities imposed upon the workers' organizations under the industrial legislation enacted between the two World Wars. Even greater and more fundamental changes in Government-Employer-Union relationships were necessitated by the mobilization of the nation's manpower and industrial resources in the Second World War.

A veritable revolution in the relationship of the Unions with the employers' side of industry and with the Government took place during the war years 1939–45. The developments in industrial relations which then took place differed basically from those which originated in the First World War. It can be said, summarily, that the principal result of the First World War, from the Trade Union standpoint, was the establishment of the Whitley system. That system laid a strong foundation for the practice of collective bargaining through joint negotiating bodies which enabled the representatives of employers and workpeople to enter into regular consultation on an industry-wide basis. The Whitley system, too, gave a restrictive application to the principle of legal regulation of wages.

But the needs of war-time industry in the Second World War carried the Unions as a whole into much more intimate association both with the organizations of employers and with the Government Departments concerned with the mobilization of the nation's manpower and industrial resources. The Trade Union Movement of this country, in the first place, was far more strongly organized and more amenable to



Head Office General Clerical Staff

the centralized leadership of the T.U.C. General Council in the Second World War than it was in the First. For one thing, the T.U.C. General Council had acquired much greater influence and authority in deciding the course of Trade Union policy and action. It is not possible in these pages to trace the course of action by which, during the inter-war years, the Unions as a whole were led to entrust wide powers of initiative to the T.U.C. General Council.

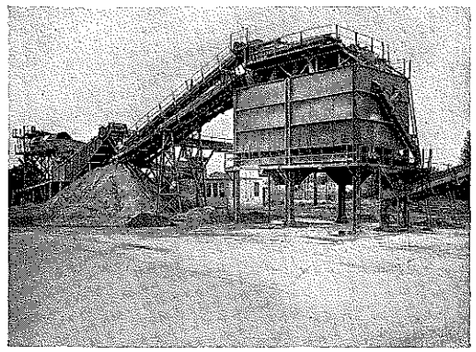
Trade Depression

WERE THERE SPACE to tell the story of the inter-war years it would be seen that for nearly two decades the Trade Union Movement of this country was to some extent losing ground.

The first wave of post-war trade depression which swept over the country after 1921 washed away many of the gains won by the Trade Unions during the war years 1914–18. Unemployment rose and wages went down, and inevitably these adverse conditions made their influence felt among the workers. The membership of the Unions affiliated to the Congress, which stood at the peak figure of over 6½ million in 1920, declined steadily year by year practically without interruption, to the low level of just under 3,300,000 in 1934. From then onward the Unions generally began to gain members again. They overcame the setback which they experienced after the General Strike of 1926, and gradually, under the guidance of the T.U.C. General Council, the Movement recovered what it had lost in prestige and influence in the calamitous inter-war years.

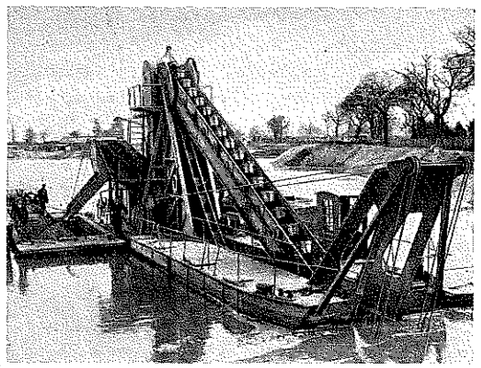
The force and vigour of this general Trade Union recovery found an impressive manifestation in the case of our own Union.

The Union was building up its strength, and recovering lost ground from 1933 on-



Sand and ballast: Gravel processing plant

Sand and ballast: Power shovels loading lorries



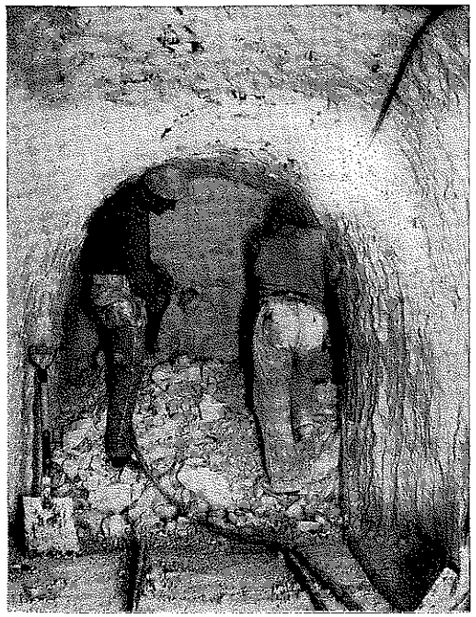
Sand and ballast: A ladder-bucket dredger

wards. It just about doubled its membership between 1933 and 1939. This was in itself a considerable achievement in view of the stagnant conditions of industry in that period of years. Except for the stimulus afforded by the rearmament programme in the five years before the war began, normal industry was almost at a standstill. Nevertheless forces of revival were at work inside the Union which placed it in a better position to face the strains and stresses of the Second World War.

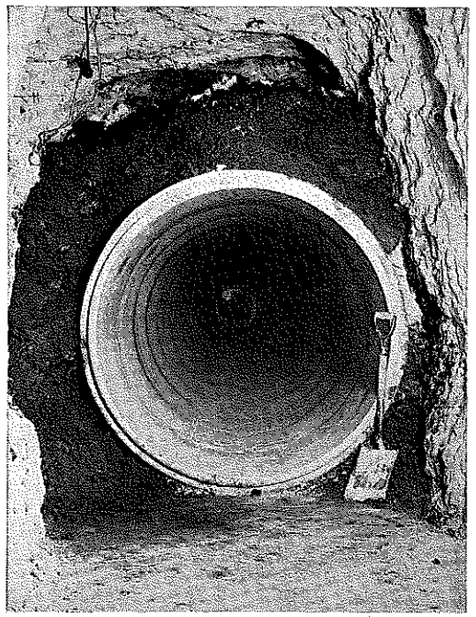
The Second World War

THE SECOND World War had been going on for a year and nine months when our first war-time Congress was convened. Under normal conditions our Biennial Congress should have assembled in June 1940. The swift march of events, having all the appearance at times of irremediable military disaster, compelled the Union's General Council to postpone the 1940 assembly. The armies of Hitler had overrun all Europe; France had collapsed and was under enemy occupation; and the British Expeditionary Force had just escaped from the death trap at Dunkirk, and had been brought back by a miracle of courage and audacious improvisation, across the narrow seas, leaving practically all their military equipment and stores behind them.

When the Biennial Congress met in June 1941 a new Government had been in supreme control for over a year. In May 1940 the Government of Neville Chamberlain fell ignominiously, and a new War Administration had replaced it under the Prime Ministership of Winston Churchill, and with Labour in full partnership. It was due to the statesmanship and exalted



Excavating for a trunk sewer

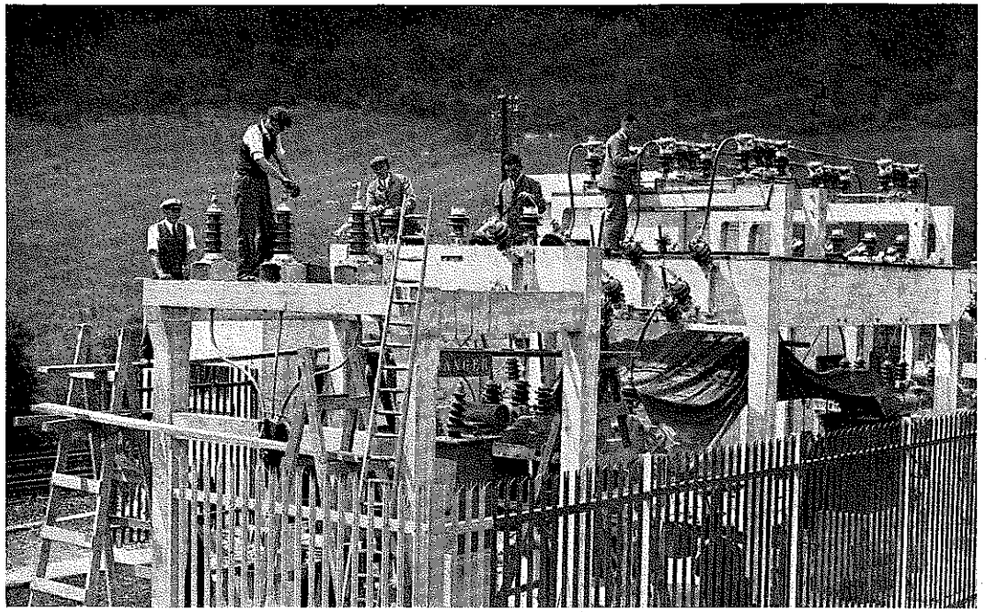


Completed trunk sewer

patriotism of the leaders of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. that the war-time Coalition was formed. Its leading members held high places in the Churchill Administration. A key position—from the Trade Union standpoint—was occupied by Ernest Bevin as Minister of Labour. It was then that a new chapter in industrial relations began to be written.

A remarkable feature of the war-time organization of the industries of this country was the maintenance of the voluntary principle in collective bargaining. To this our Union made a notable contribution. At no time during the war years, 1939 to 1945, was the established negotiating machinery of the Unions set aside. From the onset of the world crisis, before actual hostilities broke out, both the Unions and the employers' organizations recognized their responsibilities and sought the means of close collaboration, with one another, and with the Government, in the application of war-time measures for the mobilization of manpower and the carrying on of essential industries and trades.

The first step in the direction of close collaboration was the setting up of a National Joint Advisory Council to advise the Minister of Labour and National Service on all matters in which employers and workpeople have a common interest. The specific purpose of this joint body was to bring together on common ground the top-level leaders of industry to assist the Minister mainly responsible on the Government side for the management of the country's economic resources, including manpower.



Electricity supply: Erecting a sub-station

Joint bodies, similar in principle, were established to advise particular Ministries. But the main instrument of Government-employer-Union co-operation throughout the war was the Joint Consultative Committee to the Minister of Labour which was constituted by the National Joint Advisory Council.

Representatives of our Union on the T.U.C. General Council took an active part in the consultations which led to the establishment of the N.J.A.C. It was, indeed, the initiative of the T.U.C. that brought this machinery into operation. Its establishment was recommended by the General Council at the first special conference of the Executive Councils of Trade Unions in those exciting and momentous years. By nearly four million votes to little more than half a million, the conference of Trade Union Executives, held in London in the spring of 1939, agreed that such co-ordinating machinery as between the Unions, the employers and the Government Departments concerned with war-time industry, should be brought into existence.

In the upshot the National Joint Advisory Council was constituted with fifteen representatives of the T.U.C. General Council and an equal number representing the British Employers' Confederation. Our own Union representative on the T.U.C. side was the late Harry Harrison. In practice the N.J.A.C. was too large a body to function efficiently in day-to-day consultations with the Minister of Labour. On the day after Ernest Bevin became Minister of Labour, he met the T.U.C. General Coun-

Head Office Finance Department

cil and the Executive Council of the British Employers' Confederation and unfolded to them his plans in broad outline.

Not only did the N.J.A.C. affirm the whole-hearted resolve of both sides of industry to co-operate in the steps necessary to secure the protection of the country and the victory of the United Nations: it also decided to appoint a Joint Consultative Committee which was to function as a sort of industrial Cabinet. This Joint Consultative Committee was composed of seven representatives of the T.U.C. General Council and an equal number representing the British Employers' Confederation. Our own Union had its place on this Joint Committee in the person of Charles Dukes.

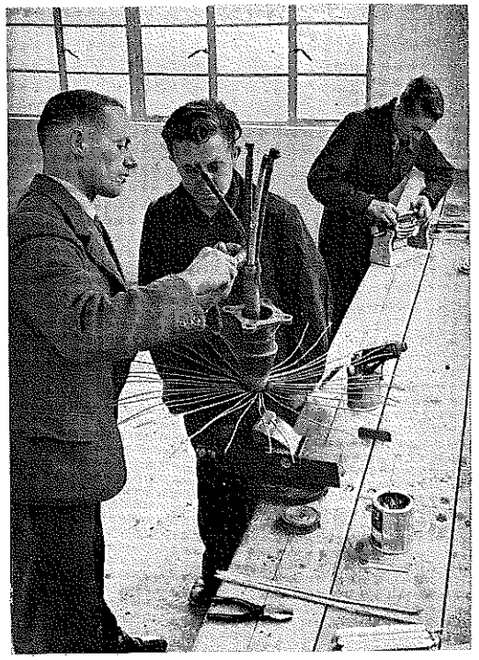
From day to day the representatives of industry kept in close touch through this joint body with the Minister of Labour. In effect, the two great councils of industry—the T.U.C. General Council representing the whole of our Trade Union Movement on the one hand, and the Executive body of the British Employers' Confederation, representing all those associations of employers connected with the productive industries and distributive services of the country—co-operated in the firm and rigorous control and direction of war-time industry which the Government undertook to maintain.

In the evolution of this governmental control, the National Joint Advisory Council was the peak of a pyramid which reached Cabinet level, with the base of the pyramid in the Regional organization with its network of Labour Supply Committees, Regional Boards of Industry, Industrial Capacity Committees, and ultimately on the floor of the workshop itself, the Joint Production Committees.

National Arbitration Tribunal

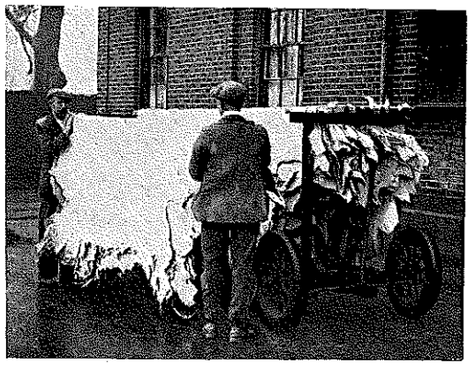
IN ALL THESE war-time joint bodies representatives of our Union played their active part. On the top level, in the Joint Consultative Committee and the National Joint Advisory Council our Union representatives, Charles Dukes and Harry Harrison, shared responsibility for such major decisions of policy as the one embodied in the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order. Under this war-time measure, known as Order No. 1305—a landmark, if ever there was one, in our social history—lockouts and strikes were prohibited unless the dispute had been reported to the Minister of Labour and National Service and had not been referred by him for settlement within twenty-one days. This Order, which was intended obviously to prevent work from being interrupted during the war by trade disputes, illegalized lockouts and strikes, but did not put an end to collective bargaining, neither did it put out of action the ordinary negotiating machinery of our own and other Unions.

What the Order did was to join on to the established negotiating machinery of industry a new body in the form of a National Arbitration Tribunal. Amid much confusion and some misrepresentation about this Tribunal, and many other war-time innovations, one thing stands out plainly—there never was any supersession of the voluntary principle in deciding questions of industrial and social policy. The war was fought with the aim of preserving democratic principles and the institution of free citizenship; and the war was won by the exercise of the principles of voluntary co-operation between the Government and the great organizations of a free people such as our Trade Unions were then, and are now.

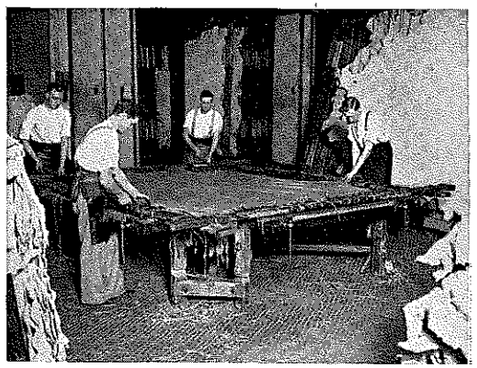


Apprentice learning cable jointing

It was specifically laid down in Order 1305 that where negotiating machinery, maintained for purposes of collective bargaining by Unions and employers' associations, existed for the settlement of disputes, the Minister must refer any matter reported to him for settlement by that machinery; and any settlement so obtained would have the same force as an arbitration award. It was only where the established negotiating machinery failed to effect a settlement that the National Arbitration Tribunal came into operation.



Hide and skin: Preparation



Hide and skin: Preparing hides

The illegalizing of lockouts and strikes was so successfully dealt with that throughout the whole course of the war, from first to last, no official stoppage took place in any section of industry with the sanction of the Trade Unions concerned. It was not the only major question of policy affecting the Trade Unions, from the standpoint of both theory and practice, that was dealt with by the Government in full agreement with the National Joint Advisory Council and its Joint Consultative Committee.

Wages Policy

QUITE AS significant was the decision on wages policy agreed upon by the Government in consultation with both sides of industry. In the early stages of the war suggestions were freely canvassed that wages should be frozen, and that no increase in the cost of living should be made the ground for an increase in wages. The proposal assumed a concrete form in discussions at the National Joint Advisory Council before the war was three months old. The case for some method of stabilizing wages was put before the N.J.A.C. in December, 1939, by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Simon. The T.U.C. General Council took a strong line on this matter, and it is no secret that our Union's representatives on the Council, Charles Dukes, H. L. Bullock, and Harry Harrison, as members of T.U.C. Committees and of the Council itself, had a good deal to do in shaping the Trade Union view on stabilization of wages and prices, and industrial policy generally.

Representations made in protracted consultations with the Government resulted in the publication of a Government White Paper, which insisted upon the duty of both sides of industry to consider together all possible means of preventing the rise of production costs and therefore of price increases, but which also insisted upon the necessity of maintaining the traditional and well-tried practice of the principal industries in regulating wages through their joint voluntary machinery for wage negotiation.

In all permanent records of British Trade Unionism this tribute to the behaviour of the organized workers through their Unions, during the Second World War, should be preserved:

> 'Since the outbreak of war the existing joint voluntary machinery for wage negotiations has operated successfully. Increases in wage rates have been reasonable; the authority of the Unions in the day-to-day adjustment of wages and conditions has been maintained; the freedom of opportunity to make claims and to have them discussed has enabled industrial peace to be maintained.'

This tribute was paid to the Trade Unions in the Government's White Paper. In the course of its statement in that historic document the Government explained that it was on the recommendation of the Joint Consultative Committee and the National Joint Advisory Council that the Government had decided to entrust the responsibility for wage regulation in war-time to the established joint machinery, subject only to the provisions of Order 1305.

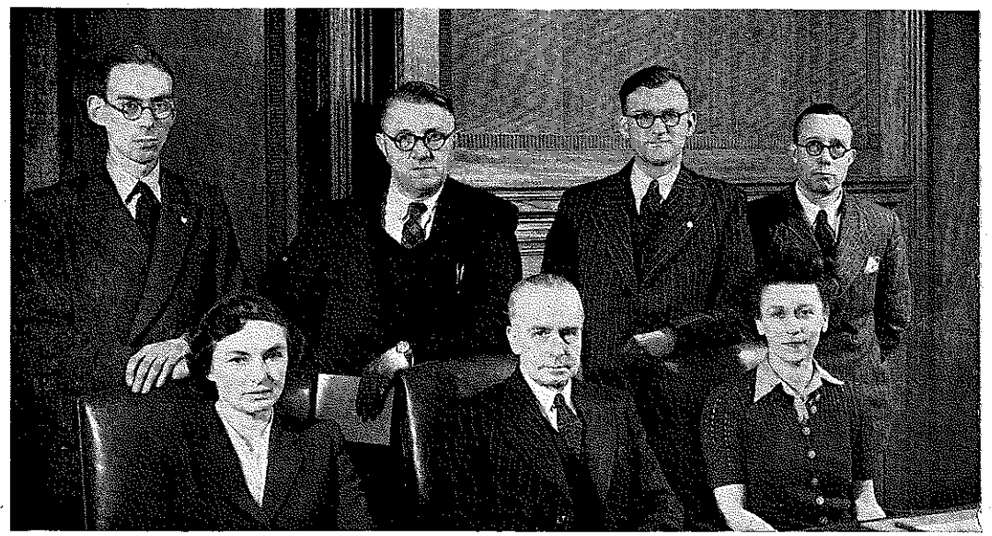
It was therefore fitting that in the 1941 Trades Union Congress, in Edinburgh, a spokesman of our Union, Harry Harrison, should have been designated to present a composite resolution in the following terms:

> That this Congress, being convinced that the continuous consultation between Government Departments and Trade Union leaders has been a valuable asset in building up our war production, approves the general relationship existing between the Government and the British Trades Union Congress, and having regard to the absolute necessity, particularly in mechanized warfare, of maintaining maximum quantity and quality of output, calls on the Government (*a*) to regard the manning of industry as of equal importance with manpower for fighting services, and to associate the Trade Unions concerned with the administration of management of all vital war industries; and (*b*) to consult the Trade Unions concerned before an application for the deferment of a calling up notice is decided.

This resolution reveals the confidence our own Union felt in its war-time leadership, and in the policy laid down for the Movement as a whole by the Trades Union Congress. Harry Harrison, in moving this resolution, hammered home a point which is equally relevant today, when the needs of great production are as clamorous as they were in war-time. He said that if greater production was to be obtained, trade unionists and workpeople had to be taken in to the fullest and completest confidence. 'I want our General Council (he said) to insist on complete confidence, complete consultation, and if our Government departments who are as big offenders as the employers, are not prepared to take us into their confidence, and are going to permit us to be subject to the accusation of absenteeism and slacking and not giving of our best, the resentment that exists now will become a revolt. I want to appeal to them. Let the spending departments take the Unions into their confidence, tell us what their programme is, tell us what they want, and if it is humanly possible to give it them, they will get it.'

Over and over again in the course of the war years the strong and emphatic voice of the Trade Unions could be heard uttering such common sense as this, not only in Trade Union assemblies, but in the Council chamber.

In the Trades Union Congress of the



Head Office Secretarial Staff

following year, at Blackpool in 1942, our Union through Charles Dukes gave its full support to the General Council's declaration expressing the 'unalterable resolve of the British workers to see the war through to the end in complete and final victory'. Brother Dukes took that opportunity of stating the attitude of our own Union on the question of 'a second front' in Europe, which was at that time the subject of violent propaganda in the interests of Soviet Russia. He said that speeches similar to those made at the Blackpool Congress had been made at our own Union meetings. The reference reflects the fact that on more than one question of war-time policy there was in our Union a minority and majority view. To judge from such speeches, Bro Dukes said that it might be imagined that sympathy for our Russian Allies was a monopoly of a section of the Movement, but the debate itself showed that the whole Movement was resolute in its wish to give the greatest possible assistance to Soviet Russia.

There was criticism, too, of other aspects of war-time experience, voiced not only at the Trades Union Congress from year to year, but in our own Biennial Congress. The Union's leadership had to withstand a certain amount of criticism in regard to such matters as the operation of Order 1305. In our 1942 Biennial Congress, for example, the claim was asserted that the Order should be amended so as to cover the Local Authorities.

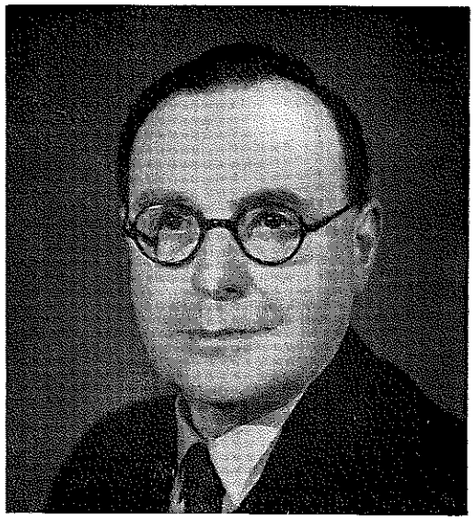
This question arose out of a legal decision in the case of Bolton workpeople, who had been taken into the armed forces, but claimed to have their remuneration made up whilst serving with the Forces by the Local Authority that employed them. The legal case had many complications. It involved the position of local government

employees who were tied to their jobs in particular areas, although they could, if released, secure employment at much more favourable rates and easier conditions elsewhere. It was unfair, as the Union itself recognized, that men should be deprived of the right to go to the Arbitration Tribunal with applications for increased wages; the difficulty was whether local authorities were tied by the Bolton judgment.

Plain speaking to the local authorities came from the Union's General Secretary (Charles Dukes), in our Biennial Congress of that year. 'The local authorities,' he said, 'should not play the game of sitting back when national wage claims are under negotiation, but should put drive into the employers' side. I am fed up with that game being played: it has gone on too long, and I am saying to all authorities whether they are manned by a Labour Majority, or in any other way: We are making our last appeal for a square deal, and we are going to insist upon our right, inasmuch as our men are tied to their jobs, which are essential jobs, as essential as any form of munition effort in the world.' The Union's firm attitude in this matter opened the door of the Arbitration Tribunal to the consideration of Union claims on local authorities.

The determination of our own Union to maintain the essential principles of Trade Union democracy was clearly expressed at the first opportunity in the war years. At our Biennial Congress in 1941, Bro Fred Marshall declared from the chair that Union policy was to maintain under war conditions its full freedom of action and to continue to negotiate on the merits of the situation as it developed:

'That is the policy of this powerful organization,' said Bro Marshall. 'It has been expressed on our behalf in clear and

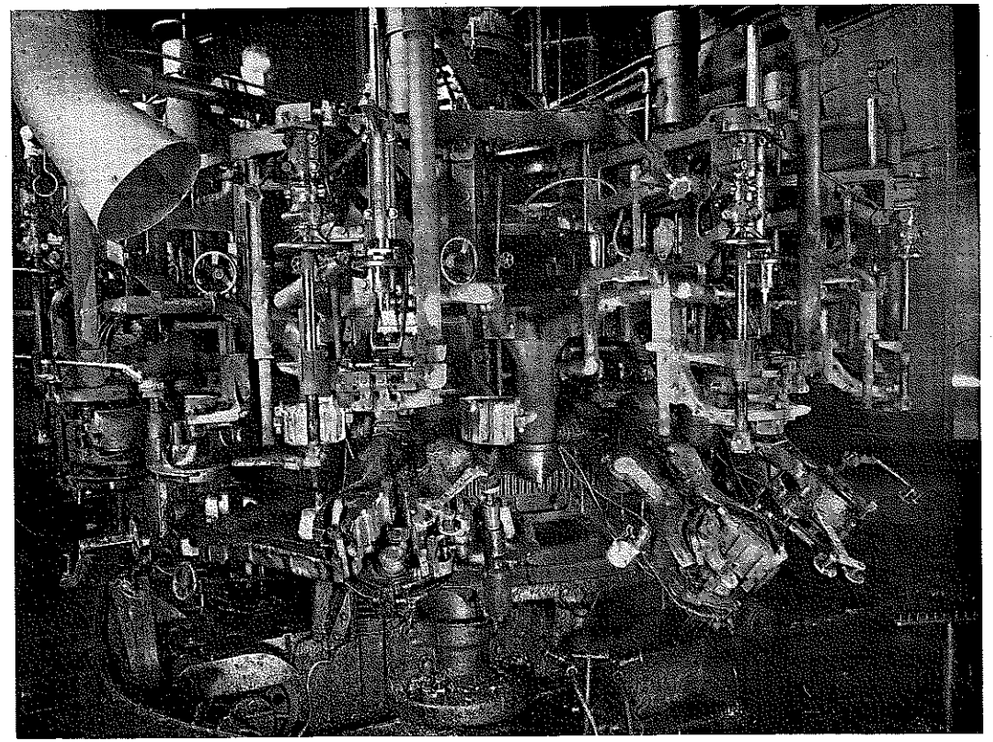


F. MARSHALL, *Chairman* 1937–1946

firm language by our General Secretary in the councils of organized labour and in public utterances. Trade Unionism has been built up on voluntary association; from that it derives its strength and virility. Freedom to pursue its policy of collective bargaining is the very essence and spirit of its existence. To exchange that freedom for a system of rigid automatic controls, operated from State Departments, would be really to hamstring our Movement and depart from the tradition and practice of a century.'

War-time Policy

IT IS INDICATIVE of the spirit which inspired our Union in this period of crisis that Bro Marshall, in his presidential address, also looked ahead to the tasks of reconstruction that would have to be taken in hand after



Glass bottle making machine

the war. Vast schemes of social and economic planning would have to be undertaken, he said, to effect the change-over from war to peace: 'The whole resources of the State will need to be employed to counteract the aftermath of war, and even now we should be planning for that time. This task will be gigantic, but at the same time it will present the greatest opportunity that has ever happened in the history of the world. It is nothing less than the creation of a fairer Britain, the rebuilding of our destroyed cities, the planning of our industries, the preservation of all we cherish, and the establishment of social justice.'

This prophetic utterance has found its partial fulfilment in the work already accomplished by the Labour Government which took office in astonishing circumstances when the war came to an end.

Other evidence is supplied by the reports of our Biennial Congresses during the war years to show that the Union faced up to its responsibilities in war and for peace with courage and vision. The 1941 Biennial Congress, for one thing, decided to relax the rule which required its officers to retire from active service on reaching the age of 65. It was explained to the Congress that under the Military Service Act the Union

was losing the services of quite a number of its younger officials and other permanent employees. The field of recruitment for new Union personnel, moreover, was seriously restricted by the provisions of the Order relating to essential work. Thus the Union was in danger of losing its effective personnel at both ends of the age-scale.

Accordingly, after mature consideration, the National Executive, with the approval of the Union's General Council, decided that purely as a war-time measure District Committees should be given discretionary power to continue for a given period, but not beyond the conclusion of the war, the services of any officer due for retirement under the age-rule, with the proviso that, of course, the officer concerned was a consenting party and was capable of carrying on with his work. At the same time, the Congress agreed to amendment of the rule governing Union contributions.

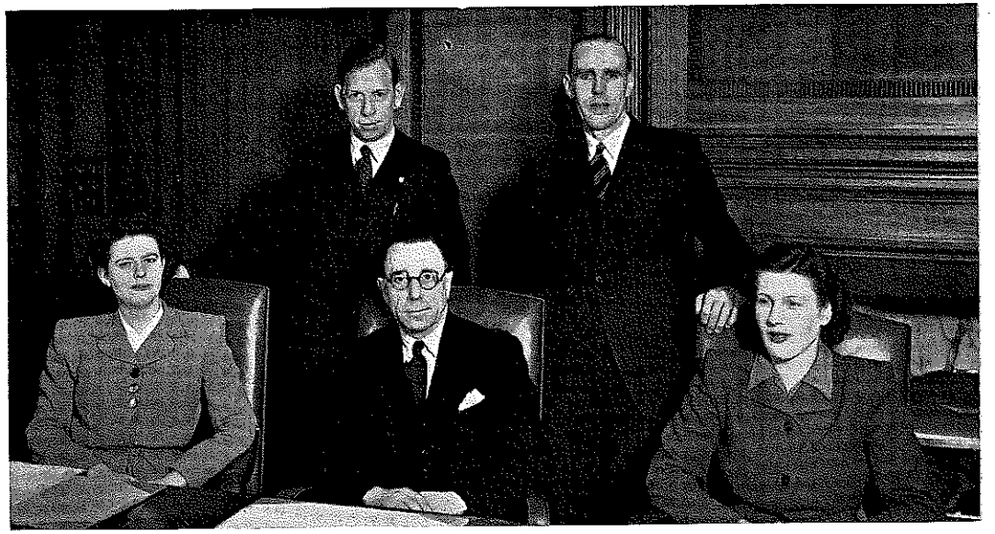
Both the National Executive and the General Council of the Union gave prolonged consideration to the financial position resulting from the fall of members' contributions, due to the entry of so many into the armed forces; to a decline in revenue from Union invested funds; and to rising expenditure. Union income (excluding revenue of the Optional Sick Fund Section) at the outbreak of war stood at approximately £460,000 a year; but total trade expenditure amounted to well over £321,000.

In these circumstances it was felt to be necessary to raise the weekly Union contribution for full members from 6*d.* to 7*d.*, and for half members from 3*d.* to 4*d.*

The necessity for these new financial arrangements was made clear to the Congress by the General Secretary. Bro Dukes put the matter in the perspective of history

Manufacturing knitting needles

in pointing out that there has been nothing static in the Union's membership dues. He could go back to the time when the weekly contribution was 2½*d.*—and at that time the notion prevailed that the right thing to do was merely to collect the members' contributions and then spend them in fighting the employers; and afterwards to lie fallow until Union funds had been built up again. Union tasks and responsibilities are different today, Bro Dukes pointed out: its work calls for larger staffs, administrative costs inevitably rose when the industries with which the Union was concerned passed from the Trade Boards stage to the era of Joint Industrial Councils and negotiating bodies with increased Union representa-



Head Office Research Staff

tion—to say nothing of the rise in costs of travel on the thousand and one Union errands that officers had to undertake; the postal charges incurred in keeping up communications with more than 2,000 Union branches; the ever-extending consumption of paper and print, and so on. The case for higher membership dues, therefore, could hardly be gainsaid.

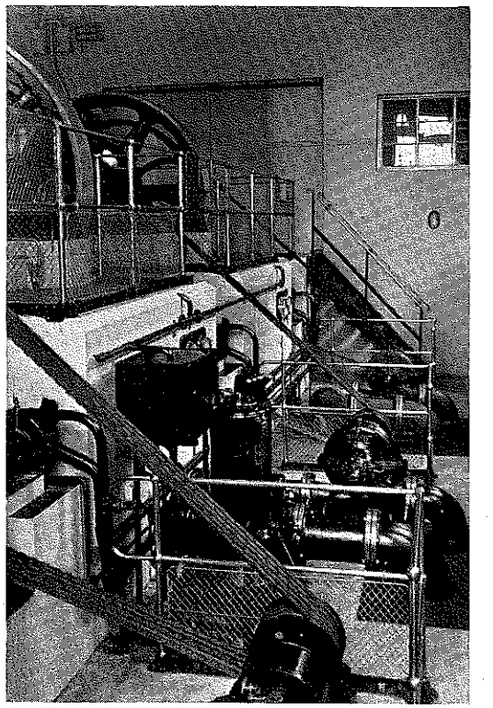
Abnormal conditions of the war years, affecting Union administration, impelled the 1941 biennial Congress to sanction another important precaution—the granting of special powers to the General Secretary and Treasurer, equivalent to powers of Attorney. These powers were needed purely for emergency purposes. It was explained to the 1941 Biennial Congress that under the prevailing war conditions a regional organization had been set up by the Government itself and regional authorities had been appointed having practically dictatorial powers. The necessity for this arose out of the possibilities of a breakdown in the central apparatus of Government. The Trade Union organization had similarly to adapt itself to act swiftly and effectively in the event of an invasion or of a breakdown in any part of its machinery.

Without special powers, it was pointed out, the General Secretary and Treasurer in his dual capacity might find it impossible to take urgent and unavoidable decisions in an emergency. A lengthy resolution setting forth the requirements of the situation and defining the scope of the powers sought for the Union's principal administrative officer was accepted by the Congress. Its effect was virtually to invest the General Secretary for the time being with the powers and authority of the Union's National Executive and General Council. These

powers were revoked in 1947. The whole of the proceedings of our historic first war Congress at Blackpool in 1941 justified Bro Dukes' description of its 'wealth of effort and depth of purpose' as being without precedent in Union history.

As the war dragged on through four more years of exhausting struggle the wisdom of the Union's far-sighted policy found ample vindication. From the administrative standpoint, the responsibilities of all departments and district officials steadily increased. In the first two years of the war, membership rose from about 480,000 (including rather more than 70,000 women members) to nearly 600,000, a total which included 162,000 women. This rapid rate of recruitment was all the more significant in view of the fuller entry of women into war-time industry. As a matter of statistics, the actual increase of members in these two war years was 273,000, but many thousands of members joined the Forces, and this drain, combined with other losses, left the Union at that stage with a net increase of about 118,000.

An even clearer indication of the far-sightedness of Union policy in the war years was the declaration made by the 1942 Biennial Congress on post-war reconstruction. The Congress recorded its approval of the measures which were even then being taken to prepare for the coming of peace. The resolution affirmed the principle that within the general scheme of reconstruction there must be provision whereby the minimum requirements of life are guaranteed as a first charge on industry and the right of the worker to employment or full maintenance must be assured. A great deal of what the Labour Government has done and continues to do since its advent to power in 1945 was foreshadowed in the discussion



Waterworks: Engine house showing centrifugal pumps

that took place in our Congress on this resolution.

It was natural that delegates of a Union such as ours should give special attention to the policy of nationalizing the services of fuel, lighting and power, in considering problems of post-war reconstruction. A resolution asserting the Union view that all these services should be brought under a controlled system with proper rational planning for the elimination of wasteful competition as between the different forms of light, heat and power supply found its fulfilment in the great series of nationalizing Acts of Parliament which the Labour Government subsequently

J. MATTHEWS ALICE B. HORAN F. HAYDAY

National Woman Officer and two National Industrial Officers

placed upon the Statute Book.

Another postponement of the periodical Congresses of our Union was necessitated by war conditions in 1944. In response to an urgent appeal from the Government the Union's General Council agreed to cancel the arrangements for that year's assembly. Events were then moving fast towards a victorious conclusion of the long drawn-out conflict on many fields of battle. The invasion of the European continent through Normandy by the Allied armies required the utmost use of all means of transport for military purposes and civilian travel had perforce to be cut down to a minimum. Consequently, our Biennial Congress did not meet until mid-1945—only a month after the complete capitulation of Germany brought to an end the European war.

In his report to the 1945 Congress, the General Secretary was able to review Union progress during the war years. From a total of 598,000 members in 1941, the strength of the Union rose to 726,000 in 1943, an increase of nearly 21½ per cent. A notable feature of the war-time recruitment of members was a 50 per cent increase in our women membership between 1941 and 1943. There was a slight recession from the 1942–43 total of 244,000 women members during the succeeeding years due to the retirement of many women workers from their war service in industry. Nevertheless, the position of the Union among the women workers in a variety of industries, including the engineering and allied trades, was materially strengthened during the war. Marked improvements were made in wage standards in many of the industries employing women, and especially in the Trade Board trades.

Some of the problems of organization that the Union's officials had to grapple with during the war were referred to at

the 1944 Congress. Many of the problems arising in the districts were the product of the complicated process of transferring workers from one industry to another in consequence of changes in the general production programme. Thus in one Government factory alone, in the Liverpool district, it is recorded that the number of employees went up to 20,000 and then fell to 10,000; whilst in other districts, workers were shifted about a good deal as some factories closed and others were opened; and many of the transferred workers neglected to exercise their right to maintain their membership of our Union when they were moved to other places and other trades.

Inevitably the Union's leading personnel was affected by the strain of the war years, and it became necessary to appoint additional industrial officers for national work at Union headquarters. Among these changes was the appointment of Bro J. Cooper, Bro H. Crane, and Bro J. Matthews as National Industrial Officers; an arrangement that was subsequently reviewed and revised in the case of Bro Cooper when Bro Cochrane who had been in charge of the Southern district returned to head office in his former capacity as National Industrial Officer, and Bro Cooper took his place as Secretary of the Southern District.

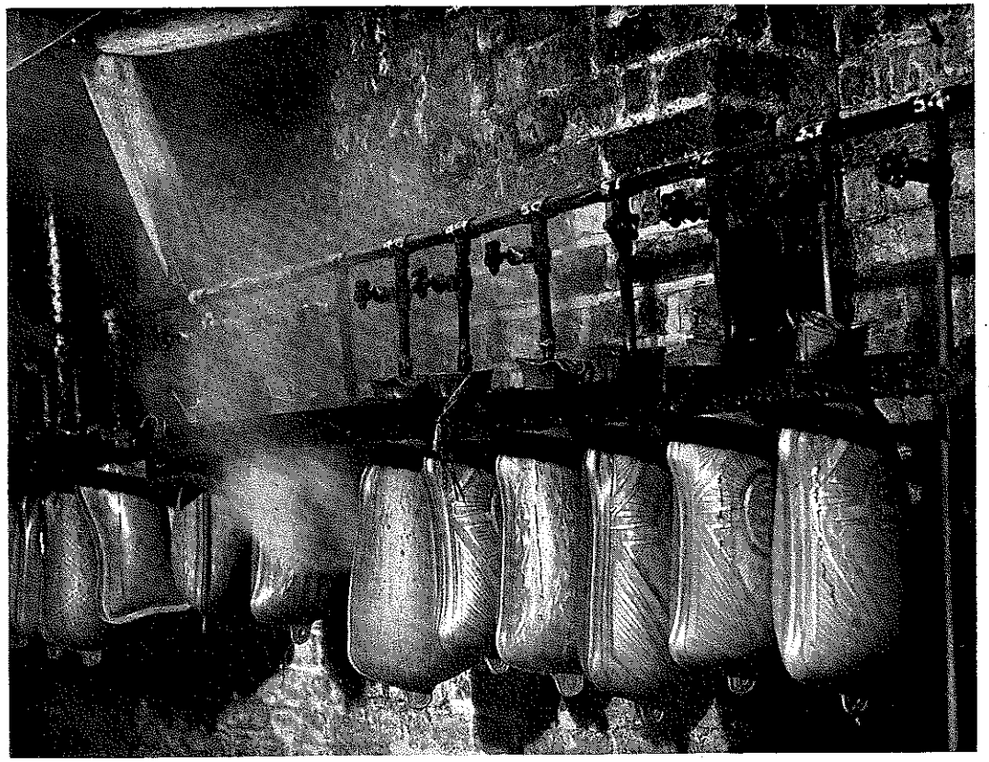
Bro H. Crane, O.B.E., has been an active trade unionist since 1919. He was born in South Africa, and during his industrial life, including two years in Australia, he had been fitter's apprentice, axeman, cattle station mechanic, motor mechanic and road builder. He helped to form our Nottingham No. 9 Branch in 1928, and was chairman of that Branch for a time. He was appointed as an Organizer in the Mid-

Electricity supply: Boiler maintenance

land and East Coast District in 1934 and became a National Industrial Officer in 1943. He was awarded the O.B.E. in the 1949 New Year Honours List.

Before Bro Matthews was transferred to Head Office in January 1945, to become a National Industrial Officer, he was an Organizer in the South Western District, and operated from Bristol. Previously he had been full-time Secretary to the Bristol General Branch, which office he took over from Bro Bullock.

After leaving school he joined the army, and saw foreign service in India and China. When he left the army he obtained employment first in the building industry, then in the gas industry, and afterwards in a Bristol Municipal Institution. Very early



Rubber: Hot-water bottles under test

in his industrial life he took out one of our cards, and helped to establish organization amongst his fellow workers. He served for a time as a member of the Glouçester County Council.

Many other changes took place in the administrative and official personnel of the Union during the war years. But the Union emerged from the world war strong and virile, conscious that its members had played a worthy part in hundreds of industrial processes and vital services which had been indispensable in the winning of the war. As the chairman said at the 1945 Congress, in the gas industry and the public services—the life-lines of the nation —they had manned their posts under the most terrifying blitzes and had done their job; forty or fifty thousand members had gone into the armed services and were presently to return home to resume membership of the Union and ready to assist the Union to make a worthy contribution to the solution of the gigantic tasks of peace.

So this record of Union history comes to the point where a new chapter opened in the social, political and economic life of the world.

Post-War Organization

WITH THE coming of peace our Union in common with all others set its feet upon an uphill and stony road. The war bequeathed to the British people many difficult economic and social problems. Our own Union had its fair share of them. Inevitably this was the case, because our organization has such wide ramifications throughout the whole massive structure of industry and trade. The period of reconstruction upon which we entered at the end of the war found the Union well prepared to face up to its responsibilities.

It is true that in the earlier months of transition the Union appeared to be losing members. At the end of 1945 there was a drop of approximately 56,000 in our membership total. The loss was more apparent than real, and the position was very speedily retrieved. Actually the decrease was due to a fall of over 64,000 in the Union's women membership. Our male membership in fact increased by over 8,000. What had happened amongst the women workers was neither surprising nor unexpected. During the war many thousands of women had entered industry, and many of them were turning naturally from the war factories to their homes. This exodus of women from industry was on a large scale. Within six months from June to December 1945 more than half a million women left industry, and our loss of women members in these circumstances was certainly not disproportionate.

Already there were indications that the Union membership was on the upward slant. It was a problem that could not find its solution in the very early months of the peace years, because a vast readjustment of the labour force throughout industry had to be effected. In many of our districts the closing down of Government factories involved a heavy transfer of labour to other places. A decline in membership was inevitable in the Lancashire and Liverpool, North Wales and Irish districts, and likewise in the Southern district, as a result of the slackening off of the war industries. But in these districts organizing activities were stimulated. Many new branches were opened, and the rise of new industries created opportunities for Union expansion.

Inevitable, too, after the war, were changes in the higher administrative offices of the Union. Under the strain of the war years some of the older officials sought retirement. The operation of the age-limit rule too brought about the retirement of the Union's General Secretary, Bro Charles Dukes. The value of his services, and the deservedly high place he held in the Trade Union Movement as a whole, determined the General Council of our Union to recommend that Bro Dukes should continue his connection with the Union in an advisory capacity until the date of the Annual Trades Union Congress in 1947. This recommendation was ratified by our 1946 Congress.

But the Congress also authorized that the procedure for the election of his successor, in accordance with Union rules, should be set in motion. In due course a ballot of the members was held which resulted in the election of Bro TomWilliamson by 262,413 votes, representing an excess of nearly 40,000 votes over the combined votes of the other six candidates. In accordance with the ballot, endorsed by the General Council of the Union at a special meeting, BroWilliamson assumed the full responsibility of the General Secretaryship in October 1946.

T. W. KERRY, J.P., *Chairman* 1946–1948

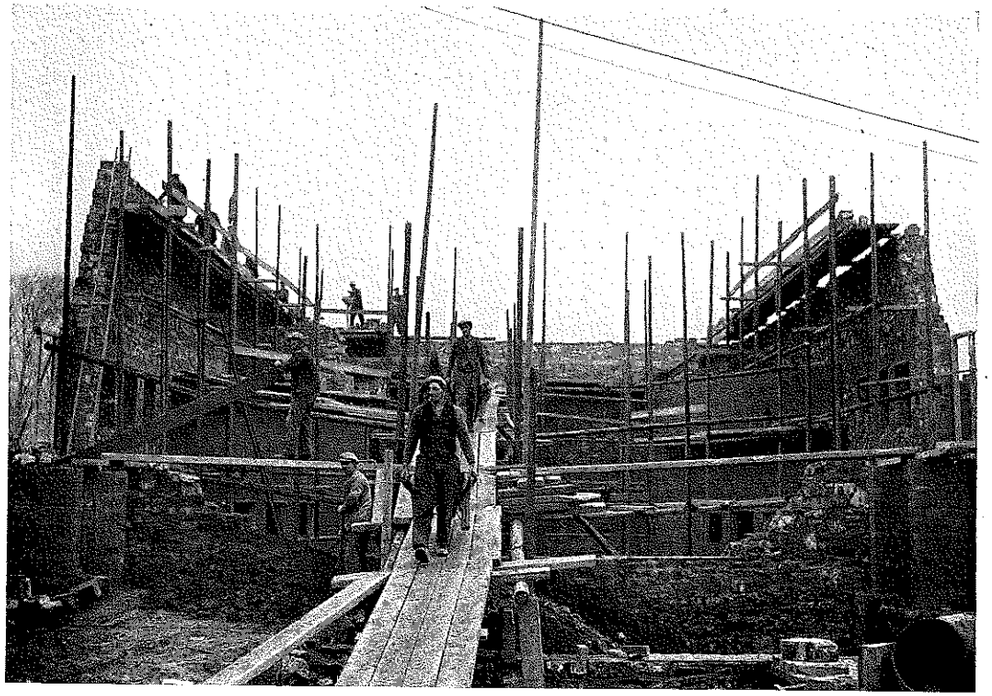
High tribute was paid at the Congress of that year (1947) to the personality and service of Bro Dukes, whose place in the forefront of the Movement was recognized at that time by his elevation to the House of Lords as Lord Dukeston of Warrington. From the vantage point of the House of Lords he continued in public life, doing valuable work as the country's representative on the Commission of the United Nations which framed the great Charter of Human Rights; but ill health overtook him with great suddenness, and he died on May 14, 1948.

Within the first year of peace death overtook, too, one of the Grand Old Men of the Trade Union Movement. The founder of our Union, Bro Will Thorne, died on January 3, 1946, full of years and honours. The Union also lost, a few months earlier (in June 1945), one of its official trustees and an official parliamentary candidate of the Union, Bro Walter Windsor. His death occurred only a short time before the General Election of 1945 signalled the sweeping victory of the Labour Party and the advent of the third Labour Government—this time a Government with an adequate majority for the reconstruction programme to which the Movement stood pledged.

The death of Bro Harry Harrison, in 1937, terminated, after serious illness, a long career of devoted and loyal service to the Union and to the Movement at large. Our head office administration lost, too, in the death of Bro H. Hartley in 1948, an Executive Officer who was for many years responsible for the preparation of reports to Congress, and the documentation of the General Council and National Executive.

The first of our Biennial Congresses in the years of peace found its chairman in the person of Bro T. Kerry. This was the last of our Biennial Congresses, as it was then decided that the Union should hold its national assembly annually.

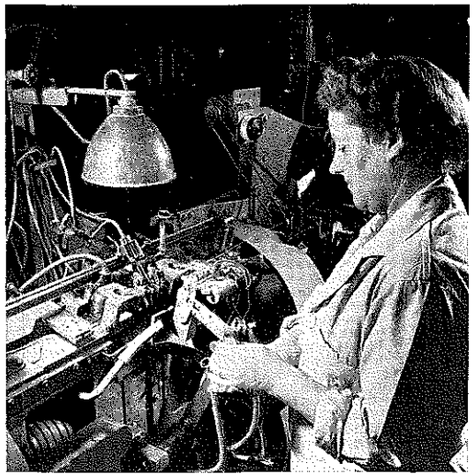
Bro Kerry reminded his fellow delegates at the 1946 Congress that he had served the Union for 40 years, having held in the early years lowly positions as Branch doorkeeper, Minute Secretary, shop steward and Branch Secretary, before becoming a full-time officer of the Union. In his address from the chair Bro Kerry referred to the rapid switch-over from war to peace production that followed the final overthrow of the enemy powers. There was a fear that chaos might follow the stoppage of war production, but as Bro Kerry said, 'the co-operation of all elements in the country enabled the worst difficulties of the demobilization to be avoided', and he expressed the view, which events have confirmed, that the contribution to the winning



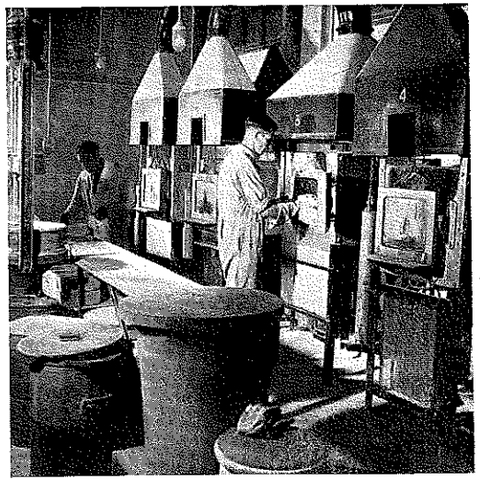
Building Trade Workers

of the war made by the Trade Unions had created a public opinion which, if wisely used, could assist greatly in the building of a new Britain.

The remarkable victory of the Labour Party in the General Election of 1945 meant, Bro Kerry added, a gigantic responsibility which he was confident the Labour Government would be able to meet. It was possible for our Chairman at that time to point to the beginning of far-reaching changes initiated by the Labour Government, including the nationalization of the Bank of England, the mining industry, and preparations for nationalization of the electricity and gas industries. He made special mention of the erasure from the Statute Book of the infamous Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927, a punitive measure enacted after the National Strike of 1926. Whilst warning our organized Movement that political measures were not ends in themselves, Bro Kerry emphasized the responsibility resting upon the industrial side of the Movement, as well as upon those who serve in the field of politics. The opportunity for which our Movement had worked from the foundation of the Labour Party at the beginning of the century had now been realized, and he struck a prophetic note in affirming his confidence that the Movement's representa-



Electric lamps: Making the lead-in wires



Electric lamps: Preparing materials for filaments

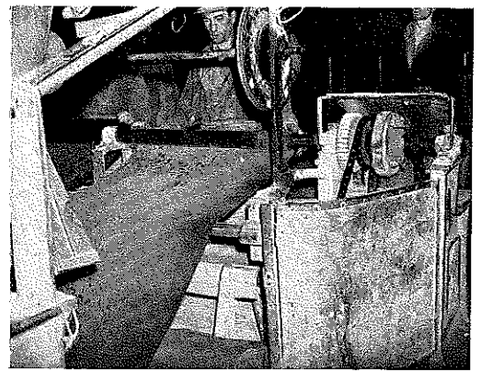
tives would rise to the height of their responsibility, and would be able to convince the country by their achievement that the only Party in the State capable of government in a modern world is the Labour Party.

'We will live to see great changes,' Bro Kerry said. 'The social services of the country will be developed; our policy of full employment will be unfolded, but its success depends primarily upon the attitude of the trade unionists towards this economic revolution through which we are passing.'

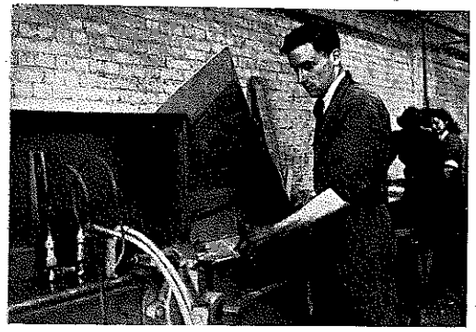
Progress

IN HIS first report as General Secretary to the Union's Congress in 1947, Bro Williamson had ground for saying that every aspect of Union activities, in the preceding year, had led to record achievements. This was manifestly the fact in regard to Union membership. By the end of 1946 the Union had attained a record total of nearly 800,000 members. The rise in numbers from 604,753 at the end of 1945 to 795,173 at the end of 1946 represented an increase of nearly 31 per cent for the year, a striking contrast to the drop of 8½ per cent in 1945. Never had the membership of our Union reached this high level; the nearest approach to it was in March 1943, when the membership total stood at 734,200.

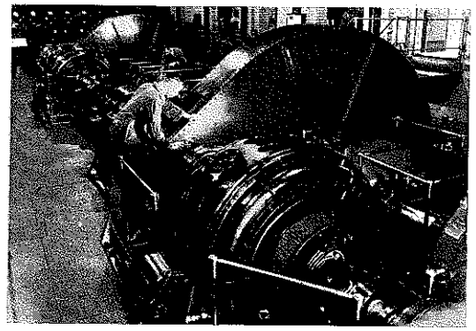
A significant feature of these membership figures was a substantial increase in our women membership again, which approximated at the end of 1946 to 150,000. This was an increase of nearly 20,000 on the previous year, when our women's membership was falling slightly. It was notable that the increase in women's membership was spread over the whole of our ten districts. It reflected intensive organizing activity in all the districts. As a matter of fact in 1946 as many as 320,000 new members were recruited. Allowing for lapses and losses through death, age, and length of service, the net increase of 190,000 in the year meant that for every ten newly enrolled members six retained membership —a very high ratio of retention which pointed convincingly to the determination on the part of the workers (as Bro Williamson noted in his report) to line up within the organized industrial movement, which he described as 'an accepted and fundamental institution of our lives today'.



Roofing felt: Rolling out excess bitumen



Plywood: A stage in its manufacture



Local Government Service: Electricity supply

Organization in a Union such as ours, Bro Williamson pointed out, is not automatic. Much hard and sustained work has to be accomplished in securing new recruits; and the high ratio of new recruitment retained in membership, he emphasized, adds testimony to the efficient service which the Union gives. In his report to the second of our Annual Congresses, in June 1948, Bro Williamson presented further proof that our Union's advancement, as he said, is very sound and well established and not a result of some momentary fluctuation, and hard and honest effort on the part of many brought the Union along to where it stands today. 'Those loyalties which are found so deeply embedded in the characters of our Branch officers, the conscientious service rendered by the officials in dealing with every day matters arising concerning the welfare of our members, and those members whose integrity and forthrightness is typical of those who desire only that the Union shall grow strong to further the interest of the organized worker, as opposed to a very small minority whose presence is to hinder and harass—these are the components which contributed to our success. We have a job to do in this Movement of ours,' Bro Williamson proclaimed, 'and while we have these loyalties we shall con-

tinue to give unlimited service and protection to our members whoever may try to frustrate us.'

The Union about which these things could truthfully be asserted was, at that time, nearly 824,000 strong. A table was annexed to the General Secretary's report to the 1948 Congress, showing the steady upward trend of Union membership from 1933 onwards. The table reveals an almost continuous increase in the contributions of members from approximately £250,000 in 1928 to approximately £1,000,000 in 1948. This table is printed here as the symbol of Union progress in the last two decades of its history to date.

MEMBERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTIONS 1928—1947

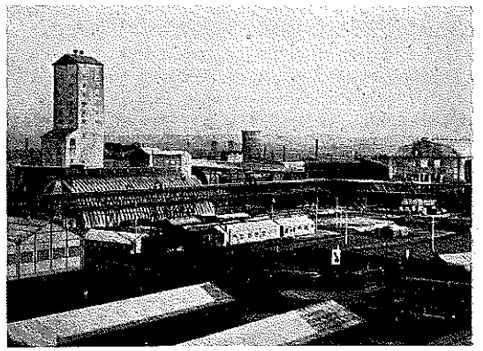
Year	Total Membership	Female Membership incl. in total	Contributions	Benefits
			£	£
1928	283,006	25,512	262,206	47,247
1929	290,877	26,701	257,472	57,812
1930	282,903	24,876	252,707	47,762
1931	267,734	20,588	232,245	51,251
1932	241,998	19,349	214,411	52,136
1933	241,447	20,460	204,443	51,433
1934	269,357	23,427	229,129	45,520
1935	300,145	25,929	254,858	50,611
1936	366,467	35,691	297,325	52,399
1937	439,287	47,351	367,545	55,333
1938	452,367	47,023	409,409	53,483
1939	467,060	55,780	399,544	56,056
1940	479,318	70,624	404,468	58,807
1941	597,890	162,381	482,371	55,192
1942	720,666	257,138	649,089*	52,719
1943	726,487	243,710	706,970	59,345
1944	660,604	193,830	694,490	68,610
1945	604,753	129,529	633,682	63,228
1946	795,173	149,058	766,051	72,553
1947	823,612	159,628	908,197	77,956

*Rate of contribution increased by 1d. July 1, 1941.

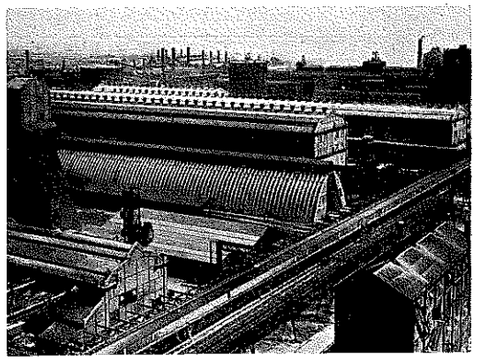
Collateral evidence of the work of the Union, expressed in financial terms is supplied by the following table:

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS PAID BY UNION, AND COMPENSATION RECOVERED UP TO DECEMBER 25, 1948

	£	s.	d.
Dispute Benefit ..	1,175,063	6	10½
Funeral Benefit	1,255,845	18	8
Disablement Benefit ..	82,463	0	0
Sick and Accident Benefit	361,266	7	4½
Compensation recovered	7,501,292	17	8½
	£10,375,931	10	7½



Part of I.C.I. works, Billingham



Another view of I.C.I., Billingham

Road Making: New housing estate

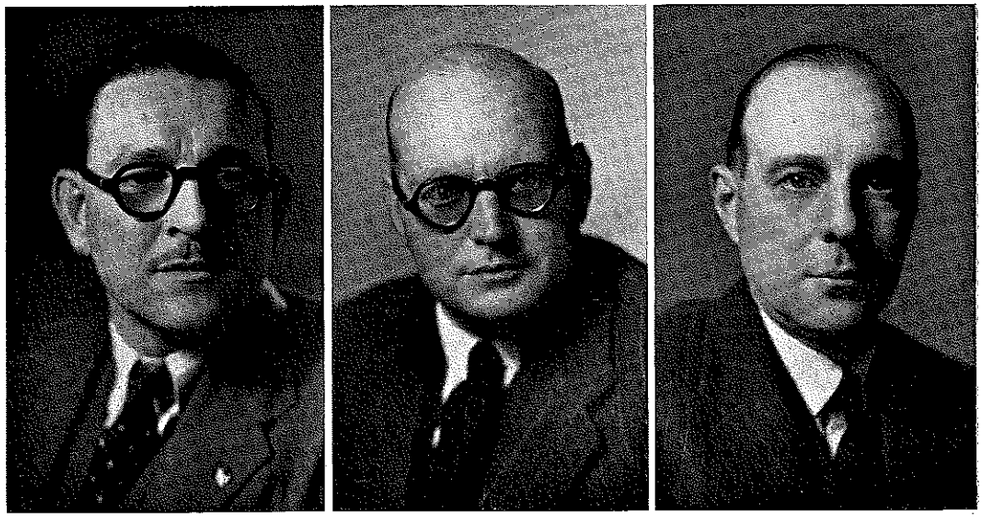
In looking at these figures it should always be remembered that the Union never set out to undertake the work of a friendly society. It has always believed that its main task as a Union was to build up wages and to improve the standards of life of its members in the wide range of industries where it found them, and simultaneously to develop the political side of our organized Movement so that by legislation and State administration an adequate system of social security would be brought into being. At the end of sixty years the Union can look back upon the verification of this view of its functions and responsibilities on both the industrial and the political aspects of its work.

Administration

CONSIDERABLE CHANGES in Head Office official personnel followed upon the election of Bro Williamson to the General Secretaryship. The position he vacated as a National Industrial Officer of the Union was filled by the unanimous selection of Bro F. Hayday, son of Arthur Hayday, as his successor.

It was during the General Strike of 1926 that Bro Fred Hayday joined the clerical staff of the Midland District. At the age of twenty-two he was elected District Organizer.

During the last war, in addition to his many trade union activities in the District,



C. H. BECKETT R. G. COOK F. REID

National Industrial Officers

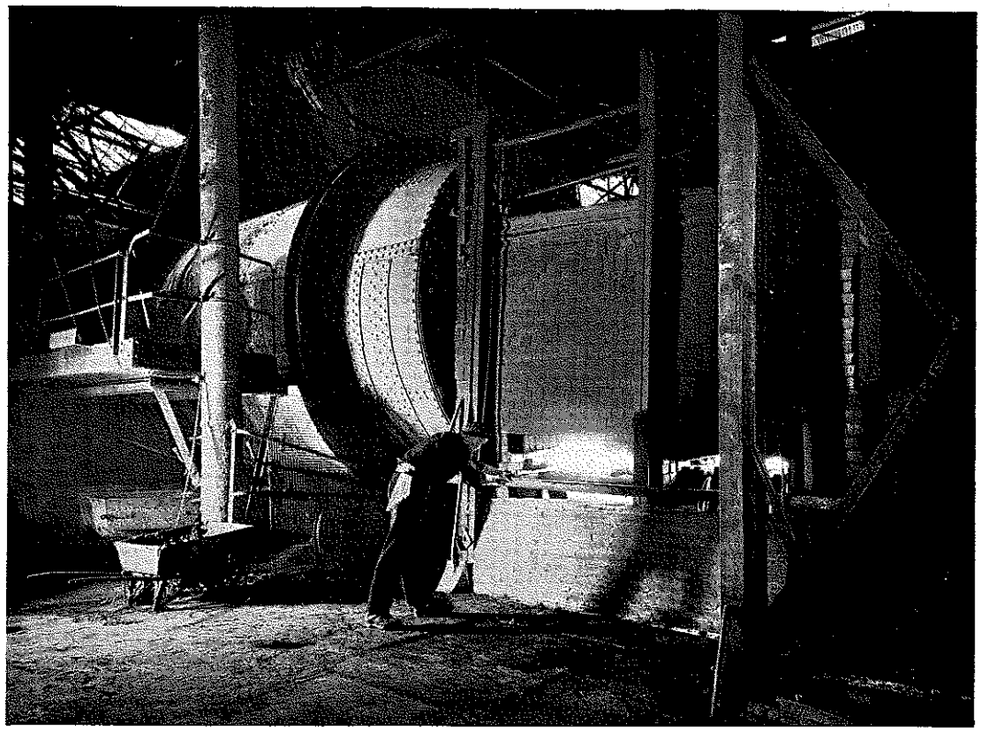
he was appointed by the Lord Chancellor to the North Midland Aliens' Tribunal, and soon after the war he was a member of the Brick Amenities Committee, set up by the Minister of Works to investigate conditions in the brick industry. He visited many brickworks in this country, in Belgium and in Holland.

Other changes in Head Office organization in the earliest of the peace years were the formation of a separate Research Department and also the appointment of Bros C. H. Beckett, R. G. Cook, and F. Reid, as additional National Industrial Officers.

Bro C. H. Beckett was appointed a National Industrial Officer in July 1947. He took out his first trade union card when he left school in 1924. In 1934, after a period of eight years in the Royal Corps of Signals he obtained employment in the electricity industry, first as a labourer, and afterwards as an assistant before becoming a fully qualified turbine driver. When he started with the Norwich electricity undertaking he joined our Norwich branch, and during the subsequent five years he played an active part in the work of the Branch and of the Works Committee at the power station. He became an official in the London District in 1939.

Bro R. G. Cook joined the Barry branch of the Union in 1931 and became branch secretary four years later. He was a member of the South-Western District Council in 1937, and the District Committee the following year. His service as an official started in 1940, and he remained in the South-Western District until his appointment as a National Officer in October 1947.

Over a number of years he has been an active member of the Labour Party, and has been secretary of a Divisional Labour Party and a member of its Executive, also



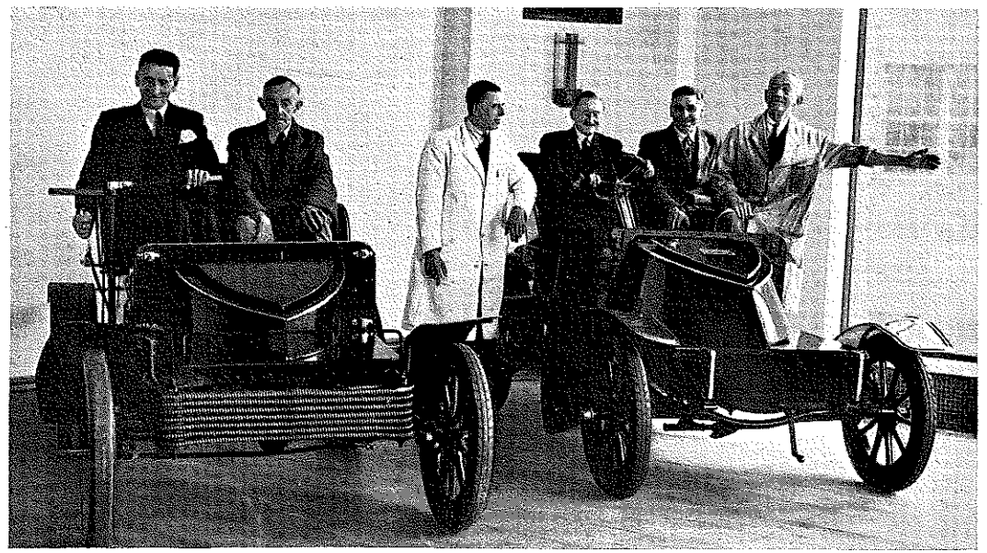
I.C.I.: Revolving furnace for the production of chemicals

a member of the South-Western Regional Council of Labour Executives. In 1936 he was one of the youngest members of the Barry Borough Council and retained this seat until he resigned in 1945, but the next year he was elected to the Cardiff City Council.

Bro Frank Reid made his first contact with the union in January 1920, when he joined the office staff of the Lancashire District. He became a recruitment officer in 1937, and two years later was elected District Organizer. During his organizing career in the Lancashire District he was mainly concerned with the Municipal services, particularly non-trading, county council roadmen, and local authorities' professional, technical and clerical staffs. He, too, has undertaken much local Labour Party work, and one of his first duties in this connection was to render assistance to Bro J. R. Clynes in the Miles-Platting constituency. He was appointed National Industrial Officer in October 1947.

Political

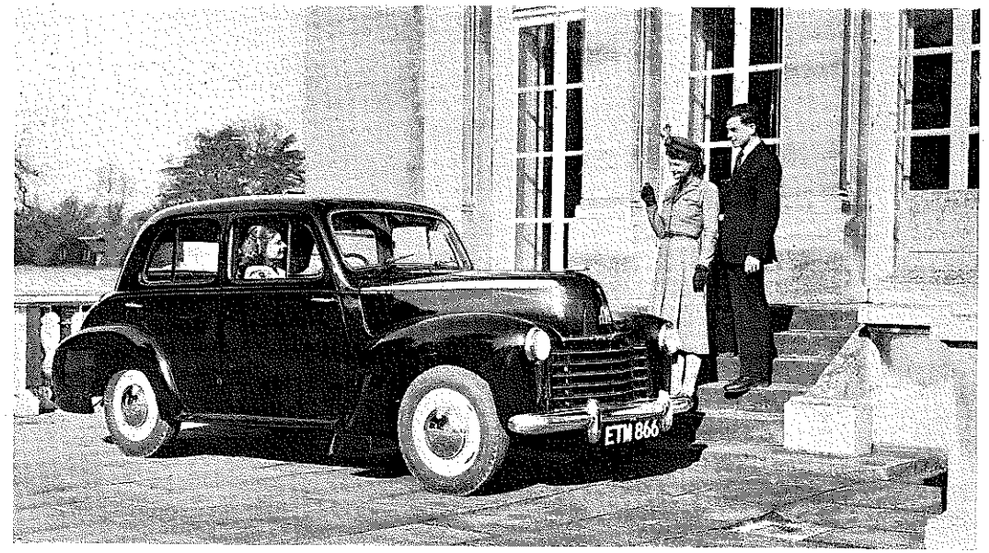
OUR 1948 Congress provided a special opportunity for consideration of the Union's



Vauxhall Works, Luton: Early models

political activities with specific reference to its Parliamentary representation, and the difficult question of the responsibility of Union officials who enter Parliament. Nobody who knows anything at all about the political Labour Movement would be disposed to minimize the influence our Union has had in the building up of the political organization of the working-class movement. As earlier pages bear witness, the leaders of our Union throughout the sixty years of its existence were as active in the political field as they were in the sphere of industrial organization. Through one political crisis after another the Union's political representatives exercised a stabilizing influence; as in the events which led up to the downfall of the second Labour Government of 1929–31, in circumstances which might have irretrievably destroyed the chances of the Labour Party's survival, and the solidarity of the organized working-class movement. During the war years, too, 1939–45, the political organization of Labour was exposed to stresses and strains which the strong and steady influence of Trade Unions like ours enabled it not only to withstand, but to provide the means of winning its astonishing election victory when the war ended. A concise review of the past policy and experience of our Union in its political relationships was presented by our National Executive in a special report to the 1948 Congress.

In this report it was recalled that at the time of the 1924 amalgamation the Union had a panel of official parliamentary candidates consisting of eight members. The mere recital of these names attests the validity of the Union's claim to have enabled men and women of outstanding political ability to enter Parliament: J. R.



The latest Vauxhall

Clynes, W. Thorne, J. Jones, C. Dukes, A. Hayday, J. Williams and Walter Windsor, with Margaret Bondfield, were members of our Union—and, with one exception—full-time officials of the Union—with political and parliamentary experience. The number of parliamentary candidates on the Union's official panel was increased to twelve in 1930 by the addition of Bros Mansfield, Porter, Whiting, Marshall and Willey. All but three of these at the time were salaried officials of the Union.

In the midst of the war (in 1942) a report was presented to Congress which revealed that a need existed to increase the number of Union official parliamentary candidates. There had been, in the intervening years between 1930 and 1942, a very considerable expansion of the Union both in membership and financial resources.

Recognizing that manifold and highly complex problems were bound to arise in the post-war years and that it was necessary for our expanding and virile Labour Movement to have adequate representation in Parliament, our Congress then agreed to enlarge the panel. In the circumstances of the 1945 General Election, however, the Union placed no more than ten official candidates in the field. All of them were successful in winning seats, namely Bros Tom Williamson, Mark Hewitson, Fred Marshall, E. Porter, A. W. J. Lewis, J. Gibbins, S. Lavers, R. Ewart, W. Perrins and O. G. Willey. Soon after his election as General Secretary of the Union, Bro Williamson, in conformity with the decision of the 1947 Congress, resigned his seat in the House of Commons.

A retrospective survey of political developments since our Union was formed sixty years ago finds its proper start for Trade

Unionists in the advent of the Labour Party at the beginning of the present century. Between 1889 and 1900 the Socialist organizations and the Trade Unions were seeking the basis of co-operation in the task of building up independent Labour representation in Parliament. As we have seen in earlier pages our Union played a pioneer part in the propaganda and organizational activities which laid the foundation upon which the Labour Party as we know it today began to build at the dawn of this century.

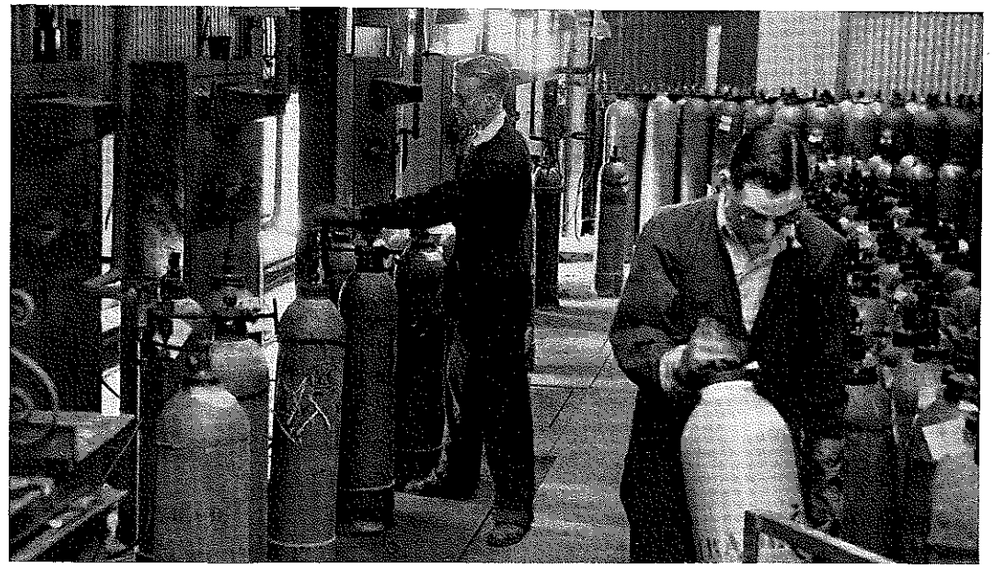
Next year the Party celebrates its jubilee. It looks back over fifty years of political history in which twelve Parliaments came and went, with Labour twice in office without power. The thirteenth Parliament is now nearing its end with Labour in power —the strongest Government of modern times. In each of the twelve preceding Parliaments, parliamentary representatives of our Union bore their part in great struggles against reactionary influences that sought to hamstring the political Labour Movement, and to hold back the decided trend towards progressive social and industrial legislation for the protection of the people's welfare and the furtherance of their democratic purposes.

Among the twenty-nine Labour Members returned to the House of Commons in the General Election of 1906, there were two representatives of our Union—Bros J. R. Clynes and Will Thorne. In that Parliament the major issue of policy was one that vitally affected the position of the Trade Unions. It had been weakened by the Taff Vale Judgment which struck at the legal immunity of Trade Unions for damages arising out of action taken by their officers during trade disputes. Our own Union was not slow to realize the injurious consequences of the Taff Vale Judgment: our national leaders, district officers and active members entered vigorously into the campaign for amendment of the law relating to Trade Disputes; and the pages of Hansard bear witness to the skill and cogency with which John Clynes and other Labour M.P.s argued the case for the measure which was subsequently enacted as the Trade Disputes Act, 1906.

Before that 1906 Parliament came to an end in 1909 the Labour Party increased its strength to 32, and among the newcomers elected in by-elections was Pete Curran, who turned a Liberal majority of 3,000 in Jarrow into a victory for Labour. In the Jarrow by-election, Pete Curran made old age pensions the main plank in his platform, having the assurance that our Union was deeply interested in this much needed social reform. Another member of our Union, Margaret Bondfield, with other prominent trade unionists, had joined in the creation of a National Committee of Organized Labour to promote legislation providing pensions for aged people, and the enactment of the first Old Age Pensions Act in 1908 was evidence of the new spirit imported into Parliament by the Labour Party.

In that Parliament, too, the first Trades Boards Act was placed upon the Statute Book, based upon a Bill framed by Labour Members.

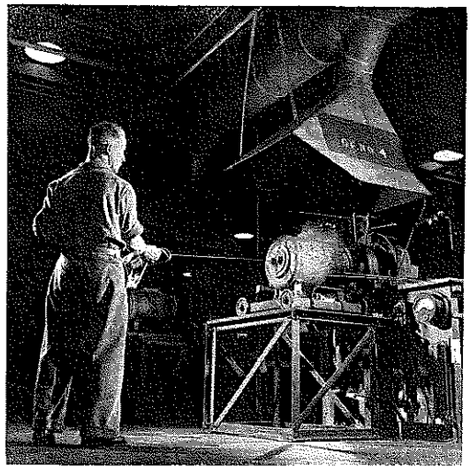
Another Parliament started its brief career in 1910 and finished it by the end of that year. It was concerned with great matters of controversy, centring upon the People's Budget introduced by Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with the issue of Peers versus People which resulted in the curtailment of the Lords' Veto by the Parliament Act of 1911. Payment of Members, too, became an accomplished fact in the course of these



Chemical: Filling liquid chlorine cylinders

years of stormy politics, in which the Labour Party was buffeted about and nearly foundered in the tempest of the Osborne Judgment. It was in the 'Long Parliament' from December 1910 to 1918 that the wrongs inflicted upon the Trade Unions by the Osborne Judgment were to some extent redressed by the Trade Unions Act of 1913. Our Union's parliamentary representatives, and our organization throughout the country, carried their full share of activity in these great controversies, and helped to shape the Workmen's Compensation legislation and other Liberal-Social reforms of the period.

When the First World War ended and a new Parliament was elected, under a much wider franchise, in 1918, Labour fought on a constructive programme which did not, however, win the whole-hearted support of the electorate. Only fifty-seven Labour candidates were returned to Parliament in that election, although the Labour poll was approximately $2\frac{1}{4}$ million out of about $9\frac{3}{4}$ million votes recorded all told. Our Union's representatives in the 1918 Parliament included, along with Bros Clynes and Will Thorne, Bro Arthur Hayday, who was elected for Nottingham West, and Bro R. Tootill, who was returned unopposed for Bolton. Bro Clynes too had no opponent in this election at Miles Platting (Manchester). Our Union put into the field a number of other candidates, most of whom polled substantial numbers of votes; among them were Bros P. J. Tevenan (of the M.E.A.), Will Sherwood, R. H. Farrah, F. Eccles, with Mary Macarthur (a nominee of the National Federation of Women Workers) and Margaret Bondfield, a nominee of the I.L.P.; as well as Bros Tom Williamson (Snr), J. N. Bell and A. J.



Drawing wire for electric lamps

Bailey nominated by the National Amalgamated Union of Labour.

A series of short-lived Parliaments followed the First World War. Another General Election followed the one in 1918, when the Lloyd George Coalition broke up and Stanley Baldwin went to the country in 1922, and again in 1923. In the latter General Election, between the Conservative and Liberal Parties, Labour secured a sufficiently large number of seats to be able to form the first Minority Labour Government. The Party was then 191 strong in the House of Commons. Our Union representation was increased to five members, and the President of our Union, Bro Clynes, entered the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal and Deputy Leader of the House of Commons. These were years of serious economic instability, with one trade depression supervening upon another, with rising unemployment, and declining wages.

Towards the end of 1924 another General Election had the effect of reducing the strength of the Labour Party to 151 though its candidates polled over 5½ million votes. Between that General Election and that of 1929, when Labour won again its place as the largest single Party, and formed the second Labour Government, came the great industrial convulsion of the National Strike of 1926. The story of that epic event cannot here be retold. Its major political consequence was the enactment of the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act of 1927, a punitive measure which struck with equal fierceness at both the political and the industrial organization of the workers. On the sequence of events which brought the second Labour Government down in 1931, this is not the place to enlarge: it will suffice to say that our Union's loyalty to the basic principles of our Trade Union and Labour Movement kept it solidly in line when the Movement's political leaders went out into the wilderness. In the Parliament that lasted from 1931 to 1935 our Union's parliamentary representatives —Bros Will Thorne and Jack Jones—held steadfastly to the faith.

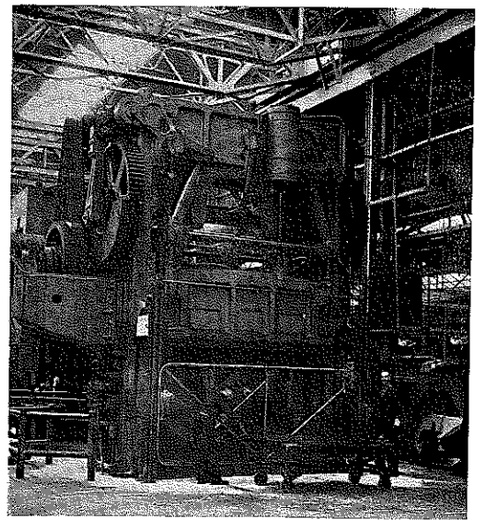
In the course of the next decade came the Second World War and three changes in the Premiership. Stanley Baldwin gave place to Neville Chamberlain, and Neville Chamberlain was superseded by Winston Churchill as the head of a war-time union of Parties. In the war-time Government, Labour was fully represented, with its leader, Clement Attlee, as Deputy Prime Minister, and important ministries in the hands of strong and experienced Trade Union statesmen.

The Labour Government

SO THE political record runs to the 1945 General Election, which brought into being the thirteenth Parliament in which Labour has exerted its growing influence over half a century. In this thirteenth Parliament it is a dominant influence. Our present General Secretary, Bro Williamson, writing in the Union journal in January 1947, had this to say about the position of Labour in political retrospect and prospect: 'Some fifty years ago it was realized that industrial action for progressive improvement in social conditions was not enough, and steps were taken by the Trade Unions to secure political representation by the formation of a political wing of the working-class movement which has grown to the dimensions of the strongest political party in the State. As a result of the struggle over that period there has been built up a strongly organized industrial movement, and a political party which has become the Government of the country with a substantial majority in the House of Commons.'

Bro Williamson then proceeded to show how the Labour Government was implementing its election programme. He cited the repeal of the 1927 Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act, which remedied a grave injustice that had lasted for twenty years by which the legitimate aims and purposes of Trade Union organization were curbed and restricted. Of paramount importance, he said, were the four Acts embodying the social security programme of the Party—the legislation providing compensation for industrial injuries, the National Insurance Act, Family Allowances (then in operation), the Health Services Act, and the impending Bill which was to wind up the old Poor Law.

Side by side with this social legislation was the enactment of Socialist legislation bringing into public ownership basic industries and vital services. Nationalization of the mining industry has brought the five-day week for mineworkers. Normal five-day working has been suspended for the time being, in the interests of the national productivity effort. Nationalization provided also the opportunity for a material improvement of industrial relations in the mining industry. The Act laid many duties both on the National Coal Board and the Trade Union organization to develop machinery which would encompass the safety, health and welfare of all employed in it.



Motor Works: Press shop

Similar betterment came with the nationalization of the electricity industry, and in the gas industry. Were space available it would be possible to show that in the fuel and power industries as a whole many of the claims that our Union has consistently advocated through its sixty years of service to organized Labour have been initiated. The same thing can be said of the nationalized road and rail transport. A basic

principle in all the nationalization legislation is the promotion of a maximum degree of consultation between the employing authorities and the Unions concerned. In the transport industry, under nationalization, a Joint Consultative Council has been set up on which are represented the principal Trade Unions and the five governing Executives that are responsible under the British Transport Commission for the administration of the whole of the transport services.

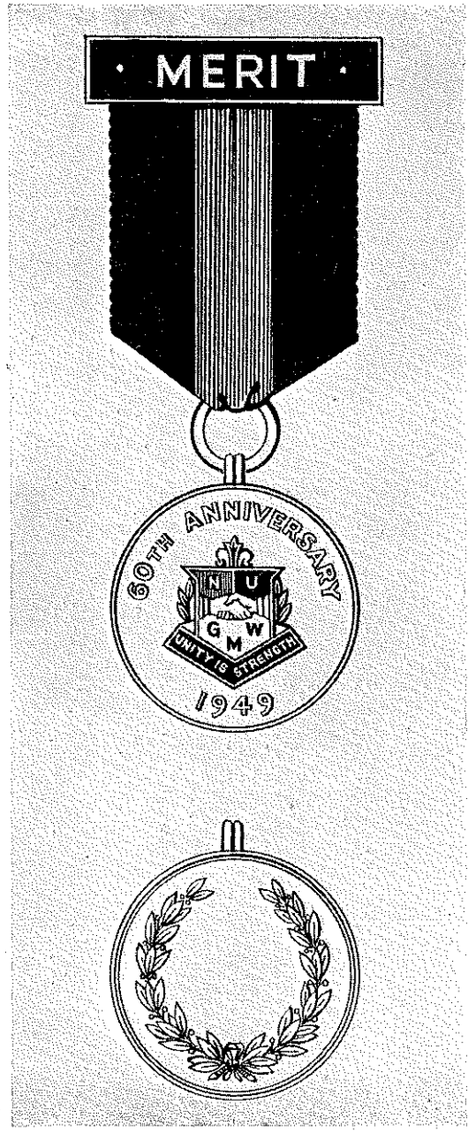
The great legislative achievements of the Labour Government are not confined to the basic industries and services in which so many of our members are employed. Legislation has been extended in the field of local government, in which our Union is likewise deeply implicated. An Act has been passed to equalize the burden of rates between rich and poor areas, and to provide payment to Councillors for loss of earnings whilst serving upon local authorities.

Such reforms as these in the sphere of local government have been sought by our Union from its earliest days. The practical wisdom which guided the policy of our pioneers in recognizing that many of the aims of the working people could not be achieved solely through their industrial organizations, but required political organization as well, now finds its fulfilment. Our Union has always been in the most intimate alliance with the Socialist and Labour organizations. We can reasonably claim that decade by decade, for two generations, the Union's policy of combining political with industrial organization has been justified by its results.

These results are maturing now in such legislation as the Town and Country Planning and New Towns Acts; by the development of non-nationalized industry under the Industrial Organization Act; by the enactment of legislation for agriculture which not only guarantees prices and assures markets for farm products, but also lays the foundation for improvements in wages and working conditions; also by the National Insurance and Industrial Injuries Acts, the Wages Councils Act and an act providing for a better distribution of industry, which has the object of ridding our national life of the problem of depressed areas dependent upon basic industries.

In truth, as this recital of major achievements in social and economic reconstruction abundantly testifies, our Union has lived through a veritable Social Revolution—a social transformation which is still far from complete, and which is proceeding still. Even as these pages pass through the printing presses the Labour Government is legislating for further developments of industrial and social significance. The political leaders of our Movement are, even as we write, engaged in preparing the programme for the next election due to be held in 1950.

In short, the Social Revolution is still going on, as the pioneers of our Union conceived it—not as a revolution of blood and terror, but as the triumph of reason and common sense through the political and industrial organizations of all who toil, whether by hand or brain.



Medallion in gilt: To be presented to long-service members

Acknowledgments

We take this opportunity of expressing our grateful thanks to those many Employers who responded so readily to our requests for pictures with which to illustrate this volume. We thank not only those who will find their pictures herein, but also those who sent in pictures which we have not used because of limited space.