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NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

PROCEEDINGS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE FEDERATION,

HELD IN BRISTOL,

MAY 13th, 14th, and 15th, 1902,

WITH

The Annual Report and the Speeches

INCLUDING THOSE DELIVERED BY

THE RT. HON.

A. H. D. ACLAND,

AND THE RT. HON.

HERBERT J. GLADSTONE, M.P.,

12, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

1902.

THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT,
42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

PRESIDENT:

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE:

EDWARD EVANS, JUNR.

TREASURER:

W. H. HART.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

ANN, E. T. (President of the Derby Liberal Association).
BARRAN, ALFRED (Leeds).
BIRD, ROBERT (President of the Cardiff Liberal Association).
BRUNNER, J. F. L. (Vice-President of the Hyde Division [Cheshire] Lib. Association).
BUNTING, P. W. (Treasurer of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association).
BURGESS, A. H. (Hon. Sec. of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Lib. Assn.).
DAVIES, W. HOWELL (Chairman of the South Bristol Liberal Association).
DICKINSON, W. H. (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation).
FRASER, DR. E. H. (Vice-President of the Nottingham Liberal Association).
FULLERTON, HUGH (Manchester).
MACDONALD, J. A. MURRAY (President of the Hampstead Liberal & Radical Assn.).
MASSIE, DR. JOHN (Vice-President of the Oxford Liberal Association).
PHEAR, SIR JOHN B. (Chairman of the Devon Liberal Federation).
PRIESTLEY, W. E. B. (Chairman of the Eastern Division of the Bradford Lib. Assn.)
RADFORD, CHARLES H. (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association).
ROWNTREE, W. S. (Chairman of the Scarborough Liberal Association).
STUART, JAMES (President of the East Hull Liberal Association).
WATSON, DR. R. SPENCE, (Newcastle-on-Tyne).
WRIGHT, FRANK (Birmingham).

SECRETARY:

ROBT. A. HUDSON.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY:

FRANK BARTER.

OFFICES:

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S. W.

(Telegrams: "Liberalize, London.")

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PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

OF THE

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION

HELD AT THE

VICTORIA ROOMS, BRISTOL,

TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, MAY 13th and 14th, 1902.

FIRST SESSION.

TUESDAY, MAY 13TH. 2 P.M.

THE DEATH OF THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

Moved by Dr. SPENCE WATSON, and resolved :—

“That this Council desires to place on record its profound sense of the loss which the nation, no less than the Liberal party, has sustained in the death of the Earl of Kimberley, who for fifty years maintained the best traditions of English public life, filling great offices in the State, and bringing to the discharge of his duties distinguished ability, a high sense of honour, and an unswerving devotion to principle. The Council further expresses its belief that Lord Kimberley’s services to Liberalism, both in and out of Parliament, will be held in long and grateful remembrance by the Liberal party.”

REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Moved by Dr. R. SPENCE WATSON (President of the Federation and of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association); seconded by Mr. ROBERT CAMERON, M.P. (Durham); and resolved :—

“That the Report and Statement of Accounts be received and adopted.”

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING PRESIDENT.

Moved by Sir EDWARD R. RUSSELL (Liverpool); seconded by Dr. JOHN MASSIE (Vice-President of the Oxford Liberal Association); and resolved :—

"That this Council, in expressing its deep regret at the retirement of Dr. Robert Spence Watson, desires to record its warm gratitude to him for the services he has rendered to the Federation since the day on which it was established, and in particular during the twelve years in which he has filled the office of President.

"It assures him of the lasting regard and affection in which he will be held by this Federation, and earnestly hopes that he will long be spared to contribute the great weight of his advocacy to all those causes which Liberalism seeks to promote."

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TREASURER.

Moved by Mr. CHARLES TOWNSEND (President of the Bristol Liberal Federation); seconded by Mr. J. E. WILLANS (Huddersfield); and resolved:—

"That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be elected President, and that Alderman W. H. Hart, J.P., be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year."

ADHERENCE TO LIBERAL PRINCIPLES.

Moved by Mr. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation); seconded by Mr. CHARLES E. HOBHOUSE, M.P. (Bristol—Eastern Division); and resolved:—

"That this Council affirms its continued adherence to the principles which in the past the Federation has advocated and placed on record.

"The Council records its unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the chosen Leaders of the Opposition in Parliament, and earnestly appeals to all Liberals loyally to co-operate in the common cause of Liberalism, and in opposition to the present incapable and reactionary Government, recognising that Liberal unity is essential if Liberal principles are again to prevail in administration and legislation."

THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE SETTLEMENT.

Moved by Mr. F. S. STEVENSON, M.P. (Suffolk—Eye Division); seconded by Mr. W. S. ROWNTREE (Chairman of the Scarborough Liberal Association); and resolved:—

"That this Council, whilst adhering to previous declarations of the Federation on the subject of the policy and conduct of the War in South Africa, contents itself at this grave juncture with an expression of its most earnest hope that the negotiations now proceeding will lead to an early peace and a durable settlement."

SECOND SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14TH. 10.30 A.M.

THE BUDGET.

Moved by Sir JAMES T. WOODHOUSE, M.P. (Huddersfield) ; seconded by Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Bart., M.P. (Somerset—Southern Division) ; and resolved :—

“That this Council is of opinion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have taken the occasion of this year’s Finance Act to declare that the Mineral Wealth of the Transvaal should, from this time forward, be under a legal liability to contribute a just proportion towards the cost of the South African War.

“The Council strenuously protests against the proposed tax on imported corn, flour and other bread-stuffs, as a deplorable reversal of that policy of Free Trade which has given commercial prosperity to the country and cheap food to the people.”

THE GOVERNMENT EDUCATION BILL.

Moved by the Right Hon. A. H. D. ACLAND (late Minister for Education) ; seconded by Rev. GEORGE JARMAN (Chairman of the Bristol School Board) ; and resolved :—

“That this Council condemns the Education Bill for the following (among other) reasons :—

- (1) The Bill fails to make adequate or satisfactory provision for the supply or reorganisation of Secondary Education.
- (2) The Bill, far from creating one Educational Authority, will, in fact, produce a multiplication of Authorities, leading to great uncertainty and to administrative chaos, particularly by dividing the responsibility between the Councils which will fix the Education Rate and the Committees which will have the spending of it.
- (3) The Bill abandons the fundamental principle hitherto recognised in this country that popular Education, paid for by the Ratepayers, should be in the hands of directly elected representatives of the people. It encourages the destruction of the School Boards and hands education over to Committees not one member of which need be directly responsible to the public.

- (4) The Bill, by giving a large annual endowment out of the rates to the privately managed denominational Schools, is obviously intended to establish at the cost of the Rate-payers a system of National Education under Sectarian Teaching.
- (5) The Bill encourages, to the detriment of Education, the multiplication of denominational Schools maintained at the public cost, thus in its practical working injuring existing Schools and tending to bring all new Schools under denominational management.
- (6) The Bill recognises and permits, in Schools which are to become rate-maintained, a religious test for Teachers as a condition of their employment in such Schools.

“The Council accordingly protests most strongly against the Bill, believing that it will do nothing to secure improvement in Education, but must inevitably, in its working, cause grave resentment throughout the country and lead to a deplorable aggravation of sectarian strife and bitterness.

“Finally, the Council calls upon the Liberal Associations of the country to offer the most strenuous opposition to the Bill by public meetings, petitions, resolutions and all other means in their power.”

TEMPERANCE.

Moved by Mr. J. EMMOTT BARLOW, M.P. (Somerset—Frome Division); seconded by Mr. W. HOWELL DAVIES (Chairman of the South Bristol Liberal Association):—

“That this Council is strongly of opinion that the reform of the Licensing Laws is urgent and imperative, and believes that Lord Peel’s Minority Report furnishes, in the main, a basis for practical legislation upon which all Temperance Reformers should combine and concentrate their efforts.”

THE HOUSING PROBLEM AND THE LAND LAWS.

Moved by Mr. GEORGE LAMBERT, M.P. (Devonshire—South Molton Division); seconded by Mr. JAMES ROWLANDS (Hon. Secretary Land Law Reform Association); supported by Mr. G. TOULMIN, M.P. (Bury); and resolved:—

“That this Council affirms the urgent necessity for a thorough reform of the Land Laws, so as to secure, among other things—

- (1) The just taxation of Ground Values and Mining Royalties;
- (2) The extension of the system of Small Holdings on the lines already adopted in the case of Allotments; and
- (3) Compensation to town and country tenants for permanent improvements made during their tenancy, and for disturbance.

"Further, the Council declares that Parliament ought immediately to deal with the grave evils which exist in connection with the housing of the working classes in town and country, so as promptly to secure better and healthier conditions of life for the masses of the people."

VOTE OF THANKS.

Moved by Mr. EDWARD EVANS, JUNIOR (Chairman, General Committee, National Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. A. J. WILSON, M.P. (Holmfirth), and carried by acclamation:—

"That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the Bristol Liberal Federation, to the President (Mr. Alderman Charles Townsend,) and his colleagues, and to the Secretaries of the Reception Committee, for their admirable arrangements and generous hospitality during the visit of the National Liberal Federation to Bristol."

TEMPERANCE

Moved by Mr. J. LEWIS, M.P. (Bristol, East), seconded by Mr. W. HOSKIN, M.P. (Bristol, West), and carried by acclamation:—

"That the Council be strongly of opinion that the temperance laws in force in this country are not only just and imperative, but also that the Government should take steps to see that these laws are fully and effectively enforced, and that all public houses which are licensed should be kept in a state of cleanliness and order."

THE HOUSING PROBLEM AND THE LAND LAW

Moved by Mr. GEORGE LARSEN, M.P. (Bristol, West), seconded by Mr. J. LEWIS, M.P. (Bristol, East), and carried by acclamation:—

"That the Council be of opinion that the Government should take steps to see that the land laws in force in this country are not only just and imperative, but also that the Government should take steps to see that these laws are fully and effectively enforced, and that all public houses which are licensed should be kept in a state of cleanliness and order."

PUBLIC MEETING
HELD IN THE COLSTON HALL, BRISTOL,

WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 14th, 1902.

**Mr. Charles Townsend, J.P. (President of the Bristol
 Liberal Federation), in the Chair.**

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

SPEECH BY

THE RIGHT HON. H. J. GLADSTONE, M.P.

RESOLUTION.

Moved by Dr. SPENCE WATSON; seconded by Mr. AUGUSTINE
 BIRRELL, K.C.; supported by Mr. CHARLES E. HOBHOUSE, M.P., and
 Mr. J. EMMOTT BARLOW, M.P.; and resolved:—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Mr. Gladstone for
 his presence and speech to-night; assures him and the Parlia-
 mentary leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of the loyal
 confidence of the Liberal Party; cordially endorses the Resolutions
 adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at
 its meetings in Bristol, and pledges itself to help in securing the
 triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal Party
 to power whenever the Country is next appealed to.”

THANKS TO CHAIRMAN.

Moved by Mr. GLADSTONE; seconded by Mr. W. HOWELL DAVIES;
 supported by Mr. W. H. BATMAN HOPE (North Somerset); and
 resolved:—

“That this meeting expresses its best thanks to the President
 Bristol Liberal Federation for his conduct in the Chair.”



NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

INTRODUCTORY.

The past year, like that which preceded it, has been overshadowed by the continuance of the war in South Africa. That it has continued so long—involving enormous loss of life and waste of material resources—is largely due to the grave blunders of the Government, alike in their policy and in their administration.

In the Far East, terms of peace between the Powers and China have been agreed to after prolonged negotiations. The story of the Boxer rising—whether in its inception, the course it took, or the methods by which it was overcome—is not one which can be looked back upon with satisfaction either by China or the European Powers; it will be well if all concerned seek in the future to avoid the mistakes most certainly committed in the past. The Anglo-Japanese alliance is a new departure which is not the less a great experiment because we are all well wishers of Japan. But since the alliance is an accomplished fact, it can only be hoped that it will make for greater peace and security.

The condition of India is still grave, if happily less so than a year ago. Lord Curzon proves a high-minded, sensible, and sympathetic Viceroy, but the financial and economic condition of the Indian people demands the constant and vigilant consideration of Great Britain, who is responsible for their welfare.

At home the record is one of heavy taxation, both for normal and for war expenditure, and of continued indifference on the part of the Government to the grave questions of social importance which urgently press for settlement.

For the coming year the country looks forward with loyal eagerness and pleasure to the Coronation of his Majesty the King, a great historic ceremonial the significance of which it is to be hoped may be emphasised by the prevalence of peace in every portion of His Majesty's dominions.

THE DEATH OF LORD KIMBERLEY.

Liberalism has lost a tried and trusted friend by the death of Lord Kimberley, one of its two chosen Parliamentary Leaders. For over half a century he held high office in every Liberal Government, and as a Minister of the Crown showed a skill and sagacity in statesmanship which made him honoured and trusted by his fellow-countrymen irrespective of party. As a Liberal he was ever staunch and true to his principles, and he will always be remembered for his services to Liberalism, more particularly as a member of all Mr. Gladstone's Cabinets and as the Liberal Leader in the House of Lords. The Executive Committee on the day after his death unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

“That the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation, on behalf of the affiliated associations of the country, desire to place on record their profound sense of the loss which the nation, no less than the Liberal party, sustains in the death of the Earl of Kimberley, who for 50 years has maintained the best traditions of English public life, filling great offices in the State, and bringing to the discharge of his duties distinguished ability, a high sense of honour, and an unswerving devotion to principle. The Committee and all those for whom they speak, desire respectfully to extend to his family their warm sympathy in the great personal loss which they have sustained, coupled with an assurance of the Committee's belief that Lord Kimberley's services to Liberalism, both in and out of Parliament, will be held in long and grateful remembrance by the Liberal party.”

THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION: A TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' RETROSPECT.

It is perhaps not out of place that some reference should be made in this report to the fact that in the month of May, 1902, the Federation completes the twenty-fifth year of its existence. It was established at a meeting in Birmingham on May 31st, 1877, the Chief Speaker at the inaugural meeting being Mr. Gladstone. In 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1891 Mr. Gladstone again filled the post of Chief Speaker at our Annual Meeting. In 1895 Lord Rosebery, who was then Prime Minister, attended the Annual Meeting of the Federation, as he did the following year also. It would not be easy to name a Liberal of influence or leading who during these twenty-five years has not spoken at some meeting of the Federation. Its first Secretary was Mr. Schnadhorst. In him for seventeen years, the Federation had a

brilliant and devoted servant who soon became the personal friend and trusted adviser of all with whom his work brought him in contact. No retrospect such as this would be complete without some renewed expression by the Committee of the great service which Mr. Schnadhorst rendered over so many years to this Organisation and through it to the whole Liberal party. In its earlier days the Federation was taunted with sectionalism, and was alleged to be under the control of a group of politicians in the Midlands. When in 1886 the testing question came as to whether the Federation should follow Mr. Chamberlain and the Dissentients, or should support Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals, all doubt as to the soundness of the principles which animated the Liberal Organisation was instantly dissipated. The Federation, at a memorable meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel in the spring of 1886, sacrificed the support which had hitherto been accorded it by Mr. Chamberlain and his circle, and gave its adhesion to Mr. Gladstone in his heroic effort to substitute for coercion in Ireland a policy of conciliation. As will be seen from a resolution to be submitted to the forthcoming meeting, the Federation to-day has not receded from the position which it took up sixteen years ago. It does not stand to the precise letter of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Bills, but the Committee re-affirms in 1902, as it affirmed in 1886, that the policy of coercion has not been, and cannot be, a solution of the Irish problem; and that the better, and only, way to solve that problem is by devolving on the Irish nation such responsibility for the management of what the Imperial Parliament shall decide to be purely Irish affairs, as, while easing the Imperial Parliament of work which it cannot adequately perform, shall at the same time build up a happier and more stable condition of affairs in the Sister Isle. So long as the vexed question of Ireland remains unsolved, so long must it be the task of Liberal statesmanship to approach it, without prejudice, and to seek for some such settlement as will be consistent with the fundamental principles of self-government.

Not in the problem of Ireland alone has the Federation, during its existence, exercised a commanding influence in Liberal opinion. The great Liberal Conference which this organisation promoted at Leeds, in 1884, indubitably made history at that moment. The cry which was raised at the Leeds Conference of "Franchise first"

turned the scale in the dispute which then raged. Meetings of the Federation have also had great and deserved weight in matters relating to foreign policy, while in domestic politics its influence has been brought to bear, with very direct results, on such subjects as the Corrupt Practices Act, the Redistribution of Seats, the Parish Councils Act, and other legislative enactments of Parliament too numerous to catalogue, during the past quarter of a century.

It has been made a taunt on the part of some critics that the Federation was responsible for the Newcastle Programme. If it were so, the Federation truly would have no need to be ashamed; but, as a plain matter of fact, the reforms which make up what came to be known as the Newcastle Programme were never formulated as a "programme" by the Federation. The resolutions were put forward, as all the resolutions of the Federation have been and still are, as representative of the general opinion of the rank and file of the Party as a whole. They were a statement in general terms of the objects to which the mind of the Liberal Party then turned, and the Committee believes that of the items on that list which have not yet been attained there is not one which the Liberal Party is disposed to abandon. The precise methods of obtaining these reforms may change with the times, but the necessity of the reforms and the justice of the causes which are involved remain unchanged. If, in the Parliamentary methods of obtaining such reforms, the mere lapse of time necessitates certain alterations in procedure, the Executive Committee recognises that this is a matter which concerns the Parliamentary leaders of the Party more directly than the rank and file. But if these alterations were to involve the abandonment of any of the principles for which the Federation has so long contended, neither the Federation nor the Liberal Party could be expected to acquiesce in any such departure.

The Federation remains to-day an embodiment of the sentiment and opinion of the rank and file of the Liberal party, as collected and formulated by the Liberal Associations of the Kingdom. As an organisation it is neither more nor less than what its constituent parts make it. It draws its strength from the affiliated Associations of the country, and it is responsible to them alone, and not to any section of the party or to any individual or individuals. It is concerned with

none of the personal differences alleged to be at the root of the recent trouble which has afflicted the Liberal party. They are, indeed, differences which the Executive Committee has never been able to appreciate. Neither on the war in South Africa, nor on any other issue, has the Committee seen adequate ground for Liberals refusing to work together in a common cause. Like all assemblages of Liberals, the Executive Committee of the Federation is and has been made up of men who hold different views on different subjects, but it has always recognised that the duty of Liberals is to act together as against a common enemy; and the Committee would fain believe that what has been possible in their case will speedily be realised among those politicians of higher rank who are responsible in the public eye for the conduct and control of Liberal policy and action.

To the Associations which make up the Federation, the Executive Committee appeals with confidence for a continuance of the support which it has always received in the single endeavour which has animated it, namely, to promote Liberal principles in the government of the country, putting measures before men, and thinking more of principles than of persons and personalities.

The Committee believes that it represents the views of an overwhelming majority of the party throughout the country when it affirms that there are two things which the average Liberal has never been able to comprehend: (1) What are the virtues of this Government which make it desirable that his Majesty's present advisers should remain in office in perpetuity? and (2) What are the essential differences between Liberals on matters of principle, the (supposed) existence of which alone can keep this Government in power? Every day it becomes more and more evident that the tenure of the present Administration could not long survive a strenuous determination by a united Liberal party to replace this Government by something better. The answer to the question when this change shall take place depends probably far less upon his Majesty's Ministers than upon his Majesty's Opposition.

RETIREMENT OF DR. SPENCE WATSON.

On the Agenda for the forthcoming Annual Meeting of the Federation there appears a resolution relating to the election of President which calls for special reference in this report.

For twelve years Dr. Spence Watson has filled the office of President of the National Liberal Federation, and it is with deep and genuine regret that the Committee have to announce that they are no longer permitted to put forward a motion for his re-election. This regret is intensified by the fact that the decision on Dr. Watson's part is directly related to considerations of health. For twelve years his election to the highest office which the Federation could bestow has been unanimous, and the services which he has rendered in the Chair and in Committee have been beyond all ordinary terms of encomium. Through troublous times in the history of the Liberal party, he has presided over the Annual Meetings of the Federation not merely with the highest ability as a chairman, with rare eloquence, and with a personal magnetism which has endeared him to all, but also with an unwavering faith in Liberal principles. He was one of the eleven Liberals who, from Northumberland, Yorkshire, and the Midlands, signed and issued the original preliminary circular in 1877 inviting the Liberal Associations of England and Wales to form themselves into a National Federation. From the first day on which the organisation was established he has been an earnest and zealous member, a most regular attendant at our meetings, and one who has inspired all who have worked with him with a measure of his own faith in all that is summed up by the word Liberalism. Nor have Dr. Watson's services been limited to the office he held in this Federation. For the greater part of the twelve years since he was first elected to our Chair, he was President also of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association. He is a Vice-president and a Vice-chairman of the National Liberal Club, and in a hundred other ways has identified himself with all that makes for progress and liberty, and freedom—civil and religious—the world over. The Liberal Party owes to Dr. Watson more than it can express, and far more than it can seek to repay. It is the intention of the Executive Committee to propose to the members of the Federation some simple form in which they may recognise their indebtedness and show their gratitude, and they hope the presentation will take such a shape as may not be unacceptable to Dr. Spence Watson and his family.

The Committee desire to express the very great obligation which they are under to their colleague, Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., for having consented to be nominated for the office of President during the ensuing year. Mr. Birrell's position is such that he needs no introduction to the members of the Federation. The Executive Committee have felt it right to give Mr. Birrell assurances that in filling the office of President the smallest possible demands shall be made upon his time, whether in or out of London. They are confident that in proposing him as President, he will obtain at the forthcoming Bristol meeting the same unanimous election as for twelve years has been accorded to Dr. Spence Watson.

At the same time the Committee wish to record their indebtedness to Mr. Alderman W. H. Hart for his consent to serve again as Treasurer. Alderman Hart has held the treasurership of the Federation for even a longer period than Dr. Spence Watson has been President, and while considerations of health have on more than one occasion prompted Mr. Hart to tender his resignation, the Executive are grateful that at this juncture he has yielded to the wishes of his colleagues and has consented to retain office at least for another year.

With the post of Chairman of Committee, the Council at its forthcoming meeting at Bristol is not directly concerned. It is an office which is at the disposal of the General Committee and not of the Council, and for six years it has been held, with great satisfaction to the Executive, and it is believed to the members of the Federation at large, by Mr. Edward Evans. The position is a very onerous one, demanding much time and attention, and it is fitting that this opportunity should be taken of thanking Mr. Evans for the readiness with which he is always prepared to make the sacrifices which are involved in his occupancy of the office.

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING.

The Twenty-third Annual Meeting of the Federation was held at Bradford on May 14th and 15th, 1901.

FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, MAY 14TH, 1901.

The First Session of the Council was held in the Lecture Hall, Mechanics' Institute, Bradford, on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 14th, Dr. Spence Watson presiding.

The Federation was welcomed to the city of Bradford in a cordial and appreciative speech by the Mayor.

The adoption of the Report and Statement of Accounts was moved by the President, seconded by Mr. Richard Rigg, M.P., and (after discussion) carried unanimously.

The re-election of Dr. Spence Watson as President, and of Mr. Alderman W. H. Hart, J. Esq., as Treasurer, was moved by Mr. H. B. Priestman (President of the Bradford Liberal Association), seconded by Mr. Robert Bird (President of the Cardiff Liberal Association), and carried unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., seconded by Mr. Theodore C. Taylor, M.P., and resolved :—

“That this Council re-affirms its adherence to those Liberal principles for which the Federation has always contended, and the application of which, both by legislation and in administration, was never more necessary than at the present time.

“The Council expresses its continued confidence in the leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, and calls upon all Liberals to give them loyal and undivided support in the onerous task entrusted to them.

“The Council records its indignation at the unworthy manœuvre by which last autumn Parliament was dissolved and a General Election taken on the false pretence that the war was over, and protests against the disgraceful attempt to trick the electorate into a belief that it was disloyal and anti-patriotic to vote for any but Ministerial Candidates.

“The Council, rejoicing that these tactics, though at the moment successful, are now rightly understood and resented by fair-minded people irrespective of party, pledges itself to strenuous and unremitting opposition to a Government which, in the interests of the people of this country and of the Empire as a whole, ought to be deprived as speedily as possible of the power to work further mischief.”

It was moved by Mr. Sydney Buxton, M.P., seconded by Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P. (Morpeth), supported by Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., and resolved :—

“That this Council confirms the resolution on the South African War passed by the General Committee of the Federation at Rugby last February; and deeply regrets the failure of the recent peace negotiations between Lord Kitchener and General Botha, and the disagreement therein revealed between the authorities at home and in South Africa.

“The Council records its belief that the future peace and prosperity of South Africa depend upon the prompt adoption of a policy which shall secure a full measure of self-government for the newly-incorporated territories, equal rights to the white people, and just and humane treatment of the native races; and the Council calls on all sections of Liberals unitedly to insist upon the Government carrying out such a policy.”

It was moved by Mr. George Whiteley, M.P., seconded by Mr. Herbert Samuel (Hon. Secretary Home Counties Liberal Federation), and resolved:—

“That this Council views with grave apprehension the constantly advancing national expenditure and the alarming increase in the National Debt: protests against any money being squandered in doles to favoured classes of the community and in particular against the renewal of the Agricultural Rating Acts of 1896 and the Clerical Tithe Act of 1899: regrets that in this year's Budget taxation is reimposed upon food, and that by the duties both on exported coal and on sugar, branches of our national trade are seriously hampered.

“Further, the Council urges upon all Liberals the pressing necessity of insisting that, in the spending of the nation's money, economy shall be practised and efficiency secured.”

SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15TH.

The Second Session of the Council was held on the morning of Wednesday, May 15th, Dr. Spence Watson again presiding.

It was moved by Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P., seconded by Professor Massie (Oxford), and resolved:—

“That in view of the confusion and disorganisation which at present characterise our National Education and of the pressure of competition on the part of foreign nations possessing superior educational advantages, this Council is of opinion that there is an urgent need for an immediate re-organisation of the general machinery of education in England; and believes that the whole work of public education, elementary, secondary, and technical, ought to be entrusted in each district or area to some one responsible and popularly elected local body.

“Further, that having regard to the fact that the Government's Education Bill entirely fails to satisfy this essential condition, this Council is of opinion that it is imperatively necessary that a short measure should at once be passed enabling School Boards to carry on the work which, under the ‘Cockerton’ decision, will otherwise be brought to a standstill, and that a special meeting of the General

Committee of the Federation be held in London at an early date, to consider the Government Bill and other matters affecting National Education."

It was moved by Mr. E. J. C. Morton, M.P., seconded by Mr. Richard Winfrey (South-West Norfolk), and resolved:—

"That this Council, holding that the land ought to be utilised for the benefit of the community as a whole, and that the law as between landlord and tenant should be placed on an equitable basis, affirms the urgent necessity for a thorough reform of the land laws, so as to secure among other things:—

- (1) The just taxation of ground values and mining royalties.
- (2) The extension of the system of small holdings on the lines already adopted in the case of allotments; and
- (3) Compensation to town and country tenants for permanent improvements made during their tenancy, and for disturbance.

"Further, the Council declares the urgent necessity of taking adequate measures for the proper housing of the working classes alike in town and country, and protests against the inaction of the Government in face of a problem the importance and seriousness of which have been insisted upon by the Prime Minister himself so lately as last December."

It was moved by Mr. T. P. Whittaker, M.P., seconded by Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., and resolved:—

"That this Council again affirms its belief that Lord Peel's Minority Report of the Licensing Commission furnishes, in the main, a basis for practical legislation in the immediate future upon which all temperance reformers should combine and concentrate; and strongly protests against the hostile attitude of Lord Salisbury and the Government to Reform in a matter of such vital importance to the social well-being of the community."

It was moved by Mr. D. Lloyd-George, M.P., seconded by Mr. J. W. Cleland (Oxford), and resolved:—

"That this Council insists that, if Parliament is effectively to represent the feeling of the country, and efficiently to carry out the work entrusted to it, the following (among other) reforms are essential:—

- (1) Adult manhood suffrage, combined with the principle of 'One Man One Vote,' must be the basis of the Parliamentary franchise. The official expenses of elections should be made a public charge, and the principle of payment of members recognised, so as to widen the choice of the electors in selecting their representatives.
- (2) The House of Lords must be deprived of the power of veto, of which it never makes use except to defeat and mutilate the legislation of a Liberal House of Commons.

- 3) The work of Parliament ought to be lightened by a well-considered system of devolution, such as will relieve it of the necessity of legislating in purely local affairs and leave it freer to deal with matters of National and Imperial concern."

It was moved by Mr. Thomas Lough, M.P. (Islington—Western Division), seconded by Mr. James Rowlands, and resolved:—

"That this Council desires to protest against the interference of the Government with the legitimate municipal aspirations of Londoners, more particularly with their desire to manage their own water supply, and against the action of the Ministry in utilising the Parliamentary majority given to them for Imperial purposes so as to prevent the representative authority of the Metropolis from submitting to Parliament proposals which have been emphatically endorsed by the people of London in the recent County Council Election."

The Council Meetings then closed with the passing of a resolution—moved by Captain Leslie Renton—according the best thanks of the Council to the Bradford Liberal Association, to Mr. H. B. Priestman and his colleagues on the Reception Committee, and to Mr. Briggs Priestley, for their admirable arrangements for the entertainment of the Federation. The Council also put on record its warm appreciation of the hearty welcome given to the Federation by the citizens of Bradford through the Worshipful the Mayor.

On the same evening a great Public Meeting was held in St. George's Hall, which had been specially decorated for the occasion. The hall was crowded, upwards of 4,000 persons being present, and the proceedings were throughout enthusiastic. The chair was taken by Mr. H. B. Priestman (President of the Bradford Liberal Association).

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman addressed the meeting. His reception was most enthusiastic, and his speech was listened to throughout with the keenest interest.

Dr. Spence Watson moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for his presence and speech to-night; assures him and his colleagues of the loyal confidence of the Liberal Party; cordially endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Bradford, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal party to power whenever the country is next appealed to."

This was seconded by Mr. Percy Illingworth, supported by Mr. D. Lloyd-George, M.P., and carried unanimously.

A hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, seconded by Mr. J. H. Godwin (Chairman of the Central Division [Bradford] Liberal Committee), brought a very successful meeting to a close.

An overflow meeting in the Mechanics' Institute was also addressed by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

(a)—The Derby Meeting.

(December 4th, 1901.)

A Special Meeting of the General Committee "to consider the situation in South Africa" was held at Derby on December 4th. The attendance was very large and representative.

On behalf of the Executive Committee it was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., and seconded by Mr. E. T. Ann (President of the Derby Liberal Association) :—

"That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, whilst recognising the grave differences within the Liberal party with respect to the earlier stages of the South African War declares that the time has now arrived when the Nation should be acquainted with the actual terms upon which the Government are prepared to conclude an honourable peace, and calls upon all members of the Liberal party to unite in demanding that His Majesty's Government should state openly and definitely, both to the people of this country and to the inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, what those terms are.

"[This Committee views with grave misgiving the suspension of Constitutional Government, and the extension of Martial Law to those parts of Cape Colony where the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts could properly have been maintained, and sees in the recent decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Marais appeal case the most serious menace to the liberties of British subjects.

"And, finally, this Committee declares its unabated confidence in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons.]"

The second and third paragraphs (printed in brackets) were added before the meeting by the Executive Committee to their resolution as originally circulated to the affiliated Associations. The second

paragraph was in the terms of a rider on the agenda paper, in the name of the Birmingham Liberal Association, and the third was the concluding paragraph of amendments on the agenda paper in the names of the Chertsey (Surrey) Division Liberal Association and the North Bucks Liberal Association.

Mr. Harris Sanders moved, and Mr. H. H. Longman seconded, the alteration of the first paragraph of the resolution to the following, being part of the amendment on the agenda paper in the name of the Chertsey Division Liberal Association :—

“That this Committee considers that the present deplorable condition of affairs, steadily growing worse, necessitates the definite and immediate offer of a general Amnesty, together with the offer of Colonial Self-Government, as enjoyed by Canada and Australia, to those in arms against us, as the only practicable solution for the present distress and difficulty ; such Constitution to be established within a fixed and early period.”

This was eventually withdrawn.

Mr. R. C. Lehmann then proposed, and Mr. Wallace Carter seconded :—

“The omission of all the words in the first paragraph after the word ‘when,’ and the substitution therefor of the words : ‘negotiations should be entered upon with the view to the conclusion of an honourable and durable peace, and that for that purpose it is essential that a Special Commissioner should be despatched to South Africa.’”

This was a portion of the following amendment on the agenda paper in the name of the Bracebridge (Lincoln) Liberal Association :—

“To omit all the words after the word ‘when’ (in line 4), and to substitute therefor the words : ‘negotiations should be entered upon with a view to the conclusion of an honourable and durable peace, and that for that purpose it is essential that a Special Commissioner should be despatched to South Africa so that it may be possible at no distant date to establish over the whole of South Africa a system of Government similar to that which has been so successful in Canada ; and calls upon all Members of the Liberal party to unite in supporting their Leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in securing the adoption of this Policy.’”

Several amendments were withdrawn at the suggestion of Mr. Lloyd-George, M.P., to permit of a discussion and decision upon the above amendment moved by Mr. Lehmann, and ultimately it was agreed to with practical unanimity.

The following amendment, which stood on the agenda paper in the name of the Central Division of Sheffield Liberal Association, was moved by Mr. J. B. Hobman and seconded by Mr. Greenwood :—

“To omit all the words after the word ‘should’ (in line 4), and to substitute therefor the words: ‘receive an explicit assurance that the best measures are being taken to bring the military campaign to a speedy and effective conclusion, and be acquainted with the actual terms upon which the Government are prepared to conclude an honourable peace.’”

It was lost by an overwhelming majority.

Several riders were withdrawn, and the resolution as amended was then carried almost unanimously in the following form:—

“That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, whilst recognising the grave differences within the Liberal party with respect to the earlier stages of the South African War, declares that the time has now arrived when negotiations should be entered upon with a view to the conclusion of an honourable and durable peace, and that for that purpose it is essential that a Special Commissioner should be despatched to South Africa.

“This Committee views with grave misgiving the suspension of Constitutional Government, and the extension of Martial Law to those parts of Cape Colony where the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts could properly have been maintained, and sees in the recent decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Marais appeal case the most serious menace to the liberties of British subjects.

“And, finally, this Committee declares its unabated confidence in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons.”

It was moved by Mr. C. E. Hobhouse, M.P., and seconded by Mr. W. S. Rowntree:—

“That this Committee deplores the terrible rate of mortality among the women and children in the Concentration Camps, a state of affairs which must render more and more difficult the attainment of any permanent peace in South Africa; and urges upon the Government that immediate steps be taken at whatever cost to remedy the present condition of the Camps.”

It was moved by Mr. Hobman and seconded by Mr. Greenwood:—

“To omit all the words after the word ‘the’ (in line 1), and to substitute therefor the words: ‘high rate of mortality among the women and children in the Concentration Camps, and urges upon the Government that all available steps should be taken to reduce as far as possible all preventable disease and mortality.’”

The amendment stood on the agenda in the name of the Central Division of Sheffield Liberal Association. It was lost by an overwhelming majority, and the original resolution was carried unanimously.

It may be added here that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman subsequently addressed the following letter to the Secretary of

the National Liberal Federation on the subject of the above meeting : —

“I have to acknowledge the official communication of the Resolutions passed by the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation at Derby on the 4th inst. I have read these Resolutions with great pleasure, and I rejoice to find that so completely representative a body has given public expression, by a practically unanimous vote, to views on the South African question so sound and so decided. The action of the Committee was also well-timed, and I believe they have expressed that which will soon be, if it is not already, the prevalent opinion of the country.

“I would only add that for the kindly reference to myself in the first Resolution I am sincerely grateful.”

(b)—The Annual Meeting.

(AT LEICESTER, *February 15th, 1902.*)

The annual business meeting of the General Committee “To elect a Chairman of Committee and an Executive Committee for the ensuing year, and to consider resolutions submitted by the Executive on the South African War and the King’s Speech and the Legislative Programme of the Government” was held at Leicester on Wednesday, February 19th, 1902.

A larger number of affiliated Liberal Associations were represented at this meeting than on any similar occasion, and the number of delegates was also the largest on record, over 600 being present.

At the opening of the meeting the chair was taken by Dr. Spence Watson (President), who, before calling on the mover of the first resolution, stated that he had been requested by the Executive Committee to call attention to, and to protest against a development in the custom of canvassing which had sprung up in recent years in connection with the election of the Executive Committee which bid fair, if continued, to impair the usefulness of the Federation. Information had reached the Executive Committee that an offer had been made to pay the expenses of delegates if in return they would vote for certain of the candidates nominated for the Executive Committee—a list of such selected candidates being circulated with the offer. Whilst it might be a difficult thing to put a stop to canvassing altogether, Dr. Watson felt that every delegate present would agree in condemning any offer—no matter from whatever source it proceeded—to pay the expenses of delegates in return for their votes being given for a particular “ticket.” He earnestly hoped that it would be

sufficient thus to call attention to the matter and to give expression to this protest in order to put a stop, at once and for all, to what threatened to bring discredit on their organisation. Dr. Watson's protest was received with cheers and approval.

On the motion of Mr. James Tomkinson, M.P., seconded by Mr. Henry Broadhurst, M.P., Mr. Edward Evans, Jun., was unanimously re-elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing year, Dr. Spence Watson thereupon vacating the chair in his favour.

Mr. Evans having briefly returned thanks for his seventh election to the office, the delegates proceeded to the election of the Executive Committee with the following result :—

<i>Elected.</i>	VOTES.
MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C., (Chairman of the Liberal Publication Department) - - - - -	529
MR. W. H. DICKINSON (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation) - - - - -	480
MR. A. H. BURGESS (Hon. Secretary of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Liberal Association) - - - - -	446
MR. J. F. L. BRUNNER (Vice-President of the Hyde Division [Cheshire] Liberal Association)- - - - -	445
MR. ROBERT BIRD (President of the Cardiff Liberal Association) - - - - -	404
MR. FRANK WRIGHT (Birmingham) - - - - -	402
DR. JOHN MASSIE (Vice-President of the Oxford Liberal Association) - - - - -	369
MR. CHARLES H. RADFORD (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association) - - - - -	366
THE HON. T. A. BRASSEY (Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Federation - - - - -	359
MR. E. T. ANN (President of the Derby Liberal Association)	350
MR. JAMES STUART (President of the East Hull Liberal Association) - - - - -	349
MR. ALFRED BARRAN (Leeds) - - - - -	339
MR. W. E. B. PRIESTLEY (Chairman of the Eastern Division of the Bradford Liberal Association) - - - - -	337
MR. HUGH FULLERTON (Manchester) - - - - -	330
MR. W. S. ROWNTREE (Chairman of the Scarborough Liberal Association) - - - - -	326
SIR JOHN B. PHEAR (Chairman of the Devon Liberal Federation) - - - - -	307

MR. W. HOWELL DAVIES (Chairman of the South Bristol Liberal Association)	305
DR. E. H. FRASER (Vice-President of the Nottingham Liberal Association)	303
MR. J. A. MURRAY MACDONALD (President of the Hampstead Liberal and Radical Association)	272
MR. P. W. BUNTING (Treasurer of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association)	253

Not Elected (in alphabetical order).

MR. W. RYLAND D. ADKINS (Vice-President of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association).	
MR. GODFREY R. BENSON (London).	
MR. A. C. FORSTER BOULTON (London).	
MR. G. W. CARTER (Chairman of the Bracebridge Liberal Association).	
MR. W. E. CLEGG (President of the Hallam [Sheffield] Liberal Association).	
SIR MARTIN CONWAY (London).	
MR. GEORGE COOPER (Honorary Secretary of the Bermondsey Liberal and Radical Association).	
MR. W. EVANS DARBY (Chairman of the East Islington Liberal and Radical Association).	
MR. MARTIN FRADD (London).	
MR. A. G. C. HARVEY (President of the Middleton Division [Lancashire] Liberal Association).	
MR. HUGH E. HOARE (President of the Mid-Essex Division Liberal Association).	
MR. R. C. LEHMANN (South Bucks).	
MR. HUBERT H. LONGMAN (President of the Bagshot and Windlesham Liberal Association).	
MR. CHARLES T. MACAULAY (Vice-President of the Frome Division [Somerset] Liberal Association).	
MR. SAMUEL MACKEW (London).	
MR. S. F. MENDEL (London).	
MR. ALPHEUS C. MORTON (Vice-President of the Clapham Liberal and Radical Association).	
SIR PATTESON NICKALLS (Vice-President of the Sevenoaks Division [Kent] Liberal Association).	
MR. HARRY NUTTALL (Treasurer of the Stretford Division [Lancashire] Liberal Association).	
MR. HERBERT W. PAUL (London).	

MR. EDWARD P. TENNANT (London)

MR. FRANKLIN THOMASSON (Bolton).

MR. ISAAC HENRY WALLIS (Hon. Secretary of the Mansfield Division [Notts] Liberal Association).

MR. J. E. WILLANS (Vice-President of the Huddersfield Liberal Association).

MR. RICHARD WINFREY (Chairman of the Eastern Counties Liberal Federation).

Of the twenty members who thus constitute the present Executive Committee, Mr. Alfred Barran, Mr. W. S. Rowntree, and Mr. Murray Macdonald are elected for the first time, whilst Mr. P. W. Bunting is a former member who, after a year's absence from the Committee, has again been elected.

Mr. P. W. Clayden, Mr. G. J. Cockburn, and Mr. Henry Tennant, were not eligible for re-election under the compulsory retirement clause of the Federation rules. Greatly to their regret the Committee received the news at Leicester of the death of their old and valued colleague, Mr. Clayden. He will long be remembered for his strenuous and constant advocacy of Liberal principles, and for his services to the party both on the Federation Committee and elsewhere.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, it was moved by Mr. W. H. Dickinson (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. Arthur Wakerley (President of the Leicester Liberal Association), and unanimously carried:—

“That this Committee emphatically condemns the policy of insisting upon the unconditional surrender of the Boers as the only method of ending the War in South Africa, and affirms its conviction that the future contentment and security of that country are bound up in obtaining a regular peace on broad and generous lines as the result of a regular settlement.

“The Committee heartily welcomes the powerful impetus given by Lord Rosebery to this alternative policy, rejoices in the practical unanimity of opinion in its favour throughout the Liberal Party, and calls upon all Liberal Members of Parliament loyally to support Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in advocating it and pressing it forward in the House of Commons.”

An amendment to alter the first three lines of the second paragraph, so as to make them read as follows, was moved by Mr. R. C. Lehmann, on behalf of the South Bucks Liberal Association, and seconded by Mr. Fred Maddison:—

“The Committee re-affirms its previous declarations at Derby with regard to the war, and heartily welcomes the powerful impetus given by Lord Rosebery to a policy of peace. It rejoices in the practical unanimity in favour of such a policy throughout the Liberal Party.”

Another amendment to alter the first two lines of the second paragraph so as to make them read as follows, was moved by Dr. Heber Hart, on behalf of the University of London Liberal Association :—

“The Committee heartily welcomes the return of Lord Rosebery to active political life and the powerful impetus which he has given to this alternative policy.”

Both these amendments were withdrawn.

On behalf of the Executive Committee, it was moved by Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P. (North Monmouth), seconded by Mr. A. C. Osler (Birmingham), and unanimously carried :—

“That this Committee, whilst it welcomes the promise in the King’s Speech of a measure to co-ordinate and improve our system of national education, declares that no measure will be satisfactory which does not provide for public management in the case of all schools receiving public money, or which tends to limit or reduce the powers of bodies popularly elected for purposes of education.

“The Committee regrets that the King’s Speech promises no legislation on urgent questions of domestic reform, such as the Housing of the Working Classes, the Incidence of Taxation, and the more serious aspects of the Drink Traffic.”

A rider as follows, moved by Mr. J. W. Greig on behalf of the University of London Liberal Association, was withdrawn :—

“Finally, the Committee appeals to the whole Liberal Party to concentrate its energies upon the lines of policy indicated by Lord Rosebery in his recent speeches.”

The following resolution on the subject of “Home Rule all round and Colonial Representation,” moved, on behalf of the Birkenhead Liberal Association, by Mr. James Moon, and seconded by the Hon. T. A. Brassey, was not voted upon, “the previous question” having been moved and carried :—

“That this Committee, regarding the congestion of business in the House of Commons as a fatal obstacle to progress in social and domestic legislation, is of opinion that this obstacle can best be overcome by the establishment of local legislatures in the several countries of the United Kingdom, each having power to deal with its own internal affairs, leaving to the existing Imperial Parliament the management of those matters which affect the United Kingdom as a whole, and of all imperial business.

“It is further of opinion that the Colonies should be invited to send representatives to the Imperial Parliament as soon as they desire to share with the mother country the burdens of empire.”

The agenda paper also contained resolutions sent up by affiliated associations on the subjects of Religious Equality, Housing of the Working Classes, and a proposed Gladstone Commemoration Day, but time did not permit of these subjects being dealt with.

LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT.

During the past year the Liberal Publication Department has continued to be of great service to the party, and in circumstances of considerable difficulty and even discouragement has been successful in retaining the confidence and support of the party as a whole.

The *Liberal Magazine* has steadily increased alike in circulation and in usefulness, the average net monthly sales in 1901 being 2,700, an increase of 700 in three years. The number for January, 1902, was the Hundredth, and on the occasion of its publication the Editor received from the Liberal Leaders (almost without exception) extremely cordial and gratifying letters of congratulation, testifying to the skill and care with which the *Magazine* is prepared and to the use made of it by all those who, on the Liberal side, take part in the controversies of the day. The number of complete sets of the nine bound volumes of the *Liberal Magazine* (covering the years 1893 to 1901 inclusive) is rapidly running out, and in a very short time it will be impossible for the Department to supply them. Full particulars of the terms upon which all or any of the volumes can be supplied may be obtained on application to 42, Parliament Street. We desire again to commend to Members of Parliament the advisability of circulating the *Magazine*, month by month, to those Liberals in their constituencies who for any reason would not obtain it themselves. Specially low rates are allowed for copies supplied in this way, and the plan furnishes a cheap and effective method of supplying Liberals with political powder and shot. We call attention once more to the “Divisions of the Month,” which include all the most important House of Commons Divisions; for the small fee of 5s. a year, the votes of any M.P. in these selected divisions can be obtained, the votes of each month being posted not later than the 5th of the month following.

The annual volume of *Pamphlets and Leaflets for 1901* makes up a complete set of the Pamphlets and Leaflets issued in 1901 by the Department. In addition to a large number of leaflets, the volume includes pamphlets on *The Renewal of the Doles*, by Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, M.P., and Mr. F. W. Hirst; on *The Expenditure and Taxation of the United Kingdom, 1875 to 1900*, by Mr. W. J. M. Williams; on *Governments and Trade*, by Mr. H. S. Mundahl; and on *The Education Bill of 1901*; as well as Authorised Editions of various speeches by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Asquith, and Sir Walter Foster. *The Liberal Calendar for 1902* contained portraits of the King and Queen (in honour of the Coronation year), Lord Kimberley, Lord Spencer, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and Mr. Asquith, together with a picture of Westminster Abbey, where the Coronation takes place. Liberals are reminded that for a small annual subscription of 2s. 6d. copies of all the pamphlets and leaflets published by the Department may be obtained as issued.

Considerable use has been made of the *Lantern Lectures* supplied by the Department, but the long continuance of the war has, in this direction, as in so many others, retarded the full development of Liberal activity in the constituencies.

The Record of Members' Votes (more customarily known as "The Recording Angel") has now been begun for the present Parliament with Part One (covering the votes and attendances of 1900-1901). The record is now complete from the year 1866.

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

In pursuance of the instruction contained in the resolution on the education question passed by the Council of the Federation at Bradford on May 15th, a Special Emergency Meeting of the General Committee of the Federation "to consider the Government's Education Bill and matters affecting the general question of education" was held in the Westminster Town Hall on Wednesday, June 5th.

Professor John Massie, M.A. (Oxford), occupied the chair, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Edward Evans, junr., Chairman of the General Committee. The President of the Federation, Dr. Spence Watson, was also unable to be present.

There was a large attendance of delegates representing the affiliated Liberal Associations of the country, and the Executive Committee was supported on the platform by several Liberal members of Parliament.

The first resolution, as follows, was moved by Dr. J. Guinness Rogers (London), seconded by Mr. Corrie Grant, M.P. (Warwickshire—Rugby Division), and supported by Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P. (Monmouth—Northern Division) :—

“That this General Committee reaffirms the opinion of the Council of the Federation at its meeting in Bradford, that in view of the confusion and disorganisation which at present characterise our national education and of the pressure of competition on the part of foreign nations possessing superior educational advantages, there is an urgent need for a thorough reorganisation of the general machinery of education in England; and that the whole work of public education, elementary, secondary, and technical, ought to be entrusted in each district or area to some one responsible and popularly elected local body.”

Mr. Thomas Morgan (Derby) moved to add the following rider :—

“The General Committee further declares that this body ought to be elected solely for that purpose.”

Mr. W. Claridge (Bradford) seconded, and the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell (Rochdale), Mr. J. W. Harris (New Forest), and Mr. W. King Baker (Ealing Division) supported. The rider was carried by a large majority. The resolution with the rider added was then put and carried *nem. con.*

The second resolution, as follows, was moved by Mr. Charles Morley, M.P. (Brecknock), seconded by Rev. A. W. Jephson, M.A. (Vicar of St. John's, Walworth), and supported by Sir W. Brampton Gurdon, M.P. (Norfolk—Northern Division), Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P. (Lincolnshire—Louth Division), Mr. G. M. Brown M.P. (Edinburgh—Central Division), and Mr. W. Ryland D. Adkins (South Northamptonshire Liberal Association) :—

“That this Committee declares that the Government Education Bill now before Parliament is unsatisfactory, for the following, among other reasons :—

“(a) The Bill lays down no definite rule for the constitution of the new Education Committees, but leaves the settlement of this important question largely to a Government Department ;

“(b) The Bill tends to remove the administration of public education from the hands of directly elected representatives of the people

into the hands of a body nearly one-half of which may be chosen otherwise than by popular election ;

“(c) The Bill does not make it obligatory on the Education authorities to ascertain and make provision for the Education deficiency that exists throughout the country, nor even to apply the ‘Whiskey’ Money (under the Local Taxation Act, 1890) to the purposes of Education ;

”(d) The Bill provides that the money of the Ratepayers shall be applicable to the support of Schools and Colleges sectarian in character and subject to no popular control ;

“(e) The Bill does not extend the Conscience Clause to all Students and Scholars in Institutions receiving grants from the Education Authority, but restricts it to Day Scholars only.

“This Committee therefore urges that the most strenuous opposition be offered in Parliament to the Bill in its present form.”

Mrs. Byles (Bradford) moved to insert the following new clause :—

“The Bill deals with the work of women in education in an unsatisfactory and reactionary spirit, and increases the difficulties, already too great, which women find in discharging public duties.”

Mr. Frederick Maddison seconded, and the clause was adopted.

Mr. H. J. Bailey (Wellington) moved to insert the following additional clause :—

“That the Bill does not treat all efficient schools, including schools run for private profit, alike.”

Mr. H. A. Nesbitt (University of London Liberal Association) seconded.

Lost by a large majority.

Mr. H. J. Wilson, M.P., moved to omit the words “in its present form” at the end of the resolution ; seconded by Mr. W. H. Elkins (Bristol), and carried.

The resolution as amended, which read as follows, was then put to the meeting and carried *nem. con.* :—

“That this Committee declares that the Government Education Bill now before Parliament is unsatisfactory, for the following, among other reasons :—

“(a) The Bill lays down no definite rule for the constitution of the new Education Committees, but leaves the settlement of this important question largely to a Government Department ;

“(b) The Bill tends to remove the administration of public education from the hands of directly elected representatives of the people into the hands of a body nearly one-half of which may be chosen otherwise than by popular election ;

“(c) The Bill does not make it obligatory on the education authorities to ascertain and make provision for the educational deficiency that exists throughout the country, nor even to apply the

'Whiskey' Money (under the Local Taxation Act, 1890) to the purposes of Education ;

“(d) The Bill provides that the money of the Ratepayers shall be applicable to the support of Schools and Colleges sectarian in character and subject to no popular control ;

“(e) The Bill does not extend the Conscience Clause to all Students and Scholars in Institutions receiving grants from the Education Authority, but restricts it to Day Scholars only ;

“(f) The Bill deals with the work of women in Education in an unsatisfactory and reactionary spirit, and increases the difficulties, already too great, which women find in discharging public duties.

“This Committee therefore urges that the most strenuous opposition be offered in Parliament to the Bill.”

The third resolution, as follows, was moved by Mr. George White, M.P. (Norfolk—North Western Division), seconded by Mr. Russell Rea, M.P. (Gloucester), and supported by Mr. Theodore C. Taylor, M.P. (Lancashire—Radcliffe Division) :—

“That this Committee is of opinion that a short measure should be passed in the course of the present Session enabling School Boards to carry on the work, which, under the ‘Cockerton’ decision, will otherwise be brought to a standstill.”

This resolution was also carried *nem. con.*

The proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chairman.

The Education (No. 1) Bill, read for the first time on May 7th, was dropped in June and before reaching the Second Reading ; and on July 2nd the Education (No. 2) Bill was introduced by Sir John Gorst and passed its first reading ; on July 9th it was read a second time, and on July 15th the following manifesto was issued by the Executive Committee :—

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION,
42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.,
15th July, 1901.

Urgent.

THE EDUCATION CRISIS.

DEAR SIR,

The natural sequel to the withdrawal of the Education (No. 1) Bill would have been the introduction of a measure legalising the “Cockerton” schools until such time as our educational system is reorganised. Instead of taking a course that would have commended itself to all who are genuinely interested in educational progress, the Government are now engaged in forcing through the House of Commons a measure which is none the less contentious because it has been introduced under a Standing Order applicable only to non-controversial business.

The new Bill is disingenuous in that, under guise of meeting a temporary difficulty, it seeks to affirm a new and far-reaching principle. It is clumsy and cumbrous in that, to achieve a given object, it involves the maximum of difficulty and friction. It is reactionary in that, in an important branch of educational work, it subjects one popularly-elected body with special knowledge and experience of Education to another popularly-elected body possessing neither.

Any doubts which may have existed as to the underlying motive of the Government in introducing the measure were effectually removed by the speech of Sir John Gorst on its Second Reading. That speech was an unconcealed attack upon the School Boards and their work, and as such it must be resented by all who have the interests of National Education at heart. It is significant that, speaking last week at the opening of a new Board School, Sir William Hart-Dyke, the Tory Minister of Education from 1886 to 1892, felt impelled to say:—"He regretted the speech made by Sir John Gorst concerning the School Board system. It was the greatest blunder that a Minister of Education could have committed. Judging from his long experience in Parliament, he could see no reason why statements so derogatory to the system should have been made." It is impossible to conceive a more weighty rebuke to Sir John Gorst for the attitude of hostility and contempt displayed by him against the School Board system.

The Bill does not stand alone: it has been supplemented by a not less objectional Minute of the Board of Education, which sweeps away a comprehensive Code hitherto in force and substitutes regulations that will cripple and injure, if not destroy, the work now being carried on in the Evening Schools and Classes.

The Bill and the Minute alike must be strenuously resisted. They both come before Parliament at a period of the Session when any serious attempt at educational reconstruction is, in the nature of things, impossible. We beg again to draw your attention to the resolutions passed at the meeting of the General Committee of the Federation held on June 5th, and we trust that Liberals everywhere, by moving public bodies to take action, and by meeting, resolution and petition, will continue to bring pressure to bear, through their members of Parliament, irrespective of party, so that, instead of the Bill and Minute, a short Act may be passed which will preserve the *status quo*, and postpone until next year the wider and more controversial questions involved in any general educational resettlement. The time is very short. The Bill passes into Committee in the House of Commons to-day, and any action which is to be effective must be immediate.

We are, yours faithfully,

ROBERT SPENCE WATSON,

President.

EDWARD EVANS, JUN.,

Chairman of Committee.

W. H. HART, *Treasurer.*

ROBERT A. HUDSON,

Secretary.

FRANK BARTER,

Assistant Secretary.

THE EDUCATION BILL OF 1902.

In the speech in which last year Mr. Balfour announced the abandonment of the Education (No. 1) Bill, after describing it as a measure constituting "a permanent central authority for secondary education," he announced that the Bill was "only postponed for a very brief period," since it would this year be given "a very early and a very honourable place." It is true that an Education Bill has this Session been introduced and read a first time before Easter, but it proves to be altogether a different measure from the Bill either of 1900 or of 1901. Both these Bills, whatever their merits or demerits, at least recognised that it is secondary education which it is urgent and imperative to create and reorganise. In those Bills, accordingly, elementary education was not touched, and what was attempted, however faultily or ineffectively, was to fill up the gap in secondary education. This year's Bill deals with both higher and elementary education, but the perspective is entirely altered; for the clauses that deal with secondary education are of small practical importance compared with those which deal with the relief of Voluntary schools and the abolition of School Boards. We have no longer a Secondary Education measure, but a second Voluntary Schools Bill, in which the "intolerable strain" is once again to be eased, this time at the cost of the ratepayer.

It is not possible within the limits of space that can be assigned to the Bill in this report to exhaust the criticisms and objections that can be taken to it, but they may perhaps be briefly summarised on the lines of the resolution which the Executive Committee are asking the Council of the Federation to adopt at Bristol:—

(a) *The Bill fails to make adequate or satisfactory provision for the supply or re-organisation of Secondary Education.*—All that the new education authority, the so-called Education Committee of the Town or County Council, can do is that it *may* supply, or aid the supply, of education other than elementary, it *may* spend the "drink money" on this object, it *may* add a further sum not exceeding a twopenny rate. There is no obligation or duty laid upon the Committee to provide secondary education, there is no State help—to serve as a stimulus to local expenditure—comparable to the equivalent of a halfpenny rate given to Wales in its Intermediate Education

Act. Progress in Secondary Education will be made more, not less, difficult, for there will be no escape from a heavy new rate to maintain the denominational schools, and the new educational authority will hesitate to impose a double burden upon the ratepayer.

(b) *The Bill, far from creating one Educational Authority, will, in fact, produce a multiplication of authorities, leading to great uncertainty and administrative chaos, particularly by dividing the responsibility between the Councils which will fix the Education Rate and the Committees which will have the spending of it.*—Nothing could be a greater delusion than to imagine that the Bill creates the “one authority,” which, in one form or another, so many educationalists desire. What is paraded as the “one authority” is the Town or County Council, acting, however, through a Committee. Of the members of the Committee the Council must choose a majority, but not a single member need be a Councillor. The remainder are to be nominated, but by whom or from what bodies is to be decided by a scheme which requires the approval of the Board of Education but not of Parliament. The Committee is, if it chooses, to have the “control of all secular education” in the Elementary schools. If it does choose, the School Boards *ipso facto* are abolished, if not they remain. Where the Committee takes over Elementary Education all that happens to the managers of the denominational schools is that not more than a third of the whole number may be appointed by the Committee, which has to maintain the schools out of the rates, except for the cost of the school-house. But the Committee, though it spends the money, has not to find it—that is the task of the Council, which will necessarily have to review the proceedings of the Committee, though it is the Committee, not the Council, which is to have dealings with the Board of Education. And it is this wonderful arrangement which is acclaimed as a co-ordination of our national system of education!

(c) *The Bill abandons the fundamental principle hitherto recognised in this country that popular education, paid for by the Ratepayers, should be in the hands of directly elected representatives of the people; it encourages the destruction of School Boards, and hands education over to Committees, not one member of which need be directly responsible to the public.*—In its present form the School Boards are not destroyed outright, but the Town and County Councils are offered the knife for their destruction. It is said that this permissive power is to become

compulsory, but in any case Mr. Balfour looks forward to all the School Boards being destroyed within the next few years. This is sorry treatment for the bodies which, taken as a whole, have unquestionably shown more educational zeal and enterprise than any other public body, and have rendered the nation incalculable service by the way in which they have raised the standard of Education. But their offence is that they have paid more heed to the needs of the child it is their duty to educate than to the neediness of the Voluntary School Managers with whom they have dared to "compete." They are, therefore, to be destroyed, in order that the denominational schools may get quartered on the rates, and that the control of popular education may be removed as far as possible from those who provide for its cost.

(d) *The Bill, by giving a large annual endowment out of the rates to the privately-managed denominational schools, is obviously intended to establish at the cost of the Ratepayers a system of national education under sectarian teaching.*—If it is impossible to calculate with absolute accuracy what this annual endowment will be, it is certain that it will be exceedingly large, probably equal to an additional rate of (on the average) 4d. or 5d. The denominational school managers will merely have to provide for the upkeep of the school-house, the whole maintenance of the denominational school falling on to the taxpayer and the ratepayer. In return the ratepayer gets no effective right of control or management. The denominational school keeps its own managers, to whom may be added nominees of the Education Committee, but so that those latter do not form more than one third of the whole number. The managers are still to appoint the teachers, subject to a veto on the part of the Committee. Little will happen in the case of the great majority of the denominational schools except that the local cost of maintenance will be placed upon the rates.

(e) *The Bill encourages, to the detriment of education, the multiplication of denominational schools maintained at the public cost, thus in its practical working injuring existing schools and tending to bring all new schools under denominational management.*—All that the denominationalists have to do is to provide the school-house and provide for its upkeep. The Board of Education has to decide what type of school is to be recognised as necessary, and one of the considerations they have to bear in mind is the "economy of the rates." That is to say the Church of England, freed from the necessity of providing the bulk of the present

amount of voluntary subscriptions, will establish a central fund, and seek everywhere to provide the buildings for new schools, which, once recognised, will for ever have to be maintained by the ratepayer.

(f) *The Bill recognises and permits in schools which are to become rate-maintained a religious test for teachers as a condition of their employment in such schools.*—In all denominational schools the managers will appoint teachers of their own denomination only. These teachers will be paid with public money, but their posts will be held subject to a religious test—a condition of affairs admirably calculated to encourage hypocritical pretence, and grossly unfair to the children taught by teachers who have had to submit to this religious test.

The Bill, in short, does nothing to secure improvement in education, it gives the children neither better teaching nor greater opportunities for intellectual advancement. It does not recognise the vital necessity to the nation of a thoroughly co-ordinated system of education, nor the fact that, to obtain this, every existing form of elementary education should be strengthened and brought under proper control. Instead, its unconcealed aims are to endow sectarian teaching; to abolish the School Boards which for the last third of a century have worked with such splendid zeal and success for education, and, under pretence of erecting "one authority," to abandon altogether the principle of direct popular control. It is a measure which must be strenuously resisted as educationally bad, as grossly unfair to all concerned except where it is partial to the denominationalists, and as certain in its working to lead to a deplorable increase of sectarian strife and bitterness. Passed in its present form it will prove fatal to our commercial and industrial supremacy, and a deadly blow to the highest and best interests of the working classes.

THE GOVERNMENT'S HOME RECORD.

The Session of 1901, the first working Session of a new Parliament, a new reign, and a new century, was singularly unproductive and disappointing. In the words of the leading Ministerial journal, it showed "no trace of the energy and enthusiasm that might have been reasonably looked for after a signal and incontestable party victory," and indeed there are already abundant signs that reformers have as little to expect from the new Parliament as from the old. The King's

Speech last year did not contain over much in the way of promised legislation, but little of what it did promise found its way on to the Statute Book. An Education Bill was introduced only to be abandoned, whilst a temporary and emergency measure was substituted at the last moment. Mr. Ritchie can be credited with a useful Workshops and Factories Act Amendment Act, though it is much to be regretted that he should have assented to the exclusion of the important provisions relating to laundries. These provisions were clearly approved of by Parliament and by the country, but this strongest Government of modern times, which is never tired of insisting on the wickedness of alliance with the Irish Nationalists, in this instance surrendered to them at discretion. This might have been highly commendable had the question at issue been an Irish one, but such was not the case; the laundry proposals applied to the whole of the United Kingdom and their withdrawal was a surrender that was fitly characterised as cowardly and indefensible. Nothing was done in the direction of Temperance legislation, except that, with little assistance from the Government, Mr. Crombie's Sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children Bill was passed, after the friends of "the trade" had tried their ingenious worst to make it worthless—an attempt which the working of the Act happily demonstrates to have been a failure. The Government themselves announced in the King's Speech a Bill for the prevention of drunkenness in licensed houses or public places. In the debate on the Address Mr. Ritchie was at pains to explain that the Bill itself would be wider in scope than its title would suggest or indicate. The Session came to an end without the Bill ever being introduced at all. All that the Government did was to take the Bishop of Winchester's Habitual Drunkards Bill, amend it out of recognition, get it passed through the Lords, and not even permit it to be considered in the Commons. In fact the Tory temperance record for 1901 may be summed up by saying that Lord Salisbury added to his historic plea in 1900 for the right of "free indulgence," a lament that "the legislature had wandered too far from free trade" in drink. The King's Civil List was settled with very little difference of opinion. A Royal Titles Act was passed to permit of his Majesty's dominions beyond the sea being mentioned in his style and title. The promised Final Court of Appeal Bill was never introduced, as Mr. Chamberlain was not able to frame a proposal which was acceptable to the Colonies as a whole.

Restrained by the enormous cost of the war, the Government last year broke through its annual custom of giving some new dole out of public money to one or other of its friends, but it did what it could by continuing those of the doles which had originally been given for a limited period, expiring in 1902—that is to say, the doles to the English and Scotch agricultural landowners, and the English clerical tithe-owners. In the first instance a Bill was introduced which made all the dole-giving Acts (four in number) permanent, and with singular effrontery this measure, involving two millions a year of public money, was introduced under a rule of the House of Commons which is only applicable to measures that are non-contentious. Eventually the two Front Benches agreed to a compromise by which prolonged resistance to the Bill was abandoned, and in return the extension of the doles was limited to a further term of four years. This did not, it need hardly be said, remove Liberal objections to the measure, but it was a considerable gain to have it affirmed (for the second time) that the doles are a temporary expedient, and not part and parcel of a settled financial policy. Now that the Local Taxation Commission has at last reported, so far as England and Wales are concerned, it is to be hoped (rather than expected) that the Government will produce the complete system of reform and readjustment the necessity for which is amply demonstrated by the reports of that Commission. Liberals have welcomed the Minority Reports on the subject of Local Subvention and the Rating of Site Values, and it is especially significant that Lord Balfour of Burleigh, a member of the present Cabinet, should be found agreeing with the Liberal minority. It is not to be inferred that he has carried his colleagues with him, for the Government would have nothing to do this year with Mr. Trevelyan's Urban Site Rating Bill, although this measure was drawn up on the lines of a report which Lord Balfour had signed. This Bill, which received the support of the whole of the Liberal party, proposed to allow municipalities separately to assess site values in urban communities, whether built upon or not, and to levy a rate on this valuation not exceeding 2s. in the £; its primary object was to relieve buildings and industry by taxing the unearned value of land and to force land which is ripe for building into the market. The introduction of the Bill and the second reading debate on it mark a distinct practical advance on this subject, whilst the division served to demon-

strate that Local Taxation reform can only be looked for at the hands of the Liberal party.

Parliament was called together unusually early in 1902, but the programme of legislation, as outlined in the King's Speech, was shorter than ever. This was partly due to the determination of the Government to make the passing of New Procedure Rules their *pièce de resistance* for the Session. It is obvious that from time to time it may become necessary to overhaul the procedure of the House of Commons and to remedy the defects which experience may have disclosed in its working. Certain of the new rules are wise and timely alterations, but, viewed as a whole, Mr. Balfour's proposals are clearly designed to give the individual member an easy time rather than either to make the House of Commons more efficient or to increase its legislative capacity. Mr. Balfour asks us seriously to believe that the Parliamentary conditions which have obtained until now have made "a galley-slave's life preferable," which is his justification for introducing rules the "whole end" of which is to let the M.P. know "when he is to go to bed" and when "he is to go to dinner." These may be admirable objects in themselves, but even taken together they hardly seem to constitute a question of urgent and immediate importance, and it is lamentable that the freshest energies of the Session should have been frittered away on them. It must be added that the new rules do, however, in many particulars help to shield the Government and to weaken the power of Parliament as against the Executive, and in so far as they do this they are to be condemned. In any case they do not touch the really important problem, which is, in the first place, how the Imperial Parliament is to be rendered more capable of doing the work which it alone can do, and, in the second place, how it can be relieved of the obligation of doing much of what is now unnecessarily thrust upon it. That is the task which confronts statesmen, and not the problem whether disorderly members ought to be coerced into a "sincere regret" or an "adequate apology."

The Education Bill and the Budget are dealt with elsewhere, and the only other measures which call for any notice are those which deal with the licensing question and the London Water Supply. The Licensing Bill alters the law as to drunkenness, amends the licensing law in several particulars (the most important alteration perhaps being that which requires that all retail off-licenses shall be obtained from

the justices), and provides for the registration of clubs. Whilst the details will have to be closely scrutinised, the Bill is a step in the right direction, though, unhappily, only a very small step when the distance that has to be travelled is taken into account. The truth is that it is hopeless to expect from a Government presided over by Lord Salisbury any proposals which seriously tackle the tremendous problems involved in the control of the liquor traffic.

The London Water Bill is satisfactory only in so far as it recognises that the various London Water Companies must be bought out, and the Metropolitan water supply placed in the hands of one controlling authority. But the authority set up by the Bill is almost the worst that could well be invented. It is a point of fixed policy with the Government that the London County Council cannot be "trusted" (to use the word which Lord Salisbury once used of the Welsh County Councils). The Moderate Borough Councils have, accordingly, been called in to displace the Progressive County Council. The Water Board set up by the Bill gives 46 members to London and 21 to outside areas. These 46 members are to be 10 County Councillors and 36 Borough Councillors, an arrangement which will have the effect of making the new Water Board absolutely removed from all direct popular control, and less easily affected by popular desire than even the present Directorates of the Water Companies. It is little less than scandalous that London should be accorded treatment which would never for a moment be contemplated in the case of a provincial city. The financial proposals of the Bill, too, are extremely unsatisfactory, despite the proviso that no allowance is to be added to the purchase price in respect of compulsory sale. Londoners have to pay dearly for the Government's hostility to the County Council and its tenderness to the Water Companies. It is a sorry recompense for the steady regularity with which London has returned Unionist members.

In commenting last year on Mr. Brodrick's Army Corps proposals it was pointed out that, although he got an army on paper, he did not say how the recruits were to be obtained to make that army a reality. It may be admitted that the long continuance of the war has made it difficult to carry out any extensive scheme of reorganisation, but the fact remains that the new army is still a paper army. Now Mr. Brodrick in this year's proposals recognises that the recruiting difficulty is the kernel of the situation, a difficulty he seeks to solve by very

materially increasing the pay of the soldier. This will still further increase the cost of the Army, already enormously high as that cost is, but it has for some time past been fairly clear that we should have to raise the rate of pay in default of some scheme of compulsory service. A very little consideration, however, has shown that conscription is out of the question, not merely because it would be alien to our traditions and inimical to our industrial system, but also because it would be unworkable in practice and quite unsuited to the needs of the country.

THE WAR.

This Report is drafted at a moment when negotiations are proceeding in South Africa which every lover of his country hopes will result in peace. It may be indeed that before this Report comes up for adoption at Bristol, peace will actually have come. It is unnecessary to say how earnestly the Executive Committee of the Federation desires that this lamentable war shall end in a regular peace, followed by a regular settlement, but none the less it is necessary briefly to glance back over the events of the last twelve months.

Broadly speaking, the history of the past year has been just that of the year and a half which preceded it, for Ministers with a consistency which in other circumstances might be admirable have continued to blunder, both in their policy and in the conduct of the war. They have persistently underrated the Boer power of resistance, forgetful of the fact that there is a whole world of difference between defeat and conquest, and that it might have been expected that the Boers would continue the struggle to the last possible moment, when to the policy of annexation was added the demand for unconditional surrender. The result of these miscalculations, both military and political, has been undoubtedly to prolong the war, which it will be remembered ended (for electioneering purposes) in September, 1900. On the one hand the Government has not taken steps to put the Army into a position effectively to deal with the very mobile Boer, on the other it has done everything to persuade him to go on fighting—whether it has been the farm-burning, the concentration camps, the banishment proclamation, or the demand for unconditional surrender. Whatever the verdict of the historian may prove to be as to the justice, necessity, or inevita-

bility of the war, it is certain that he will have to say that no war could have been conducted with so little real appreciation of the military situation or of the political problem.

The Federation from the first has protested against the policy of unconditional surrender. The resolutions passed during the past year at Derby and Leicester will be found set out elsewhere. The resolution passed at Derby was the subject of much misrepresentation, but whatever criticism may be levelled against the plan of procedure it suggested—namely, the despatch to South Africa of a Special Commissioner—the principle underlying it was that the war ought, in the interests of the future of South Africa, to be ended by a regular peace and a regular settlement. Lord Rosebery, in his admirable declarations on the war at Chesterfield, rendered notable service to this Liberal policy. It was not that he promulgated what was new, but that he secured a wider acceptance of the policy amongst those to whom he spoke with special authority. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in his first speech after the Chesterfield meeting, expressed his cordial agreement with the main lines of Lord Rosebery's policy, as anyone who had studied his speeches on the war might have known he would. The Federation at Leicester unanimously adopted a resolution on the war which commended itself to all Liberals, and nothing that has been questioned in Lord Rosebery's subsequent action can alter the fact that at Chesterfield he did a great service to the party by constructing a platform upon which Liberals, who had differed about the war, found it possible to unite without compromise of principle.

The management of the Concentration Camps in which the Boer women and children, after being removed from their farms, have been compulsorily detained, has deeply stirred public feeling in this country. Miss Hobhouse, who first called attention to the condition of these camps, has been subjected to abundant abuse and attack, just indeed as Mr. Burdett-Coutts was when he wrote to the *Times* to describe how, in the earlier portion of the war, our soldiers were being treated in hospital. But if Miss Hobhouse needed justification she has it in the report of Mr. Brodrick's Committee of ladies, and still more in the vigorous measures taken last October by Mr. Chamberlain, when the Colonial Office took over from the War Office the control and management of the camps. Whatever

may be said as to the difficulty of enforcing sanitary precautions upon those little accustomed to them, or to the conditions of camp life, the broad fact remains that thousands of lives, particularly those of children, were lost which might have been saved had there been better organisation sooner instead of later. It is no small satisfaction to know that just as the policy of farm-burning was abandoned as the result of a Parliamentary discussion, initiated by the Opposition, so the action of Liberals, in particular by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, undoubtedly led to the steps taken to ameliorate the lot of the Boer women and children.

Another matter which properly evoked great indignation was the conduct of certain officers in ordering the inhabitants of districts in Cape Colony to be present at the execution of fellow citizens. Mr. John Morley rightly characterised this as an "infernally atrocious," and it is satisfactory to know that after the Government had ordered the practice to be stopped they discovered that Lord Kitchener had already given instructions to that effect.

One of the most futile and mischievous devices of the Government for ending the war has been the Proclamation of last July, which sought to coerce the burgher by telling him he must pay the cost of maintaining his wife and children in the camps, and threatened any Boer leader who did not surrender by September 15th with banishment from South Africa. As to the former, farms belonging to burghers still fighting have already been sold, a proceeding absolutely indefensible either in equity or having regard to the terms of the proclamation. As to the threatened banishments, it is imperative that they shall not be insisted upon. The proclamation has done enough harm by making surrender more distasteful to every Boer leader, but when peace comes Great Britain will shrink from sacrificing her reputation for generous treatment by adhering to a policy that would banish Botha, Delarey, and De Wet, men whose prowess on the battlefield makes us wish to retain them as fellow citizens in a British South Africa.

In Cape Colony the year was marked by the abrogation of the constitution. The Cape Parliament has not met for much more than the year, the longest interval permissible according to law; money, raised legally enough by taxation, is being as illegally spent by Governor's warrant, instead of being voted by Parliament. This is a

serious position, and there are already those who talk glibly about the advisability of continuing to govern Cape Colony on these non-representative and unconstitutional lines. It will be the task of the Liberal party to insist that at the earliest possible moment the Colony shall be permitted to govern itself by Parliamentary and constitutional methods. Martial law, too, has been extended to the whole Colony, and the Marais case has resulted in a decision as to what martial law means, which, if it were followed, would be fraught with grave peril to the hard-won rights of the citizen, who would be at the entire mercy of the Executive. Liberals cannot but look with grave misgiving upon the use made of martial law, as well upon the Privy Council's decision with regard to it; whilst it is certain that its actual working and administration in Cape Colony has led, not merely to the inconveniences inseparable from a state of warfare, but to injustice and harsh treatment, which have proved valuable recruiting agents for the Boers, and led to their reinforcement by large numbers of Cape rebels.

Something must be added with regard to the administrative scandals which have been brought to light in connection with the contracts made during the war, more particularly those that are concerned with remounts, meat, and transport. The Government in an unguarded moment permitted an inquiry into the purchase of remounts in Austro-Hungary, which led to the most remarkable revelations, both as to the normal organisation of the War Office, and as to the methods actually adopted by it in times of war. But the Government have absolutely declined to permit any further inquiry, on the plea that all inquiry must be postponed until the end of the war. As a fact, the case for at least beginning to inquire at once is complete, and the only result (possibly the real object) of delay is to cover up what, alike in the interests of the Army and the taxpayer, ought to be subjected to the fullest inquiry and scrutiny.

THE SITUATION AND OUTLOOK.

The Budget of 1902 bears in one respect a strong family likeness to that of 1901, in that in both Sir Michael Hicks-Beach is between a huge realised deficit for the year that is gone and a huge prospective deficit for the year that is to come. In the twelve months ending March 31st, 1902, the *actual deficit* is $52\frac{1}{2}$ millions (*every penny of which has had to be borrowed*); for the twelve months ending March 31st, 1903, the *estimated deficit* is 45 millions. Over thirty-five millions of this is to be borrowed, four-and-a-half millions is to be obtained by suspending (for the third year in succession) the Sinking Fund, whilst new taxation is to be imposed which it is calculated will raise something over five millions. Another penny is to be placed on the income-tax, raising it to 1s. 3d. in the £, a figure which is high, but hardly too high in view of the enormous cost of the war; half a million is to be got by increasing the duty on cheques and dividend warrants from a penny to twopence. Both these changes, however, are uncontroversial compared to the remaining proposal. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, protesting that no one is so good or convinced a Free Trader as himself, puts back the hands of the clock by imposing a duty of 3d. per hundredweight on imported corn, and 5d. a hundredweight on imported flour. "Well done," cries Sir Howard Vincent in an ecstasy of approval, and little wonder that he rejoices. For this tax on corn is a distinct and decided departure from the principle of Free Trade, and a departure, too, in the worst possible direction, since it attacks the food of the people. Last year it was the people's sugar which was taxed, now it is the people's bread. This is justified under the specious plea that the basis of taxation ought to be "broadened." What is really being done is to heap the burden more and more on to the shoulders of those least able to bear it. The workers contribute a far larger proportion of their earnings than the well-to-do of their wealth, and the contribution is not the less real because it is levied indirectly. The Liberal Party will offer the most determined resistance to this proposed tax on corn, both because bread is an essential article of food particularly to the very poor (at least a quarter of the whole population), and because the tax is the thin end of the wedge of Protection. Our whole commercial system is built upon Free Trade, and we shall do wisely not to tamper with its foundations.

The Budget brings out with striking clearness the enormous increase which, altogether apart from the war, has taken place in the nation's normal expenditure since Lord Salisbury came into office in 1895. Leaving out of account the sum of 165 millions which have been spent on war in the last three years, we have the startling fact that the ordinary expenditure which in 1894-5 was 94 millions has now in 1902-2 leapt up to 122½ millions, whilst the estimated amount for 1902-3 is 125 millions. Seven years of Tory control have resulted in the national expenses increasing by 31 millions. Nor is this all. We are now spending over 6½ millions less than in 1895 on paying off National Debt, so that in all we have (*still apart from war expenditure*) an increased annual expenditure of nearly 38 millions a year—*just a pound a head a year for every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom*. These figures speak for themselves, and it is little comfort to have Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's assurance that no man is more alive than himself to the need of economy in our national finance. The new taxes imposed since the war have long ago ceased to be war taxes—they will, some or all, be wanted when the war is over as permanent modes of raising money wherewith to meet our ever growing expenditure. How long will it be before the nation seriously begins to consider whether Toryism is worth its cost?

If there were any who really dreamt that the Irish question could be shelved or dropped, the course of recent events must have been a rude awakening. The wish may have been father to the thought. The Government have once again returned to the path of coercion, and though the distance they have thus far gone in that direction has not been considerable, it has been sufficient to show the impossibility of attempting to govern a free people by force. Ireland is practically crimeless, and the recent discussion in Parliament on the administration of the Coercion Act demonstrated how the machinery of the law is strained for political ends, and how "criminals" are manufactured out of politicians guilty (in the words of an Irish judge, who is no friend to the Nationalist movement) of no "moral turpitude." Whatever differences, real or imagined, there may be on other phases of the Irish question, all Liberals are, at all events, as fully convinced as they have ever been of the inexpediency of a coercive policy. As to the Liberal alternative of conciliation—of the reconciliation of the Irish people to their partnership in the United Kingdom and to their place

in the Empire—something has already been said in the retrospect of the history of the Federation. The Home Rule movement has already done much, since no one imagines that, if it had not taken place, the Tory party would ever have passed the Local Government Act of 1898. That Act was an admission—never hitherto made—that the Irishman was as much entitled to manage his own local affairs as the Englishman, Scotsman, or Welshman. It was a great experiment, and the success which has attended it is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the central authority has not been a Local Government Board which the Irish people could trust, but Dublin Castle, upon which they naturally look with suspicion and dislike. The advocacy of Home Rule has not been made easier by the attitude taken up by Irish Nationalists over the War; but a physician who prescribes for a disease is not surprised or deterred merely because the symptoms are violent. Precisely because Ireland alone of all the “Britains” is not heartily loyal, Liberals want applied to her case the remedy which has never yet failed to secure loyalty and contentment. The Liberal party abandons none of the ends or objects of its Irish policy, though it is quite possible that the mode of approach may differ from that taken in the past.

It is deeply to be deplored that during the past year there has been a serious recurrence of the attack upon the right of free speech and of public meeting. It was natural to hope that the attack had spent itself in the disgraceful series of riots which took place in the early part of 1900, when at the beginning of the War both public and private meetings were everywhere broken up with great risk to person and much actual damage to property. On that occasion Mr. Balfour pleaded for the rioters that the holding of the meetings contributed an intolerable strain on their “human nature,” a plea which so strong a Ministerialist as Professor Albert Dicey pointed out meant “nothing less than that legal freedom is at an end, and that, instead of rights secured by the law of the land,” we have substituted “the capricious dictates of popular sentiment enforced by the sanction of popular violence.” “Human nature” has asserted itself during the past year, not only again at Stratford-on-Avon (this time at a by-election), but also at Birmingham where last December a serious riot occurred in connection with a meeting called by the Birmingham Liberal Association, to be addressed by Mr. Lloyd-George. Organised and concerted rowdyism prevented his

being heard, the incitement being largely supplied by a section of the local Unionist press. The result must have exceeded the most sanguine expectations. Not merely was Mr. Lloyd-George not heard but the Town Hall was wrecked, a riot took place in which shots were fired, pocket-knives used as missiles, and one innocent person lost his life, whilst the rioters passed a triumphant vote of confidence in Mr. Chamberlain, who acknowledged the resolution without having a single word of reprobation for the riot or the rioters. The incident was a gross outrage upon the elementary rights of Englishmen, and, apart altogether from party considerations, is much to be deplored.

The Committee gladly recognise the great services which have been, and are being, rendered to the party by the leaders who are responsible for the conduct of the Opposition in Parliament. In the regretted absence of that staunch and veteran Liberal, Lord Kimberley, Lord Spencer has led the band of Liberal peers, all too small, with conspicuous skill and sagacity. Both in the House of Commons and in the country, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has exhibited a courage and determination in defence of Liberalism and in attack of the Government which have increased the already high respect and affection with which he is regarded by his fellow Liberals. Nothing has been more disgraceful than the stream of vulgar abuse to which he has been subjected in Parliament, on the platform, and in the Press, the only effect of which has been to discredit those who have stooped to it. Lord Rosebery has performed a notable service to the Liberal party, in that on his return to active public life he promulgated a South African policy at Chesterfield which it is not too much to say found general acceptance amongst Liberals as a whole. If what he said with regard to Ireland has excited controversy, we do not forget that there exists no keener or more contemptuous critic of the Government, whilst the domestic questions upon which at the moment he lays greatest stress are precisely those upon which Liberal thought and energy have for some time past been concentrating. Liberal concentration is indeed essential. Cherished principles must not be renounced, but, at a time when reactionary and anti-Liberal ideas are rife, we must seek to promote Liberalism by applying it to what is immediately practicable and possible. The task of combating Toryism, of resisting Militarism, of preserving our Free Trade system, of warding off attacks upon true religious equality,

of securing efficient and equitable administration, can only be achieved by an army that is not divided against itself. The forces arrayed against us are, as ever, numerous and formidable, but they can be overcome by persistent and united effort.

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

REVENUE DEPARTMENT

General Committee's Consolidated Balance

General Committee's Consolidated Balance

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NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS.

Dr.

FROM JULY 1ST, 1900, TO DECEMBER 31ST, 1901 (EIGHTEEN MONTHS).

Cr.

RECEIPTS.				PAYMENTS.					
		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.
To Cash at Bankers, July 1st,					By Salaries and Wages, and Fees of				
1900	569	14	3		District Agents and Organisers ...	3,291	2	7	
„ Cash in hands of Secretaries	150	0	0		„ Registration, Organisation, and				
				719	Travelling Expenses of Agents and				
					Organisers	440	16	0	
„ Subscriptions and Donations and Grants					„ Printing, Stationery, Newspapers,				
from Special Fund.....	5,683	5	6		&c., and Pamphlets, Leaflets and				
					Grants of Literature per Liberal				
					Publication Department	854	11	7	
					„ Public Meetings, Lectures, Deputations,				
					Conferences and Annual				
					and other Meetings of the Federation	380	19	1	
					„ Rent, Coals and Lighting	326	1	2	
					„ Postages and Telegrams	235	17	1	
					„ Office Furniture and Plant a/c	47	14	0	
					„ Office and Incidental Expenses	185	8	11	
									5,762
					„ Cash at Bankers, Dec. 31st, 1901 ...	490	9	4	10
					„ Cash in hands of Secretaries	150	0	0	5
									640
									9
				£6,402					£6,402
				19					19
				9					9

(Signed) W. H. HART, *Treasurer.*

Examined, and found correct,
 (Signed) C. C. SMITH & RICHARDS,
Chartered Accountants,
 COBDEN CHAMBERS, CORPORATION STREET,
 February 6th, 1902. BIRMINGHAM.

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
TWENTY-FOURTH
ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION
HELD AT BRISTOL
ON
MAY 13TH, 14TH, AND 15TH, 1902.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNUAL MEETING

Most of the speeches here recorded (including those of Mr. Acland and Mr. Herbert Gladstone) have been specially revised by the speakers from the excellent reports of the "WESTERN DAILY PRESS," "BRISTOL MERCURY," and "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN."

MAY 1891

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION,
HELD AT BRISTOL,
MAY 13TH, 14TH, AND 15TH, 1902.

FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, MAY 13th.

The first Session of the Council was held in the Victoria Rooms, at two o'clock. Dr. Spence Watson (President of the Federation) occupied the chair.

Among those who were present at one or more of the meetings were the following :—

The Right Hon. H. J. Gladstone, M.P., and Mrs. Gladstone; the Right Hon. A. H. D. Acland (late Minister of Education), Mr. J. Emmott Barlow, M.P., and the Hon. Mrs. Barlow; Mr. Robert Cameron, M.P., Mr. Corrie Grant, M.P., Mr. Charles Hobhouse, M.P., Mr. D. Brynmor Jones, M.P., Mr. George Lambert, M.P., Mr. E. J. C. Morton, M.P., Mr. Russell Rea, M.P., Sir Edward Strachey, Bart., M.P., Mr. F. S. Stevenson, M.P., Mr. George Toulmin, M.P., Mr. H. J. Wilson, M.P., Sir James T. Woodhouse, M.P.; the following officers and Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation: Dr. R. Spence Watson (retiring President), Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President-elect), Mr. Edward Evans, Junr. (Chairman of Committee), Mr. Alderman Hart (Treasurer), Mr. E. T. Ann, Mr. Alfred Barran, Mr. Robert Bird, Mr. P. W. Bunting, Mr. A. H. Burgess, Mr. W. Howell Davies, Dr. E. H. Fraser, Mr. Hugh Fullerton, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Dr. John Massie, Sir John Phear, Mr. W. E. B. Priestley, Mr. Charles Radford, Mr. W. S. Rowntree, Mr. Frank Wright, Mr. Robert A. Hudson (Secretary), Mr. Frank Barter (Assistant Secretary), and Mr. Charles Geake (Hon. Secretary Liberal Publication Department); the Lady Aberdeen, the Hon. Mrs. A. Marjoribanks, Mrs. Spence Watson and the Misses Spence Watson, Mrs. Charles Townsend, Mrs. Howell Davies, Mr. Alfred Billson, Mr. Clifford J. Cory, Mr. Felix T. Cobbold, Mr. A. G. C. Harvey, Sir Israel Hart, Col. Ivor Herbert, Mr. W. H. B. Hope, the Rev. George Jarman (Chairman Bristol School Board), Mr. Hugh F. Luttrell, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., Mr. Fred Maddison, Mr. C. N. Nicholson, Mr. G. F. Rowe, Mr. W. H. Reed, Mr. Charles Roberts, Mr. James Rowlands, Sir Edward and Lady Russell

Mr. J. E. Willans, Mr. Richard Winfrey, Mr. E. A. Whittuck, Mr. Henry de R. Walker, Mr. J. Carvell Williams; the following members of the local Reception Committee: Mr. Charles Townsend (President and Treasurer), Mr. Henry Daniel, Sir Herbert Ashman, and Mr. W. H. Butler (Vice-Presidents), Mr. C. Newth, Mr. J. Swaish, Mr. F. O. Hawkins, Mr. J. W. Arrowsmith, Mr. J. W. Davis, Mr. A. N. Price, Mr. Kossuth Robinson, Mr. Mark Whitwill, Mr. B. Hitchings, Mr. D. Scott, Mr. U. Glass, Mrs. L. B. Swann, Mrs. Annie L. Martin, Mrs. Peters, Miss M. Priestmann, Mr. H. W. Twiggs (Hon. Secretary), Mr. W. H. Elkins, Mr. E. T. Morgan, and Mr. A. K. Simpson (Joint Secretaries). Of the 2,500 delegates appointed by the affiliated Liberal Associations more than a thousand, representing nearly five hundred separate Liberal organisations, were present at the meetings.

The late Earl of Kimberley.

The PRESIDENT (Dr. Spence Watson), who rose amid loud cheers, said it fell to his lot to move the following resolution:—

“That this Council desires to place on record its profound sense of the loss which the nation, no less than the Liberal party, has sustained in the death of the Earl of Kimberley, who for fifty years maintained the best traditions of English public life, filling great offices in the State and bringing to the discharge of his duties distinguished ability, a high sense of honour, and an unswerving devotion to principle. The Council further expresses its belief that Lord Kimberley’s services to Liberalism, both in and out of Parliament, will be held in long and grateful remembrance by the Liberal party.”

They would indeed. Lord Kimberley was a rare example of the mature wisdom which a long and varied experience only could give. They would miss his clear judgment and unflinching tact, his unselfish readiness to aid in all true Liberal effort.

The delegates signified their assent to the resolution by rising in their places.

The Adoption of the Report.

The PRESIDENT, in moving the adoption of the Annual Report, said that after nineteen years’ absence they met again in the famous city of Bristol. The circumstances were somewhat changed. The Liberal party was then in power under their greatest leader. Bristol was an exceedingly interesting place to meet in on many accounts, but to them as politicians perhaps the first and greatest name which rose to their minds was that of Edmund Burke. In the beautiful entrance gallery of the House of Commons, which one visited so often and with such great pleasure, there was no more fascinating statue, to his mind, than that of Edmund Burke, for there were few more beautiful characters in the history of English politics. But before passing to the observations he had to address to them let him congratulate that assembly upon the most recent event that had taken place—their victory at Bury. One swallow did not make a summer, but one swallow was a very good harbinger of the summer which was about to come. It was his duty to propose the adoption of the Report, which

dealt admirably with a great many topics, but that which arrested his attention as an old man was the one entitled "A retrospect of twenty-five years." A quarter of a century had gone by since, with Mr. Gladstone's blessing, they founded the Federation. What changes they had seen during those twenty-five years! What triumphs, what defeats, how many perils and trials the party had passed through! But, through all, they had Mr. Gladstone at their head, the first and only leader which the Liberal party ever had both in and out of Parliament, and that simply by common and united consent. He was chosen by no vote, by no form of election, but by the respect and love of those whose hearts he had touched, and whose souls he had thrilled as no other man ever had. Under his guidance the party fought great battles and did great things: in power or out of power it did great things, whatever its resources might be. In those days they did not suffer from delusions, such as that leaders were meant to follow the men in the street, and that when our country was at war those citizens who thought her wrong must hold their peace. They believed in speaking straight out exactly what they thought, and in letting those who differed from them speak straight out exactly what they thought. In those days they had a Poet Laureate who was not only Laureate but a poet, and he actually called ours

"The land where, girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will."

When the Tories went to war, as they always did—when into Afghanistan they carried death and desolation, and villages were burned and those who rose to defend their homes were called rebels—the Federation and the party protested vehemently, and the leader of their protest was Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Again, the Federation took up the great question of the extension of the county franchise—a great fight, and one which was gallantly won, but which lasted fifteen years. Let them think of that, they who expected all the great reforms waiting for solution to be carried in a single Session when the Liberals were in power, but were satisfied that they should be indefinitely postponed when the Tories held sway. Surely patience and earnestness went together then, as impatience and apathy go together now. At length, with a courage and foresight already abundantly justified, and which will one day be rewarded, Mr. Gladstone made Home Rule a plank in the Liberal platform. That question was still with them, and would be until the victory was won. Who that went through the parting of the ways in 1886 and chose the right path, who that cheerfully devoted the next six years of his life to that cause, would ever forget or regret it, would ever look back? The Federation had deliberately formulated its belief at the time of the great secession, and from that belief it had never withdrawn, and he did not believe that it ever would. It was formulated in a resolution which was moved by Mr. J. E. Ellis, M.P., seconded by himself, supported by Mr. John Morley and Sir Henry Fowler, at the annual meeting of the Federation at Leeds in November, 1886, and it ran thus: "That the best interests both of

Great Britain and Ireland imperatively require that the great effort to give a better government to Ireland begun by Mr. Gladstone should be firmly persevered in until a desirable settlement is arrived at. That such a settlement must meet the views and wishes of the Irish electors as expressed by their constitutional representatives in Parliament; and that the only plan which will satisfy either the justice or the policy of the case is that of an Irish legislative body for the management of what Parliament shall decide to be distinctively Irish affairs." What had occurred since then to make them change the belief which they then expressed? He did not speak now of tactics but of principles: the how and the when were for those who led the fight, the principles were for them and each of them. It was said that the Irish were disloyal to the British Constitution. Was this a discovery of the past three years? It was said that the Irish had voted against the Liberals on the question of Education. Had they not always known that they would? Did they ever dream that they were buying the Irish members body and soul? Would Liberals not despise the Irish members if—especially upon this Education question—they did not act upon their conscientious convictions? The Federation had formulated its resolution of 1886 because it believed that Home Rule was right, and they had fought for it before, and they held it now, because they so believed, and for no other reason. And how they fought for it all through the dreary time of Tory Coercion! What numbers of earnest men went, at great personal sacrifices, about the constituencies preaching the truth about Ireland and Home Rule! And they were winning "hands down": they were coming into port on the very crest of the wave, when the great Irish leader, Mr. Parnell, fell from his high estate, and they were beaten, for the time, by personal, not political causes. Since the rejection of the first Home Rule Bill the Liberals had only been three years in power, and then with a small and uncertain majority. No Government had ever worked harder or carried out so many or such far-reaching legislative and administrative reforms against such difficulties and in so short a time as the last Liberal Government had. But how the party, how the country had missed Mr. Gladstone's commanding and inspiring presence! How sadly had the nation lost its position in the world since the Tories had again taken office, pledged to a "spirited foreign policy" which, being interpreted, meant "unlimited concessions to the demands of strong Powers and constant war with such as were, or were thought to be, weak."

And now they had seen the whole might of the British Empire engaged in a long, costly, and, in his opinion, a needless and useless war, from which we might ultimately get land and gold, but never glory or honour. We had lost much in many ways through it, at home and abroad. The right of free speech had been denied, open public meetings had been forbidden with the approval, if not the connivance, of the Government; Martial Law had been proclaimed when the Courts were regularly sitting, and had been allowed to run to such insane lengths that peaceable, law-abiding English citizens,

irrespective of sex, had been forbidden to land in English colonies, and free-born Englishmen forbidden to leave English colonies for their fatherland—and who cared? The English people went mad with Mafeking, and then gave up thinking about the war. If we cared nothing for our good name, dragged in the dirt by inhuman sentences barbarously carried out, the execution of gallant foes, which their friends and relatives were compelled to attend, surely 40,000 men dead and wounded upon our side, and as many on that of our brave opponents, might give us pause. Or, if that was a sentimental view of the case, was it nothing that we should have thrown away £200,000,000 of money, which might have enriched and blessed the whole Empire, and this in completely devastating two countries, where by toil and patience men had made the inhospitable earth habitable by man? Surely never before had so strange an apathy spread over the English people. It was as if they were affected by a deathly paralysis of the political sense. It was so not only in foreign but also in domestic affairs. Upon the question of the war, as in such matters was always the case, the Liberal party was divided, but the war—and they all hoped this was true—seemed to be approaching its end. The free British Empire had taken away the independence of two free white peoples, as an old Roman Emperor or a new Russian Tsar might naturally have done. He did not speak of peace—conquest, captivity, desolation, death, did not go with peace as he learned in his early childhood. But surely matters at home also demanded some of our care and attention. Much had happened in this very year, and was happening now, which should dispel all apathy, in their party at all events, and bring closely into their ranks every force of Liberalism to contend against the common foe, which, as in sheer wantonness, in the pride of its great majority, was playing havoc with some of their most dearly cherished doctrines. In Education—and in that connection let him say how thankful they all were that their own ex-Minister of Education, Mr. Acland, was to be with them on the morrow—at a time when our nation's needs were more acute than ever, after two (happily) abortive attempts, this "Government of all the talents" had presented a Bill which made no attempt to create a systematised national education, but which provided for the the destruction of the only bit of systematic educational work which the nation had ever had—the School Boards under the Education Act of 1870. So far as this Bill dealt with education at all—and that it scarcely did—it not only made confusion worse confounded, but it went out of its way, and far out of its way, to rekindle the all but extinguished embers of bitter religious strife. Those who appreciated the educational needs of our nation and realised what the Government proposals were, saw clearly that they were endeavouring, by a kind of fraud which they could not call pious, to substitute the predominance of the State Church for the educational system demanded. And, as though this were not sufficiently audacious, they now attacked the principles of that Free Trade under which this country had attained its high commercial position and our people such measure of comfort

and happiness as they enjoyed. This was a mad beginning, but it was a move in the true Tory direction and against the best interests of the people, just as the Education Bill was, but it was worse in one respect—it was more cruel. The Education Bill diminished the possibilities of intellectual growth and the chances of advancement in life for the children of the poor among us, but the Corn-tax struck at the very poorest of the poor and took from those who had not that which they seemed to have. The Nonconformists were awaking, the politicians were awaking—he hoped Bury was a sign—but the people remained apathetic. If they really were awake, if they really would arouse from sleep, these Tory nightmares would be for ever at an end. Was not this enough to arouse them and enough to unite them? Was this a time for planning strife in the party itself, to be forcing to the front questions that were not immediately on the carpet, to be searching out reasons for difference, to be founding Leagues which must depend for success upon splitting that party the union of which was the only hope of the nation? He was delighted to hear cries of “No,” and if they meant that their theoretical differences were for the hour of discussion, and that they would be side by side when the fighting time came, then they could shake hands. He was thankful that up to the present time, through the trying circumstances of the past three years, they had avoided that split. He did not fear it, but he abhorred the thought of it. Were they really Liberals? Could they not tolerate even serious differences of opinion? They always had done so in the past. They might depend upon it that there was a strong determination on the part of the rank and file of their party that they should hold together against their common foe. United they stood, divided they fell, and the fact that the best welfare of our beloved country depended upon their victory as a party should unite them as one man in their mighty cause. It only remained now for him, in moving the adoption of the Committee’s Report for the last time as their President, to thank the representatives of the Federated Associations for their constant and unvarying kindness, which would, he was sure, be extended to the distinguished man who had consented to succeed him. It had been to him through long years an unflinching and invaluable aid, and the more so because they had not always seen eye to eye. He had come to these annual meetings many a time with a desire to speak out the truth as he saw it, and not knowing whether there was another man in the room who saw the truth in the same way, but they had always heard him patiently. He wished publicly to thank his colleagues upon the Executive Committee for their gentleness, and courtesy, and forbearance, which had so greatly lightened that which had at times been a heavy burden. Of course they had frequently had differences of opinion, but they had never had a quarrel. And he wished specially to allude to the ever-ready help of their invaluable editor of the Liberal Publication Department, Mr. Geake, whose unique worth began to be recognised. But, perhaps he might say above all, he must name the support and counsel which, since they lost Mr. Schnadhorst’s services, had always been given to

him by his friend, their trusted secretary, Mr. Hudson, who had just completed twenty years of loyal and most valuable service to the Federation. Not once had he failed to take labour upon himself at whatever self-sacrifice, and he had never asked for help but when it was absolutely necessary. His spirit had, he gratefully acknowledged, influenced every one in the office, and he had been admirably seconded by his excellent assistant, Mr. Frank Barter.

Finally, might he hope to be permitted still to take some small part in the counsels of the party? And, once more, gratefully thanking one and all for their confidence, their help, and, that which he most prized, their affectionate regard, he earnestly prayed for the Federation a long and prosperous and united career in the best work of true Liberalism, and strength and wisdom for those who followed him in that chair.

Mr. ROBERT CAMERON, M.P. (Houghton-le-Spring Division of Derbyshire) formally seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Letter from the Lord Mayor.

The PRESIDENT then announced the receipt of a letter from the Lord Mayor of Bristol, which he read, as follows:—

“I very much regret that my civic duties prevent my giving you a personal welcome. The Council of this city is now in session and I must not leave the chair. Although as Lord Mayor I take no part in politics, I cannot refrain from wishing you success in solving the difficult problems which confront you. Bristol takes a deep interest in all questions affecting the social and commercial well-being of the Empire, and is ever ready to lend its aid to promote such measures. It has sent many eminent men to the Commons House of Parliament. Amongst those of the past I may name Edward Colston, Edmund Burke, Henry Berkeley, and Samuel Morley, and of to-day the able Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has represented us since 1885. I welcome you in the name of my fellow-citizens, and wish you a pleasant visit to our interesting old city.”

Vote of Thanks to Dr. Spence Watson on his Retirement.

Sir EDWARD R. RUSSELL (Liverpool) moved the following resolution:—

“That this Council, in expressing its deep regret at the retirement of Dr. Robert Spence Watson, desires to record its warm gratitude to him for the services he has rendered to the Federation since the day on which it was established, and in particular during the twelve years in which he has filled the office of President. It assures him of the lasting regard and affection in which he will be held by this Federation, and earnestly hopes that he will long be spared to contribute the great weight of his advocacy to all those causes which Liberalism seeks to promote.”

He said that in some of the earlier years of Dr. Spence Watson's presidency he was his colleague, and he mentioned that only because it gave some value to his testimony, a testimony in which all his colleagues could concur as to the general services he had rendered. In the course of the words they had just heard with such deep

feeling, Dr. Spence Watson had told them how much the nation must owe to the union of the Liberal party; and in his long career no man had contributed more to the union of the Liberal party than Dr. Spence Watson. Knowing the character he had in the country they might say rightly that he was the sturdiest and most outspoken and most uncompromising of men; but in political matters he had been an example of that practical, honest, and beneficial diplomacy which was necessary in the conduct of public affairs, which was compatible with the highest action of the human conscience, but which at the same time availed itself of all the passing circumstances of the time, of all the moods of men, and of all other as conscientious convictions as those which a person himself entertained. Dr. Spence Watson had always shown these qualities, and these qualities were those which made for liberty. The party would always be the better for this kind of advice, and it would have been in a better position than now if his advice had been more often taken, and it would have been in a better state if the spirit of his actions had been that which had governed persons in higher positions, and positions of more influence. Leaving all controversial points out of sight, the one thing which had aggravated sectional difficulties and put back the Liberal party's power and influence in the country had been the undue predominance of personal considerations, of egotisms, of considerations very largely of self in the way of assertion of individual opinion and individual preference. Dr. Spence Watson had found a way of bringing the most unlikely persons into co-operation and harmony. Let them go forward in the future in his spirit and imitate his example. Long might he live; long might he intellectually, politically, and in physical health prosper amongst them; and long might they have the advantage of his counsel.

Dr. JOHN MASSIE (Oxford), in seconding the resolution, said: It is hard at any time to say good-bye to a true friend, and I am sure that whenever Dr. Watson has stood face to face with the Council of the National Liberal Federation he has felt that there is more than one Society of Friends. But it is still harder when that friend has been a comrade in a great and noble cause; and more than a comrade—a leader, high in character, transparent in sincerity, wise in counsel, undaunted in conflict, self-restrained in success, and in failure never despairing. Such is the man who for twelve years has presided over you, and you have never thought of another President. You have heard his eloquence—never sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, but always in the service of conviction; you have seen his unflinching tact and good temper, his staunch adherence to principle, his readiness for wise and reasonable compromise; you have seen his unflagging pursuit of his ideals, his unwearied patience in waiting for their attainment, his breezy optimism in times of depression. I shall never forget one particular occasion. The Federation had met when the Liberal party was in the dumps; but at the sight

of the sunshine upon the President's face as he rose from his chair, and the sound of his first word—which was simply "Well!"—the dumps were dissolved in laughter and cheers. Such is the personality of the man who has led you, and led you like a man, for twelve years. It is hard for you to part with him; but you will permit me to say that, hard as it is for you, it is harder still for the Executive Committee. Our fellowship has been closer and more constant. At a great cost to himself, not only in health and strength, but also—why should we not say it?—in pocket, he has kept up his attendance at our frequent committee meetings. It is, I am sure, often remembered by many, but it is also, I think, sometimes forgotten by some—especially by those who make it their chief business to criticise—that those who serve on the Executive have not only to serve, but also to pay; and this without having any magical letters after their names, like M.P., L.C.C., or M.L.S.B. And Dr. Watson, living farthest away—somewhere towards the bracing but distant North Pole—has suffered most. Year after year he has wished to retire, but has self-sacrificingly yielded to pressure that he should remain. The long journeys, sometimes by day, but more frequently by night, often in the midst of harassing business, have tried his strength, but never tired his interest. But however tried or however tired, he was always the same in the chair; patient, serious, judicious, genial, alert, open-minded, just; never domineering, never self-seeking; never expecting too much from young beginners like myself; a force never disintegrating, always unifying; with a temper never excommunicatory, always conciliatory; no pragmatist, no rash and heedless iconoclast, no timid and faithless laggard—such has been the Chairman whom we of the Executive part with to-day, and who will always live in our grateful and loving remembrance. We are losing our leader, but he will never be a lost leader. Differences we have had, differences honourably held and openly expressed—differences we have had, but estrangement never. He will never be a mere critic on the hearth; his is not the spirit of the candid friend. We shall always listen for his voice, most of all in times when depression calls for encouragement. In dark and in bright hours he has led us; in a dark hour he is leaving us. But always in that window on Tyneside shall we see a light burning, prompting us to remember that the deeper the darkness the closer should be the watchfulness, the more unwearied the patience, till the day dawns and the shadows flee away. And I believe that the dawn is near, and that our departing President will yet see the sun at high noon. May God preserve his strength, may God prolong his days, that he and all who love him may together long enjoy the maturity of those powers and see the fruit of those labours which he has so loyally and so unsparingly devoted to the cause, the party, and the country he loves so well.

The resolution was carried by acclamation.

Dr. SPENCE WATSON, in acknowledging the resolution, was prevented, by repeated cheering for some few minutes, from speaking.

He eventually said he had had to bear many things in his life, but their kindness was the most difficult thing he ever had to bear, in that he did not deserve it. He knew full well how much they had had to put up with. He knew how kind his friends Sir Edward Russell and Dr. Massie had been in what they had said, and he knew how kind they had been to his shortcomings, of which he was fully aware. As regarded their party, they must have differences, because they were Liberals; they must take different views, because they were Liberals. There was the time for opposition, and that was the seed-time; but when the time of harvest came, when the time of fighting came, let it be shoulder to shoulder and hand to hand, and they need never then despair of the grand old Liberal cause.

Election of President and Treasurer.

Alderman CHARLES TOWNSEND (President of the Bristol Liberal Federation), proposed :—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be elected President, and that Alderman W. H. Hart, J.P., be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

He said that he could endorse everything that had been said with reference to the magnificent manner in which Dr. Spence Watson had attended to the business of the Federation. He recalled the time when the Federation previously visited Bristol, and added that, having spent an active life in politics from that day to this, notwithstanding all the criticism that had been from day to day, from year to year, spent upon the National Liberal Federation, the Liberal party without it would have been in very sad straits indeed. As to the resolution before the Conference, they in Bristol had a peculiar interest in it in reference to Mr. Birrell, who was the Liberal candidate for Bristol North. If he was any judge of that constituency, which he had represented in Parliament for about three years, he thought he might promise that Mr. Birrell would be their future member. At all events, it would not be their fault if he was not. He need not say in Mr. Birrell's presence how well he was qualified to fill the high and difficult position that they had asked him that day to accept. It was no bed of roses, he could assure him, but at the same time it was a position in which he might be of magnificent service, not only to the National Liberal Federation, but to the country at large. The course which the Liberal party took during the next few years would determine its existence for the next quarter of a century. If it failed in its duty, if it failed to show that spirit of unity which was absolutely necessary to its existence, then he for one would despair of the Liberal party returning to power for many years to come. But they had seen during the last few weeks how completely the present Government was out of touch with the people. Only that day he met an old friend, a staunch Conservative and a staunch Churchman, who told him that he had all his life supported the Tory party, but that he had now done with them for ever. For himself, he only hoped that, when the day of trial came and the ballot papers were handed round, those friends who felt

so strongly now would not wobble at the last moment. There was always some danger of that, but he hoped that they might get over that difficulty. But he emphasised this, that they must sink personal questions, minor differences, and be content to believe that those who did not altogether agree with them were quite as conscientious as they were themselves, and doing that, they were doing the best they could, not for the interests of the Liberal party, which was a comparatively minor consideration—it was only a means to an end—but for the interests of this great nation. The principles of Liberalism had led them to almost all the victories which had been won for the English people in the past, and it was only those principles which could win victories for them in the future. If he had a feeling of intensified distrust in the Conservative, the Tory, or Unionist Government—whatever they labelled themselves—it was to-day. They had already thrown up one sponge, a little one, only a twopenny one. How many large sponges, educational and otherwise, they would throw up before they had done he did not know.

Mr. J. E. WILLANS (Huddersfield) seconded, and said that having served on the Executive for some years he could speak from personal experience of the qualifications of both gentlemen, and described them as being well-balanced to fill their respective positions, each of which had been well merited.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Mr. BIRRELL was received with hearty cheering on rising to reply. He said he was extremely grateful to them for the confidence they had reposed in him. He would deny himself the pleasure of expatiating on his own manifold infirmities and shortcomings, but would give them the earliest opportunity of discovering them for themselves by at once taking the chair.

Mr. Alderman HART, in returning thanks, said that they wanted to revive the old feeling that they had in their younger days, and which so often led them to rejoice in the triumphs they had formerly obtained. That could only be done by remembering that their great aim and duty was to educate, and that was the only way they could bring about the triumphant period that they were looking for and hoping to attain, and in order to make the true position of things plain, in order to educate, they wanted more of the sinews of war. He made an appeal for increased subscriptions.

The Martinique Calamity.

The PRESIDENT asked to be allowed to express the heartfelt sympathy of the Federation with the great and friendly nation of France in the calamity which had just befallen one of their West Indian possessions. Before such a ruthless illustration of the forces by which we were surrounded, there was nothing for us to do save

bow the head in amazement and resignation. Powerless we poor mortals might be in actual conflict with nature, but we none the less could feel with one another that sympathy which sorrows like this brought home to all of us. Without formality, he wished to give expression to the sympathy of the Federation with France in this great calamity.

Adherence to Liberal Principles.

Mr. BIRRELL (President, National Liberal Federation) moved the following resolution:—

“That this Council affirms its continued adherence to the principles which in the past the Federation has advocated and placed on record. The Council records its unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the chosen leaders of the Opposition in Parliament, and earnestly appeals to all Liberals loyally to co-operate in the common cause of Liberalism and in opposition to the present incapable and reactionary Government, recognising that Liberal unity is essential if Liberal principles are again to prevail in administration and legislation.”

There was not a single important Liberal principle which had not been flouted, ridiculed, scorned, and violated by the Government, who none the less when challenged for their conduct in the House of Commons were able triumphantly to point to the Government lobby crowded with a great majority of the representatives of the people. Liberals lived in their enemies' day. The Bury election was a hopeful symptom. He confessed that until that happened it had seemed as if nothing really mattered. The majesty of the law, the liberty of the subject, the authority of Parliament, the very food of the people, religious equality, the education of the children, the alarming annual increase in our national expenditure, and the avowed inability to discover any new taxable article except the poor man's loaf—all these things had seemed to excite small interest in the minds of the electorate. There might be those who thought that this startling indifference and amazing apathy were proofs positive of an imperial race and foreshadowed for the Union Jack a glorious destiny in lands beyond the seas, but in that Federation they must be allowed to think otherwise. Determined as they all were to keep the old flag flying, proud as they well might be of the magnificent courage, high spirit, kindness of heart, and splendid discipline under trying circumstances of our soldiers and sailors, glorying though they did in our great colonies, Radical many of them, Home Rulers all of them, they none the less believed that the inspiration of this great Empire, its true and only protection, was to be derived from keeping here at home in these crowded islands—the seed-plot of our race—a law-abiding, freedom-loving, well-contented people, full of peace and plenty, and the friends of civil and religious liberty all the world over. How we were fallen from that high estate! Who cared to-day, or at all events who seemed to care, greatly for our civil and religious liberty? True it was—and we must admit it—our hands were so full, our pockets were so empty, and our honour it might be, at all events in

foreign estimation, so tarnished that it would be idle, it would be absurd, for any Government to seem to take an interest in what was happening in distant parts of Europe. But, as a comparatively young man, he could remember the time when what was happening in Finland would not have passed without remark in England, and we should have had something to say about it. But he was afraid there were in our midst too many who thought it was not surprising that Russia, in obedience to her Imperial instincts, should find it absolutely necessary to depopulate and render miserable her once happiest province. He was afraid that, were any of them to say anything about Finland to Russia, Russia might delicately inquire what was the present state of the British constitution in Ireland and what were the precise terms in the matter of language we were about to offer to the Boers with regard to the use of their native tongue in the land that was once their own. There was a time when the case of Mr. Cartwright would have excited almost universal indignation. To-day they were told that it did not matter, and even the Attorney-General, who ought to be the watchdog of liberty, pooh-pooed any reference to constitutional precedent. Who was Mr. Cartwright? Who was John Hampden? If that was too high an example, who was John Wilkes? The Attorney-General, like Lord Mansfield, was a Scotsman, but he certainly had not exhibited any portion of the noble spirit of the illustrious protector of our common law. In these days we were badly off for Mansfields, Camdens, Denmans, and Cockburns. We saw once more bread taxed. Did that matter? "Oh," it was said, "it is a little tax, a tiny tax." How long would it remain so? Oh for an hour of John Bright! As for education, there was no need for him to say anything about it, as the whole subject was to be expounded on the following day. It would not always be their enemies' day. There were already signs and tokens; indeed, anything less like immortals than the present occupiers of the Treasury Bench he at all events had never seen. Languor was stamped on their brows. It would seem almost inhuman to chain them any longer to their desks. Even week-ends could not resuscitate their debilitated constitutions. The black shadow of a great war which they never really understood, and with the stern realities of which they had never of their own initiative really grappled, enveloped them, and would continue to envelop them to the end. It could not be long before they would receive their discharge from a not very grateful democracy. But who was to succeed them? That would depend upon the measure of coherency displayed by the Liberal party. If they had faith in their violated principles, if they had any real enthusiasm for humanity, if they hungered and thirsted after righteous social reforms, why then they would themselves succeed. If they had none of these things, if they cared lightly for them and thought they were not worth the trouble of seeing them through—and great would be the trouble then—they had much better remain out and let another gang of faithless officials taste of the sweets of office and earn the contempt of honest men of all parties. This was not a time to

discuss shades of opinion. No two men ever thought exactly alike on any political question. Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright—could they have two men of greater dissimilarity of mind? Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Mill approached every question from the opposite poles of temperament. And yet what Liberals those four men were! They must be content with them if they had any like them. He believed the party was coming together. Unhappy words that once threatened them with division seemed to have lost some of their charm. They had lately been told by a very high authority that no party had a monopoly of the larger patriotism which included the whole Empire in its scope. That was true. No party, and still less any section of that party, had that monopoly. They, too, were well-wishers of an Empire which should be free, tolerant, and unaggressive. Freedom for all, toleration towards all, peace with all—who did not respond to such aspirations? They had lately had brought home to them, by certain mercantile operations on a rather larger scale than they had been accustomed to, the great truth that however Imperial our politics must necessarily be, capital at all events was cosmopolitan, and that the real welfare of a great trading community was far more bound up in the retention of its trade with the great populations of the world, in the East and the West, than by the mere extensions of territory. The resolution expressed unabated confidence in the elected leaders of the Liberal party in the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and appealed to all Liberals to co-operate loyally in the common cause of Liberalism. Well, if they did not carry that resolution he would tender his resignation.

Mr. C. E. HOBHOUSE, M.P. (Bristol, East), in seconding, remarked that, judging by the temper of that audience, there would be little difficulty in unanimously adopting that resolution. The Chairman had dealt at considerable length and with great ability with questions outside the scope of the second part of that resolution, and the few words he had to say would be confined to the second part. That resolution asked them for confidence in two men well known to many of them personally, and to all of them politically. They had known them for years as staunch adherents to and exponents of those principles of Liberalism which were referred to in the first part of that resolution. The second part of the resolution appealed to them to co-operate for Liberalism. The Chairman had said something about Trusts and Combines that had been instituted by Mr. Morgan in England. If Liberals would only combine, he ventured to think that England would supply the trust. It was because they had failed in combination and in co-operation that that trust had been withheld. But they were not going to let that state of things go on in the future. They had had so many blows dealt to all the principles that they held dear that for their common safety they could not hesitate any longer, but must go shoulder to shoulder along that path which those eminent men referred to had marched. There was only one thing that there was no room for in the Liberal

party, and that was distrust and jealousy of each other. For all persons and for all principles which made for progress there was room to spare, and he thought that they should not only ask their old friends to help them in getting rid of the present system of administration, but get some new friends to join them as well. Surely the case of Mr. Cartwright was a warning to them. They had only to imagine a similar set of circumstances being applied to themselves to make them see in what great personal danger every individual, Tory or Liberal, stood at the present moment. Mr. Cartwright's case was not the case of a distinguished individual. To most people he was an obscure journalist, but he exemplified those principles for which their fathers had fought and triumphed. They had gone back since those days, they might go further back, because they were confronted with the overthrow of principles of taxation and education and religion, and all personal freedom, and he asked every man inside and outside that assembly, who called himself a Liberal, to co-operate in the cause which Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman led.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The War in South Africa and the Settlement.

The resolution on the agenda paper was in the following terms:—

“That this Council deeply deplores the long duration of the war in South Africa and the sacrifice of life which it entails, evils which are in large measure due to the blunders of the Government, both in policy and administration.

“The Council emphatically condemns the policy of insisting upon the unconditional surrender of the Boers as the only method of ending the war, and affirms its conviction that the future contentment and security of South Africa are bound up in obtaining a regular peace on broad and generous lines as the result of a regular settlement.

“It records its belief that as the first step towards this end the banishment Proclamation issued last July ought to be withdrawn.

“The Council views with grave misgiving the suspension of Parliamentary Government in Cape Colony, and the overriding of the ordinary administration of justice by martial law throughout the whole of that Colony indiscriminately.

“Finally, the Council is of opinion that the indefinite postponement by the Government of all inquiry into the scandals which have arisen in connection with the war is strongly to be condemned, in the interests alike of the army and the taxpayer.”

At the beginning of the meeting, slips were circulated amongst the delegates announcing that the Executive Committee, in pursuance of the notification made on the agenda, would ask the Council as a matter of urgency to substitute the following resolution for the resolution printed on the agenda paper:—

“That this Council, whilst adhering to previous declarations of the Federation on the subject of the war in South Africa, contents itself at this grave juncture with an expression of its most earnest hope that the negotiations now proceeding will lead to an early peace and a durable settlement.”

The PRESIDENT, when the resolution was reached, asked on behalf of the Executive Committee for leave to substitute this altered resolution. In reply to questions, he ruled that they could have no amendments on this, but it would be in order if anyone chose to move that permission to make the substitution be refused by the Council.

Mr. A. M. SCOTT (Lewisham) opposed the substitution of the new resolution for four reasons. The first was that the situation had not changed since the agenda was issued to the delegates. In the second place they had committed themselves in the report they had adopted to the mischievous policy of the Government in this matter. Then there was the consideration for the unity of the party. The resolution on the agenda was the most straightforward they had had put before them by the Council. His fourth point was that if they adopted the suggestion put before them now they would be simply doing what they had been doing for three years past. The time had come when they must have the courage of their convictions and speak the truth as it appeared to them. Doubtless they would be called traitors, but they would be called that in any case.

Mr. J. MORGAN (Brecon) seconded. He thought the reason why the Liberal party had lost much of the confidence of the people during the last three years had been because they had tried to make a sardine tin look like a silver snuff-box. They knew it was a needless and useless war, and were they, as representatives of the great Liberal party, to be content and say they hoped it would speedily draw to a close? If the war ended to day they would have to have a reckoning with the Tory party.

Leave for the substitution of the amended resolution was given by an overwhelming majority.

The War.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON, M.P. (Eye Division of Suffolk) moved the new resolution of the Executive thus sanctioned. In his earlier remarks he alluded to the heroism of their soldiers in the field, and then reminded the Conference that at Leicester they urged that the Government ought not to insist upon the unconditional surrender of the Boers, and aimed at obtaining peace on broad, generous lines as the result of a regular settlement. The fact that negotiations were now in progress, that they were of a very difficult and delicate character, and they hoped they were at the dawning of a brighter and better day, were reasons why they should in that great gathering walk circumspectly. At a moment like this nothing should be said or done that could be construed either as a provocation or encouragement to resistance. Contingencies had to be weighed, conditions discussed, and mutual concessions made, and it was to be hoped that nothing would be said or done at that Conference which would render nugatory the hopes they now entertained. Without departing from any convictions they might hold or opinions they had expressed, he appealed

to them to record by a unanimous vote their earnest desire for an early settlement, which might provide a substitute for the present position of affairs, and gradually result in the welding together of the two races and in bringing about a happier future under auspices under which other parts of the world had in times past been able to secure that desirable consummation.

Mr. W. S. ROWNTREE (Chairman, Scarborough Liberal Association) seconded the motion. He said the Government drifted into the war, they might almost say steered into it, in a light heart. The result was a bread tax in England and in Cape Colony an entire suspension of constitutional liberty. He once heard Dr. R. W. Dale say that John Bright was loved because he gave the people bread and freedom. If John Bright were living now he would tell them that neither bread nor freedom could long continue unstinted to a nation unless they clung to peace. He reminded the Conference that the resolution deliberately affirmed the resolutions standing in their books; he would not have seconded the resolution unless it distinctly declared that. Mr. Rowntree, having remarked that British care for the interest of the natives was one of the reasons urged in defence of this conflict, proceeded to refer to the suppression of a native newspaper without any warning or trial of any kind. It was conducted by a native member of the Wesleyan body, who had taken a prominent part in native educational work. His newspaper was suppressed and himself and his staff ruined by administrative order, and he had never yet been told of any article or sentence that was objected to. It was, Mr. Rowntree contended, not those who supported Home Rule, but those who had supported such proceedings as those he had mentioned who were endangering the integrity of the Empire. If peace were indeed at hand, and if it were due in any measure, as was rumoured, to the influence of the King, he would have bound the Empire together with cords that could not be broken and built himself an everlasting name.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Ireland and Home Rule.

Mr. E. J. C. MORTON, M.P. (Devonport) moved:—

“That this Council records its earnest conviction that the long-continued attempt to govern Ireland by coercion has lamentably failed to produce that harmony between the executive power and the people of the country which is the chief end of good government; and, while reserving its judgment as to method and opportunity, affirms that it is in the best interests, both of Ireland and of the Empire, that there should be devolved upon a representative body in Ireland the power of legislating with reference to what the Imperial Parliament shall decide to be distinctly Irish affairs.”

Hitherto, he remarked, the Liberal party had been one of regular victory, and the Tory party the party of historic defeat. Hitherto, the Liberal party had never failed to carry into law any measure on which it had set its heart; hitherto the Liberal party had never

deserted the cause to which it had pledged itself, and he submitted to them that that Liberal party was not now going to begin to go back on its pledges, or to desert causes which it had taken up. If they did so, then the beginning of the end of the Liberal party would have come upon them. For ten long years they had as the first plank in the Liberal platform the cause of Home Rule for Ireland. They worked hard for that cause, they worked unselfishly, and in many instances at personal sacrifice, and they were inspired from the beginning to the end by the greatest leader who had ever led them. Therefore, they owed it to their predecessors and to his memory, and they owed it to him to justify the last and greatest work he entered upon in his political work to remain true to the cause of Home Rule for Ireland. He (the speaker) could well understand that there were many men—he did not say that he agreed with them—feeling intensely irritated against the chosen leaders of the Irish party for the way in which they had greeted with applause and unconcealed pleasure every disaster that had happened to this country during the war. He could well understand, too, the people who felt irritated against the Irish people in the action they had taken in regard to the education question, but he submitted that no Liberal who was a genuine Liberal could ever adopt a policy of tit for tat. They advocated Home Rule because they believed it was right and expedient, and the righteousness and expediency of it remained as strong as ever they did in the days when first they thought of it. They believed it was right because they thought that after centuries of suffering the Irish people deserved their freedom. They had good grounds for believing it expedient, and in giving the Irish Home Rule they must give the Irish no less control over their own private affairs than Mr. Gladstone proposed. There were two main conditions he suggested that should be insisted upon, and they were these: The legislature they proposed to establish in Ireland should be limited in its power simply and solely within the geographical area of the island of Ireland; and, secondly, that within that area that legislature and executive shall have nothing to do with any matter of Imperial or foreign import—have no control over a dockyard or over a ship; in fact, have control over no man armed with anything more than a bâton. These were the conditions of Mr. Gladstone, and they were practically accepted by the Irish race throughout the whole world. He defied any man who was not insane to say that if they granted those conditions that there was any danger in their granting Home Rule to Ireland. He appealed to them to stand to their guns. They had the great inspiration of Mr. Gladstone at the beginning of their struggle and throughout the greater part of their struggle for Home Rule for Ireland, and they had to-day the happy inspiration still remaining of their great leader and dear friend who had just resigned the presidency of that association. As long as they had a man like that amongst them, though Mr. Gladstone might be gone, and though only the memory of his influence remained to guide them, they ought to feel

inspired and remain true to those principles to which they had pledged themselves. It was not only in the interests of the British Empire, it was not only because they had pledged their word to the policy of Home Rule, but it was also for the sake of healing the sore that existed so long as the Irish people did not obtain their freedom. It was also because he believed that justice demanded that they should attain this right of self-government. Justice to Ireland demanded that they should remain true to the cause of Home Rule. From the spirit of that meeting he did not believe they were going to desert the cause or go back upon their pledges in the past. He believed they would live to see the dawn of the day when Ireland should herself at last find peace, and when, after her seven centuries of suffering, the bitterness, the animosities, and the hostilities they felt against this country to-day would at last be swallowed up in victory.

Mr. R. BIRD (Cardiff) seconded the resolution, and said that one of two things must obtain in Ireland—either coercion or some form of local self-government. Coercion had been repeatedly and consistently tried, and had always failed. Every attempt in the way of coercion only left the wound all the deeper, and the determination of the Irish people to govern themselves all the stronger. Every sensible man must admit that force was no remedy with regard to Ireland. Because their Irish friends had done what he considered an ungracious and ungrateful thing, it was no reason why Liberals should stultify themselves.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14th.

The second Session of the Council was held in the Victoria Rooms, at 10.30 a.m. Mr. Birrell (President of the Federation) occupied the chair.

The Budget.

Sir J. T. WOODHOUSE, M.P. (Huddersfield), proposed the following resolution :—

“ That this Council is of opinion that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should have taken the occasion of this year's Finance Act to declare that the mineral wealth of the Transvaal should, from this time forward, be under a legal liability to contribute a just proportion towards the cost of the South African War. The Council strenuously protests against the proposed tax on imported corn, flour, and other bread-stuffs as a deplorable reversal of that policy of Free Trade which has given commercial prosperity to the country and cheap food to the people.”

He said it was satisfactory to find, as evidenced by the contest at Bury, that the mind and conscience of the country had at last become aroused to the deplorable condition of our national finance and to the reactionary and retrograde fiscal policy which the Government were asking Parliament to sanction. The great, the rapid, and almost startling growth of the national outlay demanded, and ought to receive, the earnest consideration of all thoughtful people. He supposed that 1861, when our Free Trade policy had got thoroughly established, was a convenient date from which to look at the growth of our national expenditure. In that year our expenditure was £72,000,000. He went to 1891, when it was £87,000,000, and in the next ten years, during the greater part of which a Tory Government was in office, the national expenditure—apart entirely from the £70,000,000 average during the last three years in respect of the war—was £114,972,000. Last year the expenditure was £122,000,000. That also was apart from the £10,000,000 which went to the debit of the local taxation account. The normal expenditure of the country, apart from the war, had increased by £31,000,000 per annum since the present Government came into office. They had to bear in mind also that the Government had failed to pay off £6,500,000 in discharge of the National Debt, and they would thus find that the increase in expenditure, in fact, amounted to no less than £38,000,000 per annum. Looked at in another way, in 1861, the expenditure was £2 10s. 8d. per head of the population. It fell in 1871 to £2 4s. 3d., but last year it amounted to £4 6s. 8d. per head. In considering the increase in the expenditure they had to consider what were the reasons and object of that expenditure. It was only fair to look at both sides of the account. They had therefore to bear in mind that the population, the trade, the income, and the capital of the country

The following should appear before the Budget Resolution on page 74:—

Election of Dr. Spence Watson on Executive Committee.

The PRESIDENT said there were at present two vacancies on the Executive Committee, and, according to their constitution, they could not be filled for about ten months. It would be in accordance with the wishes of the Executive Committee if, under the special circumstances, the Council would authorise them to invite their retiring President, Dr. Spence Watson, to take a seat at the board.

The proposal was cordially and unanimously assented to.

had immensely increased, as shown by the fact that a penny in the Income-tax now realised £2,600,000 against £1,100,000 in 1861. For much of the increase in the Civil Service expenditure no complaint could be made. In the matter of the expenditure on education that was a valuable national investment, which the Government could not restrain, and which they would not wish them to restrain if they could do so. It gave us an abundant dividend for the outlay. Then there was the increase in the Post Office expenditure which was also satisfactory, because there was a return in the shape of revenue. But the great question involved with regard to the growth of our expenditure was that which arose with reference to the Army and Navy. Those charges accounted mainly for the whole growth between 1861 and 1901—from £31,000,000 then to £35,000,000 in 1891, which had become doubled in the last ten years. That was a very serious question. Unless we got a reaction, the expenditure of the country would become so enormous that it would be quite impossible to find new sources of taxation that could possibly meet it. The effect on our industry and our commerce would be so serious that it was high time they aroused the attention of the nation to the enormous amount of extravagance that was going on. Not only had our expenditure been increased. Their complaint was that the management of our finances had been loose, extravagant, costly, and thriftless. As an illustration he would refer to the enormous waste of money that took place with regard to remount scandals in South Africa. Was any work ever performed in a more perfunctory, inefficient, extravagant, and unsatisfactory manner? Had we not had constantly exhibited an entire absence of that commercial flexibility in our Government Departments which controlled and adapted expenditure to the daily increasing conditions of our complicated national life? What we wanted was a sufficient and efficient Army and Navy, but what we wanted also was efficiency and a thorough overhauling of all our Government Departments. We wanted some good commercial men at the head of them, and the business conducted in the same way as all great and successful commercial establishments were conducted. Only in that way could we get the value for our money, and the nation did not mind the money which it spent when it once understood that it was getting value for it. They condemned the bread-tax because, in the first place, it was not a war tax, it was a permanent tax. It modified and violated the well-settled fiscal policy, and restored Protection. It was a tax on the prime necessities of life, and it was placed on the shoulders of those least able to bear it. They objected to it again because it imposed a charge on the community at large for the benefit of a class. It was said that it was a small tax. But it was not the smallness of the tax, but the principle involved, the policy which it implied and introduced, which they had to consider, and that great principle of Free Trade which it abrogated. The tax protected the farmer, but it also protected in even greater degree the home miller. The only class that benefited was the class who owned agricultural land. Had we not done enough for this class? Were they not content with the three

millions a year which they had already got, and which they now sought to get again out of the taxpayer? He would have thought even such an eminent landlord as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have thought twice before he tried to dip his hands again into the pockets of the poor. Another point to bear in mind was the fact that what the consumer lost the revenue did not gain. When the duty was taken off in 1869 we produced two-thirds of the bread; we now only produced one-fourth. There was to be derived from this tax two millions six hundred and fifty thousand, but we knew that it meant a charge of not less than four millions. Who got the balance? Why, it went into the pockets of bakers and others, who would derive the benefit of the difference. It was said that the tax would not be felt, that it only meant half a farthing, and therefore would not be realised. There were no such current coins of the realm, and, as they knew, the poor, the great mass of the population, had to buy their bread in the smallest quantities, and therefore the tax, in effect, became double when it had to be paid. If the working men described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer existed it was in very few places. The bulk of the population was in our great towns. At least one-fourth of them existed in the direst poverty. Precarious labour provided them with subsistence for the day, but the slightest interruption made them destitute. A week's broken weather brought not a few to the brink of starvation. Instead of relieving the declining years of the poor by the oft-promised old-age pensions, the Government intensified and aggravated their distress by taxing their food. The Conservatives had increased the duty on tea, they had put a tax on sugar, and now they were seeking to tax bread. These were the three most essential articles of the diet of the poorest, who were the last people on whom taxation ought to be imposed. The Budget was distinguished by financial feebleness and extravagance, administrative timidity, and fiscal heresy. It had accentuated the difference between Liberal policy and Conservative policy. In 1894 the Liberals introduced a Budget which taxed the rich; the Conservatives in their turn had preferred to tax the poor. Could they not have taxed the ground landlords? Could they not have foregone, at all events for a season, the doles that went into the pockets of the landlords? No; they were at it again; they protected the privileged classes at the expense of the masses. We wanted a Government that would protect the people, that would restore and be true to the principles of Peel, Cobden, and Gladstone. Free Trade meant great trade. By its means commerce had been reinvigorated and enterprise developed, and England had become the *dépôt* of the whole world. It was bound up with our prosperity, and he asked the delegates to adopt this resolution and to make a determined stand against the infringement of the principle which was involved.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Bart., M.P. (Somerset—South), seconded the resolution. Dealing with the first part, he said that whether that was the time or not for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have made a declaration with regard to putting the mineral wealth of the Transvaal under

legal liability, the fact of great importance was that the Government, neither in the present nor in any other Session, had very clearly laid down any suggestion. They had hinted at something of the kind, but they had said nothing to absolutely commit them to the principle that the mineral wealth of the Transvaal should be made to pay the utmost towards the cost of the great and expensive war in South Africa. Referring to the question of the revival of the corn duties, he reminded his hearers that the Government had stated that that was a permanent tax. It was not, they said, a war tax, but was a tax to permanently broaden the basis of taxation, because they believed that the great majority of taxpayers of this country did not pay sufficient in indirect taxation. In fact, the Government had stated that the working classes of this country did not pay sufficient amount towards the taxation of the country. That statement ought to be considered, because undoubtedly the working men of this country were prepared to pay their fair share of taxation according to their ability. The principle laid down by Liberals was that every man should be taxed according to his ability. He believed that working men would rather have any tax imposed upon them than have their bread taxed, if they did not already contribute their fair share. He thought that the Government, in putting on that tax, had really had for their object the breaking down of free trade. His interests were absolutely and entirely agricultural, and as an agricultural Member of Parliament it had been his fortune this year to be the Chairman of the Central Chamber of Agriculture. The other day, at a meeting of the Chamber, the question of the revival of the Corn Duty was discussed at great length. It was most interesting and instructive to hear speech after speech made by the farmers—agricultural representatives throughout the length and breadth of this country. One after another said that the tax on flour and corn would do them no good, and many of them said that where they got half-a-crown they would have to pay 5s. for foodstuffs. As an agriculturist, he could only confirm that. The fact that the resolution in favour of corn duties was carried by such a large majority was due to the belief that they were getting in the thin end of the wedge. The Tory Government had broken down the great principle of Free Trade, and if they put a shilling on wheat there was no reason why in the future they should not put on five or ten shillings. To hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer discussing the position of the poor in relation to that tax one would think that the working classes were in a condition of great luxury. He ventured to think that the labourers throughout the country would repudiate the statement by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach that they could have meat and other luxuries every day in the week on thirteen shillings a week. They could not, on their small wages, stand any additional taxation on the first staple food that they required, and it would be especially hard upon poor old men and women who were past work. He quoted a statement by Sir Edgar Vincent, the Tory member for Exeter, to the effect that it could not be supposed that the Government would infringe the important principle of Free

Trade for so small a result if they did not intend to go further. They had not to fight the present rise in bread merely, but what the rise would be in the future if the Government were allowed to proceed with their proposals for beating down the principle of Free Trade in food. Another Tory Member of Parliament—Sir Francis Powell, who represented Wigan—wrote to the *Times* in 1899 to the effect that there must be no duty between corn at the ports of Manchester and Liverpool and the great industrial population of Lancashire. Sir Edward concluded by remarking that as a result of the present Budget the Government would go down to posterity as the Bread Tax Parliament.

Mr. W. C. BARKER (Rochester), speaking from the body of the hall, remarked on the fact that the mover and seconder of the resolution had avoided the first part of the resolution in their speeches, and, as constitutional principles were involved, he should like to have it expounded by experts. Had they a legal right, a moral right, to tax them?

Mr. FRED MADDISON supported the resolution, and called the attention of the meeting to the facts that Sir James Woodhouse had dealt with, in which he had shown two things: first, that the startling expenditure had increased as the power of the Tories had increased in the country. But not content with that, he brushed aside item after item in that careful analysis of his, and showed that the increase in the expenditure was increased in the fighting services. He pointed out that a good deal might have been saved by avoiding the scandals about the remounts and the meat. But let them not deceive themselves on that point—they could never avoid them in the panic of war. They might deprecate that, and they ought to have a most searching inquiry; but he thought that the real efficiency depended upon their policy, and, therefore, Liberals must not constantly be quoting the sacred names of Cobden, Bright, and Gladstone in corroboration and confirmation of a Free Trade policy. They had something besides a Free Trade policy, and a policy on which a Free Trade must ultimately depend—a peace policy. Let them in those days of fine talk about efficiency think of those great principles which made Liberalism triumph in the middle of the last century, and let them declare their views. But if the policy of England in the future was to be the same as it had been in the last three years, they must have an increase in expenditure, for they could not destroy free republics without an important armed force increasing day by day.

Sir EDMUND VERNEY thought they ought not to be tied by the terms of the resolution, and he hoped the proposer and seconder would take the same view. The essential principle of all Liberalism was that taxation must be accompanied by representation. To his mind it was not worthy a dignified assemblage like theirs to decide who and what should be taxed before the war was ended.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried, with seven dissentients.

THE GOVERNMENT EDUCATION BILL.

The Right Hon. ARTHUR H. D. ACLAND moved the following resolution:—

“That this Council condemns the Education Bill for the following (among other) reasons:—

1. The Bill fails to make adequate or satisfactory provision for the supply or reorganisation of secondary education.
2. The Bill, far from creating one educational authority, will, in fact, produce a multiplication of authorities, leading to great uncertainty and to administrative chaos, particularly by dividing the responsibility between the Councils which will fix the education rate and the Committees which will have the spending of it.
3. The Bill abandons the fundamental principle hitherto recognised in this country, that popular education, paid for by the ratepayers, should be in the hands of directly elected representatives of the people. It encourages the destruction of the School Boards, and hands education over to Committees, not one member of which need be directly responsible to the public.
4. The Bill, by giving a large annual endowment out of the rates to the privately managed denominational schools, is obviously intended to establish, at the cost of the ratepayers, a system of national education under sectarian teaching.
5. The Bill encourages, to the detriment of education, the multiplication of denominational schools maintained at the public cost, thus in its practical working injuring existing schools, and tending to bring all new schools under denominational management.
6. The Bill recognises and permits, in schools which are to become rate-maintained, a religious test for teachers as a condition of their employment in such schools.

“The Council accordingly protests most strongly against the Bill, believing that it will do nothing to secure improvement in education, but must inevitably, in its working, cause grave resentment throughout the country, and lead to a deplorable aggravation of sectarian strife and bitterness.

“Finally, the Council calls upon the Liberal Associations of the country to offer the most strenuous opposition to the Bill by public meetings, petitions, resolutions, and all other means in their power.”

MR. ACLAND, *who was very heartily welcomed*, said:—I felt bound, under all the circumstances of the case, to accept your invitation to be here to-day, but if through want of practice or want of physical vigour I fail to do justice to the subject with which you have entrusted me I am sure I may rely upon your indulgence. In the first place, let me say what pleasure it gives me to speak once more in public on a subject on which the Liberal party presents a united front. I am sure it must have given you all pleasure, as it did me, to see my old colleagues to whom I am bound by so many feelings of comradeship making one by one in the House of Commons last week what I consider to be first-rate speeches on behalf of national education. I cannot hope to add anything to the arguments which they used, for I consider that if you group those half-dozen speeches together you have a perfectly unanswerable case against this Bill.

have been of prime importance in bringing about our educational progress. I certainly have no illusions as to the difficulties under which a country like this has made educational progress, and I know that unless there had been these powerful forces at work to compel the adoption of education in many parts of the country, we should have had very little education in some places even at the present day. The two chief forces which have made for education since the Act of 1870 up to now have been the Education Department and the School Boards. The Education Department has always had in the background most important powers. First, it could, dealing with individual schools, withhold the grant; and secondly, dealing with an individual School Board which had not done its duty, it could default the School Board. Now in the backward districts those powers have been of the highest possible importance. On the other hand, in the towns—in many of the towns—the force of the Education Department has neither been so great nor so necessary. In the towns on the other hand, you have had School Boards. What has been their most important power? That they have not had to go to any other body to ask for leave to spend money on education, but that what they required for national education they have had the power to spend themselves. Now these two great forces you are going largely to weaken or wholly to take away. As to the Education Department, I am convinced—and I am sure many who are best informed on this subject would say the same thing, if it was their duty, which it is not, to speak on these controversial subjects—that the Bill is going to weaken those forces of the Education Department of which I have spoken. And as regards the School Boards, you know yourselves that if the Bill is made compulsory it abolishes them all. It withdraws that power of direct expenditure, without asking anybody's leave, which has been the great lever of progress, lifting the Board schools to be, as many of them are, a model of what education should be, an example of what it may be, of which any country may be proud, and drawing after them the Voluntary schools, many of which I fully admit, were good to start with, but drawing after them by competition the Voluntary schools, and creating that "intolerable strain" of which we have heard so much. Now, in abolishing the School Boards what are you doing? You are depriving the country of the services, the directly elected services, of some of the best educational enthusiasts in the country. You are depriving the country of the enormously useful work of many men, aye, and of many women, too—and the women can find no elected place on the new authorities, which is a grave disaster. You are depriving the country of the services of those people. Some of them, no doubt, may be replaced, but only as nominees, and in doing that you are doing something which is the gravest injury to education.

One Authority.

But we are told, in compensation for all this, you have one authority with absolute control. Now, for my own part—it may be through a natural want of progressive instinct—I have never been a

worshipper at the shrine of one authority. Many of my friends, of whose opinions I wish to speak with respect, on the other hand have seemed to speak of "one authority" as if it was a kind of machine into which you only had to drop the hard-earned penny of the rate-payer and pull a handle and out would come tumbling a whole series of educational reforms. Well, I think some day one authority may be very useful in the proper place, but not as provided by this Bill. There are some towns where I can conceive that one authority might work very well at once. But in all our educational work, and especially in legislation, you must look not at the most advanced districts, at the most successful examples—and there are some towns where education would go on successfully if you had no legislation at all—but you must look at the backward districts and see that your machinery is suitable and effective for helping on education there. Now, the great argument for one authority was what was called overlapping. You would think from what some great authorities say that the educational bodies were jostling one another in their panting anxiety to provide education all over the country, and that what the educational patient was suffering from was an excess of full-bloodedness, instead, on the contrary, as I diagnose the complaint, of anæmia of the acutest kind. You would suppose that there were higher grade schools scattered with profusion everywhere in keen competition with secondary or technical schools. Of course the fact is that only in a very small part of the country is this overlapping a serious evil, and there it can be dealt with for the present, at any rate, by a little common sense between the authorities. No, I judge that we could do a great deal without any one authority at all, alike for secondary education and elementary education, but particularly for the former, from what I have seen of what has been done in the little Principality of Wales. In Wales they, fortunately for themselves, got an Intermediate Education Act of their own before these modern ideas came into fashion, and without any one authority at all they have provided themselves there by their own energy with a network of effective intermediate schools all over the country districts and in the towns, by which the sons and daughters of their farmers and tradesmen are getting an education which we in England may well envy and desire for ourselves. So I do not approach this one authority doctrine with any excess of reverence.

The Powers of this Authority.

I rather propose to criticise it. Is it one? and how much authority does it give? Is it one? The best way to examine that perhaps would be to take as an illustration a town and a county of the technical instruction committees of which I happen to be a member. In the town in which I live I find that from the point of view of elementary education, if the Bill be made compulsory, to use a phrase which was much in vogue in the mouth of the Minister of Education at the time of the Bill that perished in 1896, I find we should be the paramount authority for

elementary education. But as regards secondary education, we should either be a subordinate authority, subordinate to the county; or if we voted money ourselves for that purpose we should be what I call an inferior concurrent authority. Then I pass to the county in which my old constituency is situated—the county of West Riding—and there I find that if the Bill be made compulsory, over a large part of that area for both elementary and secondary education, we should be the paramount authority. But over another portion of the area, which contains a population of, I think, nearly half a million, there are fifteen authorities, non-county borough and urban, which would be in the relation to us of being independent or paramount in elementary matters; but, as regards secondary education, either subordinate to us if they voted no rate, or, once more as I should call it, inferior concurrent in relation to us if they did vote the money. Now, these conditions which I have described will hold if the Bill is made compulsory, but if the Bill is permissive—well, I will not attempt to describe the kaleidoscopic condition in which the authorities will find themselves under these circumstances. I have been told with regard to this large portion of the county, which will be under fifteen urban authorities for elementary education—I have been told that the Lay House of Convocation voted that the particular portion of the Bill which makes that provision should be struck out. I could not help wondering whether that desire to get rid of those urban authorities in non-county boroughs who were to provide this elementary education was due to the passion for uniformity, to the desire to adopt the doctrine of a logical one authority, or whether it was due to a modest wish not to have the authority too close. I am sure that Convocation have an earnest desire to lean upon the manly support of representative institutions. But it seemed to me that in this particular request there was a certain coyness, almost as if a voice had said, “I really like you very much, but would you mind sitting a little further off?” Now, with regard to the West Riding, I have tried to put myself, or some younger man than me, in the position of a member of this new authority. I imagine an ardent and enthusiastic educationist finding himself for the first time a member of this new authority in the West Riding. He naturally says, and it seems to me a most reasonable thing to say—he says, “I should like, once during my time of office, to visit each one of those schools over which I am to have absolute control.” I have consulted the officials as to what would be the nature of the task which he would undertake, and I find that if he set to work to visit, at the rate of two departments per day during every day in which the elementary schools were open in the year, each of those schools over which he is in so-called absolute control, it would take him exactly three years. Over a district which is 100 miles from end to end in one direction, and, I suppose 50 miles across in the the other direction, you may imagine he would have a good deal of travelling and not much time to attend committee meetings. And, if the Lay House of Convocation had its way, it would add at least another year to his task. Well, now all this shows, surely, that the

scheme which the Government has laid before us is wholly unsuitable in districts of this sort, is conceived in a hurry, and altogether unthought out.

The "Absolute Control" of the Authority.

Now, I ask, has this authority the absolute control which is attributed to it? And, first, in Voluntary schools. It seems to be supposed that because we object to this Bill, therefore we cannot admit that in the days that have passed many people have made considerable sacrifices to maintain these schools. On the contrary, before 1870, the more you examine our early educational history the more, I think, you will feel surprised at the generosity and the sacrifices with which people attached both to the National Society and to the British Society and to other bodies made sacrifices for the education of the working classes, at a time when the State was doing little indeed. I, for one, shall never fail to recognise the generosity of those who helped education in those days, and I only wish that the same generous spirit was to be found among many of our wealthy classes now that was to be found in those old days. Since 1870, by slow degrees, the State has given more, and by slow degrees, as we know now, the inclination to provide from voluntary sources has grown less. But though I recognise the sacrifices and appreciate them, I decline to admit that, when at last these schools demand the whole of their support from public sources, except so far as the provision of buildings is concerned, we, the nation and the public, ought to be content with one-third of the management.

The One-Third Representation.

That some representation should be arranged for which is a fair equivalent for the contribution I am sure we should all admit, but if you are to have a public system you must have some leverage for educational improvement. What is the leverage under these conditions? You assign to the existing managers two-thirds of the management, and to the public, which is to find the funds, you assign only one-third. If difficulties arise what is to happen? They say the public authority is to withdraw the grant. But who suffers the penalty? Not the managers, but the public authority itself. The more grant it withdraws the more rates it has to pay. And not only that, but if it finally ceased to continue its arrangement with the school it must provide a school at the expense of the ratepayers of the parish. That is a very unsatisfactory condition of things, and the fact is that the whole provision for managers is of an unsatisfactory character. It is calculated that you will have something like 50,000 nominated managers in the country, and for my part I say that whether it is in a Liberal county or a Conservative county this amount of nomination by the new authority is quite indefensible. You ignore the parents, you give them no rights or powers in this matter whatever. Just consider the position. If you try to explain the matter to a ratepayer in any country parish who is dissatisfied with his Voluntary school you say, "My dear sir

you do not seem to understand that the benevolent Government has given you complete representative control over your school." "No, I don't," he says. "Well, but don't you know that they have nominated one man in three to represent your interests here?" "No," he says, "I have nothing to do with his nomination." "Then you must go further back," you tell him; "you must go back to the committee who are the new education authority." "But I have nothing to do with nominating the committee." "Oh but," you say, "the County Council nominate, or perhaps nominate"—because it is not certain—"one or more members of that committee from among their own number." And so he is driven back to the County Council, who may or may not have nominated any single member of this great representative authority from the Council itself.

The "Frugal Mind" of the Authority.

Well, now, it seems to me that the representative authority is not anywhere near that ratepayer's door. It is rather like John Gilpin's coach, of which, as you will remember, it was said that "three doors off the coach was stayed." I confess I distrust the party who are in the coach. You will remember that of the chief personage in that coach it was said that she was of a "frugal mind." Yes, too frugal to be at all satisfactory to the friends of education. I have my eye on the rural county councillor on the day on which the education estimates are to be brought in at the meeting of the Council in the county town, and I know that no agricultural operation, however important, will prevent him from being present on that day. There may cross his mind as he goes to the meeting or as he sits there and hears the pleading of the representative, if there be one there, of the committee—there may cross his mind a slight amount of trouble because he cannot obey the behests of his party, or of Convocation, or of the educational expert. But I am quite sure of this, that you will be able to say of him, as was said of John Gilpin of old,

" Yet loss of pence full well he knew
Would trouble him much more."

Now I ask you if you remove the educational forces which we know, and as to the good which they have done we feel certain—are you sure—for I am not sure—that you are substituting anything better in their place?

No Settlement of the Question in the Bill.

And, finally, gentlemen, do you make a settlement of the question? We make no settlement. On the contrary we aggravate the difficulties which have confronted us by not first considering the position into which you put your new authority in relation to the future provision of schools. You would have thought that we might have brought these old difficulties of religious controversy to a close. That is what we should have tried to do. But in every new district where a school is to be placed you put your new authority at a disadvantage. You

make provision in your Bill, that not only in the new districts, but in the old, wherever a body of people are dissatisfied with the existing school, be it Board or Voluntary, they have only got to carry it on for one year, and get thirty children into it, and they can fall back upon the public authority and tell them to carry it on or provide all its annual expenditure for the rest of time. Does that make for religious peace? You have only to get in the new districts—enabling, as the Bill does, the religious bodies to concentrate themselves upon the provision of buildings—the buildings which are naturally required for Sunday-schools and for religious purposes, and when Voluntary managers have once provided the building, they have only got to get through the conditions of clause 10—which are largely devised to make these arrangements easy—and they come to the authority and they say, “You keep back with your schools, and make way for us with our denominational school, and maintain our school in future from year to year out of public funds.” And not only that, but the Bill provides for a bonus on the child in the Voluntary school of 5s. per head, as against the child in the Board school, who is to get comparatively little out of the necessitous School Board grant—a trifling sum in comparison with the bonus which is offered on the Voluntary school child.

The Doctrine of the Two Doors.

Do not let us make any mistake about this doctrine of the two doors. The school is to be attached to the church or chapel building, and that is to be the practice which is to be encouraged everywhere. The new public authority is to have the Voluntary schools set up against its own schools wherever it suits people to do it, and as to future schools, as far as I can understand, it will probably have none at all. Now, I ask you, is that common sense? You set up this great new authority, and you have the chance from the very first to point the finger of scorn at its schools, to call them godless, as some people do, and to call on the denominations to look upon the authority as the common enemy. There is to be recrimination upon recrimination in the matter of the Cowper-Temple clause or the catechisms, and so far from its being, as some people call it, a preservation of the *status quo* it is an aggravation of all the difficulties that we have had in the past.

The Bill a Negation of Statesmanship.

I say that to put down a Bill which we call a great settlement and to put provisions of this sort in it is the negation of statesmanship and the abrogation of common sense. Whether we require leaders of industry in the future or broader intelligence in the mass of our work-people, or whether we require both, and they are dependent one upon the other, we ought to give dignity to our new authority. This Bill does not do it. If men are to do their duty to the State you must give them duties to the State to do. You must enlist in the cause of education every kind of civic activity. This Bill does not do it. It does not give leverage for improvement where improvement

is most required ; it creates grave danger of starvation, even of the better kinds of education which we have got ; it aggravates our difficulties ; it fosters strife. Our duty was, in the great educational reform which we might have had, to unite together all the best forces of the country—the educational forces, the religious forces, all the patriotic forces of all lovers of their country wherever you could find them. It was our business to unite those forces for an education which, through its influence on future generations, would enrich and elevate and strengthen our national life. It is because this Bill does not in my opinion carry out these objects that I ask you to support the resolution which is now before you.

The Rev. GEORGE JARMAN (Chairman of the Bristol School Board) seconded. He said that he was not going to analyse the Bill, or go through the various portions of it that were open to objection from the educational or from the sectarian point of view. There were two points that he wished to select. In the first place he was most anxious that the authority which the Bill proposed should have a large interest in, and a large knowledge of, the vast mass of children that were to be cared for. He noticed that Sir John Gorst, in pleading for one authority, had stated that higher education, if it was to be effective, must be based on a sound system of elementary schools. Then Sir John had gone on to say who was best fitted to carry out that sound system that had somehow to be based. He (the speaker) thought that a man's common sense would have told him that the people who laid the foundation and had reared the building on it until they came to the coping were the people who ought to have a large voice as to what the coping should be. They had in Bristol connected with their elementary schools more than 60,000 children, and he thought that Bristol would have said that, although it recognised that the middle classes had their claims, and that secondary schools had their needs, the issue to those 60,000 children of an opportunity of education of a somewhat superior character was the main thing to be thought of by the authority that should be elected for the purpose of co-ordinating our education. The bodies that had been elected by the people, and who had worked hard and long, and worked with success, to develop that system, and put it on a solid basis, and of a worthy character, were to be set aside for a new body. That body, which had not had the experience, was to become the nucleus of the great educational system in the future. Against that true Liberals, true educationalists, the parents of the children, the representatives of the body of the working classes ought to utter a united and firm protest, and say, "We will have symmetry, and we will have symmetry starting from the foundation until it reaches the coping stone." The rev. gentleman said that lately all the higher grade education that had been offered to the five or six millions of children in our elementary schools was so infinitesimally small that one wondered that any Mr. Cockerton should have been set to work to try to pull it down. Higher grade education was of immense moment because it

might be developed, and it was of immense moment because the children of our elementary schools could step over to the higher grade schools. (A VOICE: "*Can they?*") Someone asked if they could. That gentleman would see for himself if he went over to St. George, and the school at Merrywood, in Bedminster. Those schools were situated in industrial portions of that city, and amongst the poorest people. The school at St. George was built by the people of St. George. When those people were paying 1s. 6d., 1s. 8d., and 1s. 10d. in the pound for the School Board rate they willingly built the school, and what he asked for was that that new body should be a body that would keep that door open—that would make it easy of access. He was much concerned that the secondary body proposed did not know enough of the working classes and was not enough in touch with them; he was not desirous that such a body should be the main body for the day to come. He asked that the people who paid the bill should provide the authority. Coming to the next point, he said that Mr. Balfour asked in the House of Commons the other night what it was the Nonconformists wanted. The statesman gave an answer to the question himself, and it was one which he had no doubt entered into the heart of every Free Churchman in the House of Commons. Mr. Balfour said, "What the Nonconformists want, though they don't say so, is to starve the Voluntary schools." Against that statement he entered a most indignant protest. Why should they starve the Voluntary schools? Who would have to pay for the substitutes if the Voluntary schools were done away with? If they were slow to make sacrifice, was it not proof that they were doing it for some higher purpose than the starving of some Voluntary schools? Nonconformists had a duty towards the children of their faith. Mr. Balfour had stated that he had tried to run to ground some of the stories about extreme cruelty towards Dissenting children. He would ask him not to run to ground the extreme cases, but the system that allowed sectarian managers to proselytise the children of Free Churchmen. He would give him proofs to run to ground the system of thrusting the Church catechism down the throats of children of Free Churchmen in thousands of cases under the conscience clause. He would ask him to run to ground the system that closed the door of the teaching profession to Free Churchmen and Free Churchwomen who proved their intellectual fitness in the examinations where they did get a chance to rise to the top of the profession, but who were kept out of the profession and treated with indignity because they had a conscience which they had a right to preserve. As a right honourable gentleman in the Cabinet had boasted of his Puritan ancestors he (the speaker) ventured to say that there were a good many tens of thousands of men and women in this land who had something more to boast of than Puritan ancestors—men and women who had within them a Puritan spirit and in whose veins the Puritan blood had not yet become tainted. The Puritan spirit stood in the old days amongst the Ironsides for courage, and let the right honourable gentleman show that he had a bit of it by standing up in the House of Commons and defending that Bill

that trampled upon the Puritan conscience and that insulted Puritan history. He would then discover that the forces of the Puritan spirit had been aroused, and as the Government had mistaken their opponents' numbers and strength on another field, he ventured to tell them that they had mistaken the numbers and strength of their opponents on that field. They asked for no privilege but for the right to teach their own shibboleths at their own expense. They had shown that they were prepared to do that at enormous sacrifice, but when they had done it they were not prepared that the secular hand should be thrust into their pockets to support the shibboleths of others whose shibboleths were that their (the Nonconformist) creed was not worth calling religion, and that they were schismatics and children of schismatics.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Temperance.

Mr. J. EMMOTT BARLOW, M.P. (Somerset, Frome Division) moved:—

“That this Council is strongly of opinion that the reform of the licensing laws is urgent and imperative, and believes that Lord Peel's Minority Report furnishes, in the main, a basis for practical legislation upon which all temperance reformers should combine and concentrate their efforts.”

He remarked that they had had solid fare, both mental and physical, as regarded corn and education, and it was not inappropriate that they should now deal with a matter which concerned liquid refreshment. Being a temperance man himself, he was only going to deal with the question very shortly and very briefly. The question was one of the utmost importance whether they looked at it as regarded the large sum of money expended by the people of this country on intoxicating liquors, and many of them thought it might be expended to a much greater advantage, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer was always looking to it in thinking of the country's revenue. What did it contribute to the vice and crime and ill-health of the country? It had been stated by responsible judges that the greater part of the crime with which the Bench had to deal had been attributable to the use, the excessive use, of strong drink. It had also been said by competent members of the medical profession that the excessive use of strong drink had more to do with the physical deterioration of the people of this country than any other cause. This much he would say: If they were to have a great and powerful Empire in the days to come, they must have a great and powerful race, both physically and mentally, to work for and govern that Empire, and, unless they controlled the drink traffic, the drink traffic would control them. He thought, from the aspect of that audience before him, that they were sufficiently educated on the question, that it would be taking coals to Newcastle if he were to attempt to preach to them on the subject. They had a duty, and that duty was not to bring the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and, without holding any pharisaical opinion of themselves, he thought they were

fully abreast of public opinion on the matter. That resolution referred to Lord Peel's report, which was printed in a little pamphlet which he held in his hand. That little report took up over 200 pages, and he suggested that report should be taken as read. If he read that report, and attempted to criticise its details, he thought it would be somewhat beyond his scope on the present occasion and their wishes. He thought it dealt with a difficult and intricate subject in a full and reasonable manner. It attempted to introduce changes which were urgently needed, and it attempted to introduce them with as little interference as they could possibly be done with. If only the report had been acted upon at the time it was published, they would now be in a way of making progress with the suggestions thrown out on the question, and it appeared to him as a whole to be the most reasonable and equitable scheme yet presented for dealing with that matter, for the report in the main furnished a basis for reformation. Some people would like it to go further, and some were doubtful whether they ought to go as far, and he did not think that anything else would grapple satisfactorily with the great and overwhelming subject which confronted the nation to-day. He asked them, as Liberals, to go in for other reforms, but do not let them leave that out, for it affected the health and welfare of their people, and would affect the health and welfare of the future history of this great country, and might, if left untouched, cripple its progress for years. He appealed to them that the subject should be dealt with in a fair and statesmanlike manner.

Alderman W. HOWELL DAVIES (Chairman of the South Bristol Liberal Association) seconded the resolution, remarking that apparently they were all temperance reformers, from Lord Salisbury to the humblest Liberal. He had been working for many years in the city of Bristol, and taken part in many contested elections, and had read many important speeches from those gentlemen whom they called their opponents, and they were all temperance reformers—at least they said so. He had read, too, many remarks and speeches which had been delivered at licensed victuallers' assemblies, and many had been held in that hall, and they were in favour of temperance—at least they said so. But they all had different methods of putting their views into operation. Lord Salisbury had appointed a Commission to consider the subject, and now all that was being done in advocacy of the question of temperance was a small Bill which the Government had proposed this year. They all had been asking unceasingly for temperance, and they were very glad of that little Bill. The Liberals who believed in the temperance question did so because they felt that allied with it was the happiness and prosperity of our people. The other people who professed temperance wanted to keep the temptations constantly before the people. The temperance party knew that the greatest dangers to which the people were subjected were in the back streets of their city, where the lowest class of the trade was catered for. Still this class of house, without special attractions, was

becoming increasingly unprofitable, and he strongly objected to such licences being used as barter with the licensing justices for the privilege of other licences in new and growing neighbourhoods. He was glad to see that one important bench had decided to refuse licences where they believed the present number was more than sufficient. He believed that in this temperance question was largely wrapped up the better housing of the poor; only let them make people more temperate, and then they would be able to clear out those wretched, miserable habitations which were a curse to their civilisation.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Land Law Reform.

Mr. GEORGE LAMBERT, M.P. (Devon—South Molton Division), proposed the following resolution:—

“That this Council affirms the urgent necessity for a thorough reform of the land laws, so as to secure, among other things—(1) The just taxation of ground values and mining royalties; (2) the extension of the system of small holdings on the lines already adopted in the case of allotments; and (3) compensation to town and country tenants for permanent improvements made during their tenancy, and for disturbance. Further, the Council declares that Parliament ought immediately to deal with the grave evils which exist in connection with the housing of the working classes in town and country, so as promptly to secure better and healthier conditions of life for the masses of the people.”

He remarked that during his election he saw stuck up on a pig-stye, “Vote for Long and a better home.” Mr. Long was the Conservative candidate. Well, the pig had gone to his sausage home, but there was no solution of the housing problem. They had had a small Bill called “The Ownership of Dwellings Acquisition Bill.” How many working men had been able to obtain their dwellings under that Bill? It was like all Tory legislation—what it gave with one hand it took away with the other. They had had a Housing of the Working Classes Bill, which enabled local authorities to buy land outside their own areas. How many local authorities had put the powers into operation? He believed one had thought about it and one had made application to do it. These were abortions, and it was only abortions they would get from the Tory Government on the housing question. In this matter the slum owners came out the gainers. What had they done to compensate agricultural tenants? There had been another abortive Bill, but it was characteristic of a Government which had gone to Whitechapel for yeomen. Some went to the front, but it was difficult to teach Whitechapel yeomen which side of the horse to get up, but there was no choice when they came down. In conclusion, he pleaded for the unity of the Liberal party.

Mr. J. ROWLANDS (hon. secretary of the Land Law Reform Association) seconded, and said the question of land reform would have to be fought out at the next election.

Mr. G. TOULMIN (the newly-elected M.P. for Bury) supported the motion. He explained that he was late in reaching the meeting

because he had been detained to give his first vote in the House of Commons against that bread-tax upon which Bury gave a decisive opinion on Saturday. He urged that they must raise the standard of that life whose sole capital was its capacity for labour; they must resist the heavy hand which it was proposed to lay upon bread, and they must lift the heavy hand which now rested upon the land. They were, he added, proud of the Empire—Liberal policy had made it—but his concern was for the race. A map was a fine educational document, but he (Mr. Toulmin) preferred the human document. In considering the resolution he wanted his hearers to think of the man behind the phrase. There was not a line in the resolution which did not cover an epic or a tragedy. The reference to ground values suggested teeming populations shut up in our stifled cities; mining royalties suggested the great crowd of workers in an industry which was at the mercy of the idle hands that held the title-deeds; the reference to small holdings suggested the hope held out to the labourer that by a life of steadfast toil he might at length receive the reward of a little farm; and the reference to farmers' improvements called to mind how the enterprise, foresight, and skill of the farmer were often confiscated where exercised, but more often not exercised through want of security. As to the paragraph referring to housing, England must act upon those lines or the race would decline. Only if the heart was sound could this great Empire do the great work which he believed it was fated to do in this world if it was true to itself. Only, in his opinion, by the Liberal party could the life of this Empire be made sound. The Liberal party were sound on the questions enumerated in the resolution, and by unity and enthusiasm in their ranks they might overcome those things to which Mr. Lambert had referred. The next great victory in the Liberal party would be won by a true soldiers' battle, and they should all prepare for the great work they must take in hand.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Vote of Thanks.

Mr. EDWARD EVANS, JUNR. (Chairman of Committee, National Liberal Federation) proposed:—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the Bristol Liberal Federation, to Mr. Charles Townsend and his colleagues, and the secretaries of the Reception Committee for their admirable arrangements and generous hospitality during the visit of the National Liberal Federation to Bristol.”

The resolution expressed not only the views of the executive, but those of the whole of the delegates.

Mr. H. J. WILSON, M.P. (Yorkshire — Holmfirth Division), seconded this, and it was carried.

Mr. CHARLES TOWNSEND said he thanked them most cordially on behalf of his colleagues. It had not only been a great honour but a great delight to welcome them to Bristol.

This brought the Session to a close.

MEETING IN THE COLSTON HALL,

MAY 14TH, 1902.

On Wednesday evening a mass meeting was held in the Colston Hall. The hall was crowded, upwards of 4,000 persons being present, and the proceedings were throughout enthusiastic. The chair was taken by Mr. Charles Townsend (President of the Bristol Liberal Federation).

The CHAIRMAN said that it was about twelve years since they welcomed Mr. Herbert Gladstone in the old Colston Hall at a great political meeting. Many of those present would remember his visit then, and they were grateful to him for coming amongst them again. They welcomed him most cordially for his own sake, and they welcomed him as they remembered his revered and honoured father, who did so much through a long and strenuous life to raise the moral tone of political thought and feeling in our country. They honoured Mr. Gladstone, too, as they remembered that devoted and illustrious woman, his mother, who stood by the side of her husband through so many fights and helped him nobly to do his work for his God and his country. As they were approaching the close of their series of meetings in connection with the visit of the National Liberal Federation to Bristol, he should like to assure Mr. Gladstone that those meetings had been remarkable for their unity and concord. There had not been one single note of discord, and it had been plain to everyone who had attended those meetings at the Victoria Rooms that the great aim and object of every speaker had been to do all that was possible to unite the Liberal party in one great whole. He ventured some time ago, when he was calling attention to those meetings, to say that he believed they would make for unity. He felt that evening that that desire had really been accomplished. The speeches to which they had listened had been brief, concise, and to the point, and if there had been no other speech made than the remarkable address by Mr. Acland, which it had been the privilege of many present that evening to listen to, it would have made the visit of the Federation to Bristol a memorable event, and one which would, he felt sure, bring forth fruit in the future. He believed that the Federation's visit would be a great advantage to Bristol. They had on that platform two gentlemen who were candidates for two divisions of the city. He (the Chairman) was there to express the confident hope that those meetings would do very much to make their seats as members for the city of Bristol secure when the day of strife came on. He had noticed the disintegration in the Tory party, although it was not openly confessed. He thought it was quite possible that a general election was not so far off as some imagined. It would be their duty to be ready for it, and to see that no stone was left unturned, not only in Bristol, but in the many great

constituencies which were represented there that evening by the delegates, to return a sound, strong, united Liberal party to power. Well, they had already commenced to bury the Tory party. He hoped that process would go on from time to time, and the magnificent victory which has just been won by Mr. Toulmin would be repeated again and again, whenever there were by-elections, to foreshadow the greater victories to come. Before sitting down he wished to refer to one matter which occurred in the House of Commons the previous evening. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, speaking of the Liberal party, said that the union of that party was in destruction, and he taunted them with the fact that, when they objected to the new tax which was about to be imposed upon the bread of the people, they suggested nothing in its place. Sir William Harcourt, with that real wit which has always marked his great speeches, replied, "Take it out of the doles." And so said he.

SPEECH BY THE RT. HON. HERBERT J. GLADSTONE, M.P.

Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, *who met with an enthusiastic reception*, said :—The Chairman has told us that our meetings under the régime of the National Liberal Federation yesterday and to-day have been marked by harmony and concord. Taking that in connection with the fact of this great meeting which I see before me, surely we can say without fear that we know we are not a negligible quantity, a party so weak and so worn out that our political opponents can affect to ignore us.

The Bury Election.

The Chairman has alluded to the Bury election. Some three weeks ago I remember reading a speech by Mr. Harry Lawson when he attended his first meeting of Liberal Unionists, and he said it was the happiest day of his life. What a chequered existence! I cannot bear to think of his state of mind at the present time. But that is a small matter. The real importance of that election is this—that in 1885, when the Liberal party were absolutely united, before the disunion on Home Rule, Sir Henry James, a very strong candidate, only won Bury by a majority of 189, and now, when we are "a feeble remnant" fighting Bury in 1902, Mr. Toulmin wins it by a majority of 414. At any rate, I think Mr. Birrell may take encouragement. I do not know whether he has many "Liberal bakers" in North Bristol, but, anyhow, I will undertake to say that his task in North Bristol will not be so arduous as was the task of Mr. Toulmin in Bury.

Taking Stock of the Position.

Present here to-night, gathered from all parts of England and Wales, are many of the keenest politicians and the most active workers to be found in the party. I come from London, and I am

Liberal party at this moment is union. Our first object is to make an unanimous protest against the way in which this country has recently been governed. We believe, I suppose, all of us, that the honour and interests of the country have been recklessly imperilled. . . . We are marched from one surprise to another. We know not what a day may bring forth; and under these circumstances our first duty ought to be, and our first object will be, to remove this constant source of apprehension and danger. Everything must give way to that. . . ." And so it is now, for unity means a great deal. Unity obviously is necessary to success, but it is success which brings direct, immediate, urgent responsibility, and it is that kind of responsibility which constrains men and sections to agreement, which compels them to agree at any rate upon something for the good of the country—not everything anybody desires, but as much as a competent body of men can under pressure honestly agree upon. It is under these circumstances alone that you will arrive at that full agreement and understanding upon which an administration can be brought into being. In the constituencies I believe there is unity in the party. I recommend you to guard it as very precious. I advise you to repel all attacks upon it, all influences seeking to divide it, perhaps to justify divisions elsewhere which, in my judgment, should never have taken place.

Liberal Organisation.

The second necessity is improved organisation. Let me venture to give you a word of warning in my official capacity as chief Whip of the Liberal party. During the past fifteen years there has been a constantly increasing tendency to apply to headquarters for candidates, for speakers, for financial assistance, and for advice. This is not as it should be. I want to see every constituency self-contained, self-governing, competent to make up its own mind as to what it wants, and with full energy and determination to get what it wants, or to try to get what it wants to the utmost capacity of its own means. There must be more reliance on individual effort and individual resources. But I quite agree that a central organisation is necessary. There is the Liberal Central Association, but that by its constitution is not what may be called an organising body. It has to deal with the House of Commons and with general elections rather than with what Lord Rosebery calls the "spade work" of the party. But we have here to-day many distinguished members of the National Liberal Federation. There is Dr. Spence Watson, who, after twelve years splendid work for the party, retired yesterday, with great dignity and amid universal regret, from the post of President of the Federation. And there is his successor, my friend Mr. Birrell. There sit Mr. Edward Evans and Mr. Hudson, and I speak in their presence with bated breath.

The National Liberal Federation.

I know the splendid work which the Federation has done in the past and is doing in the present, but I respectfully put the question

in all frankness—Has it altogether moved with the times? The discussions, resolutions, speeches—all are excellent, at least as a rule. Certainly they are necessary, but these good things are not worth much unless there is real material power behind them. There are many delegates present here to-night, I have no doubt, who will return in the morning to what I may call political deserts, to constituencies which are to all intents and purposes derelict. Even in Gloucester and Somerset there are some constituencies which I have in my mind where Liberalism is dormant. I say that every delegate who attends the meetings of the National Liberal Federation should come here armed with the knowledge that in the constituency which he represents his party are in marching order, and, if they have not got a candidate, that their organisation is ready for one; that they are awake and alert, and mean, with their own resources and as much resource as they can get from elsewhere, to do what they can. (A VOICE: “Give us a policy first.”) A gentleman says “Give us a policy.” Perhaps I will give you a policy before I have done. If I do not, and if you do not get a policy from the responsible leaders of the party, why on earth don’t you make a policy yourselves? It is not the men who represent you, or many of you, in Parliament who have been asleep for many years. They have had to work day after day, week after week, amidst great difficulties and against heavy odds, while a great many of you in the country have been asleep yourselves. I say, to revert to my subject, now that there are new forces, there are new dangers to be encountered in the constituencies. The forces of Conservatism have been greatly strengthened. There is need for new methods and for new work to be undertaken in detail in the constituencies themselves. There is a lack of the steady pressure, trained skill, and the stimulating encouragement of a well-equipped central office. I know that there are deficiencies in the central office, though it is within the power of each constituency to make them good. But a strong central organisation can greatly help opinion everywhere, and I would respectfully suggest to my friends of the Federation that there is now a distinct opening for new undertakings in political work and organisation. It is not the time now to go into details on this question. All I can say is that if anything can be done, speaking on behalf of the Liberal Central Association at any rate, I can promise the most cordial assistance and co-operation from that body.

The Government Record.

And has not the Government given us chances enough? I have taken stock of our own position. Let us take stock of the position of the Government. Seven years ago the Liberal Government went out of power. We left them peace in Ireland. A spirit of tranquillity previously unknown for a century prevailed. We left our colonies loyal and flourishing; we left them a rising trade; we left a revenue largely increased by Sir William Harcourt; we left them a National Debt diminished and diminishing; we left them increased efficiency in all the great Government departments. We left them an army

and a navy which, on the authority at the time of Lord Charles Beresford and Mr. Balfour, were never more efficient. This Government has had a great majority and a subservient House of Lords. Since 1873 no Government has had so good an opening and such great opportunities. They have passed some good measures—I am not concerned to deny that—but I do say they have not tackled the greatest problems which interested this country. I may make an exception of the Education Bill, of which I shall have to say a word or two later on. I don't think they are going about the solution of that problem in the right way. They promised you peace; they have given you war. They promised you temperance; all you have is a small emasculated Bill, originally brought in by a Bishop. They promised you old-age pensions, and they are giving you taxation of the old people's necessaries. They promised you higher national education, and they are giving you the relief of Voluntary schools. They promised you efficiency, and their record is to be found in the war annals of South Africa relating to enteric, concentration camps, guns, cordite, and remounts. They have grasped at every success of our gallant troops in South Africa as being due to their own virtues, but they shirk every responsibility when anything goes wrong.

The Case of Mr. Cartwright.

The last instance of that was the notorious case of Mr. Cartwright, a British subject who had committed an offence. (“*No.*”) I am not going into that. At any rate he was condemned by a legal tribunal. Let us assume for the sake of argument that he had committed an offence. He was sent to prison; he served his time, and came out and proposed to go back to his own country. By the exercise of arbitrary and unconstitutional authority he was detained in South Africa. That flagrant injustice was mercilessly exposed a week or two ago, not only by the Opposition, but even to a more striking extent by many members among the supporters of the Government. The only defence of the Government was “Lord Kitchener.” I do not believe that Lord Kitchener knew anything about this case. I believe this injustice was due to the action of some young and inexperienced subordinate officer; and are we to be told in the British House of Commons that an act of that sort, done by an irresponsible nobody, is to be supported by the whole strength of His Majesty's Government? I say the country owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. John Morley for bringing this matter to the attention of the nation.

The Enormously Increased Expenditure.

This is no time to go into the question of the management of the war, but there is one subject that every Liberal speaker should touch upon, though perhaps briefly, and that is finance, because the state of things has become alarming, and it is well that each Liberal speaker whenever he has an opportunity should bring the salient facts of the case before the public. When we went out of office in 1895 our normal expenditure was £93,918,000, and that normal expenditure has now

risen to £124,519,000—an annual increase of 31 millions. Then you have the war expenditure of £229,559,000, and that, you may be perfectly certain, is very greatly under the mark. You have the sinking fund of £4,640,000 suspended, and you have an increase of your national indebtedness of no less than £161,733,000. In 1900 your additional taxation amounted to fourteen millions sterling. In 1901 it grew to twenty-seven millions, and in 1902 your additional taxation amounts to thirty-four millions. You have 2d. a pound on your tea, you have 4d. a pound on your tobacco, 4s. 2d. per cwt. on sugar, and 3d. and 4d. respectively per cwt. on corn and flour. What becomes of your “free breakfast table” for the poor? It will be much more to the point to talk of a free dinner table to the rich. You may have a splendid Government, but it is a very expensive Government. And when we condemn their methods, or some of their methods, what do they tell us? That we are refusing to vote supplies for Lord Kitchener. I thought Sir Henry Fowler made a remarkably fine speech last Tuesday in the House of Commons, and he repudiated that charge with indignation. Surely we may criticise the methods of the Government in finance. Yes, I think we may ask for a little latitude here. Surely Lord Kitchener does not come into the question of taxation. We do find fault, and we shall find fault. First of all we say that if the Government had been efficiently prepared for the war we should have saved perhaps half the cost of it.

The Bread Tax.

But, we ask, why should bread be taxed? Why not beer? I am a beer drinker myself. I do not mind paying more for my beer if I have it. If I cannot pay for my beer I go without my beer, that is all. But I am also an income-tax payer, and I am afraid I shall have no option but to pay that. But as an income-tax payer I ask, why was not an additional penny put on over and above the actual increase which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed? The income-tax at the time of the Crimean war rose to 1s. 4d., and the cost of the Crimean war was not half as much as the cost of this will be. And the paying capacity of the income-tax payers at the time of the Crimean war was not half the paying capacity of the income-tax payers at the present time. In 1864 the income-tax produced per penny £1,218,000; in 1901 it produced no less than £2,426,000. Why not get an extra and easy £2,426,000 a year? And now when they propose to tax bread I should like to ask the Government why they renewed the doles in respect to tithes and agricultural rates, and put a further charge on the nation—a charge renewed last year in the midst of the war when they knew the kind of financial liability which they had got to face—a charge amounting to £1,600,000 per annum. From those two sources alone, to say nothing of beer, you have a sum of over £4,000,000 per annum, and the bread tax is estimated to yield £2,600,000. I say that the country ought to rise against this tax. It was received with shouts of approval by every Protectionist

in the House of Commons—yes, Protectionists, who were carefully muzzled during the debate of the last two days. Then “there was no protection in it—no such idea.” “Where did Protection come in?” it was asked, and so forth. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Mr. Balfour seemed to argue that it would not affect the price of bread. It is a new doctrine. Somebody must pay, and I will tell you who it is. The millers and bakers and others concerned in the corn trade will not pay this tax if they can help it. Nobody will pay the tax if they can help it. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach pointed out that when the tax on corn was repealed by Mr. Lowe prices remained stationary. He seemed quite surprised that we did not take that as the conclusive fact in the case. The bakers are men like ourselves, and bakers presumably in 1869 were in no hurry to forego a little profit. Why should they lower the price of bread when by keeping it up they put money into their pockets? No; bakers are human beings. They were possessed of mortal frailty in 1869, and they are possessed of mortal frailty in 1902, and this same frailty will induce them now to avoid paying this tax if they can.

How the Bread Tax Works Out.

And what a temptation to the trade. Mr. Grant Lawson told us the other day that, after all, this tax was very small—it only amounted to one thirty-second part of a penny on the loaf. We cannot split a farthing into eight parts. The baker, therefore, has a very great temptation to put on a halfpenny, because by putting it on he makes the purchaser pay the tax and he puts a large profit into his own pocket. You all know, as well as I do, that men concerned in trade frequently make large profits out of new taxation. (“*Why not?*”) Why not? That is my point. Why should they not make profits if they can? We all do if we can make profits fairly, but why did not Sir Michael Hicks-Beach realise this before putting on this tax? Why did he not realise that bakers, whether they are Liberals or Conservatives, would do what they could to make as much money out of the tax as possible? It is inevitable, and depend upon it sooner or later the consumers will have to pay. I have got a long list of places here where the price of bread has already gone up. (“*Bristol.*”) Yes, Bristol. Are your bakers all Liberals here? I do not know if the Bury bakers are all Liberals. I hope they are—so much the better for us as a party. But prices have gone up in Manchester, they have gone up in Bath, they have gone up in many great towns. The tendency of bread is to rise, especially when you put a tax upon it. I do not think Sir Michael Hicks-Beach knew his business when he proposed this tax. This tax falls upon all of us. We all eat bread.

Taxing the Staple Necessity.

But it was said several times in the House of Commons, “Let those who called for the war, and who profit by the war, help to pay for it.” I think that is quite a fair statement. Let us pay for it.

Let us have an increase of the income-tax. Let us have an increase of the beer tax if you like, or any other tax. But bread is the staple necessity of 25 per cent. of our population who have to struggle for their existence from day to day. They have no time to shout for the war, but they suffer when you put on a bread tax. I resent this tax. I believe every Liberal in the country resents this tax. I believe it will have mischievous effects throughout the country. I believe, moreover, that it is not a step towards Protection but a step into Protection. I say let the Government think better of it, and let it follow the Chancellor of the Exchequer's abortive cheque tax.

The Education Bill.

The Government have given you another blessing—the Education Bill. Upon that subject Mr. Acland spoke this afternoon. I hope we shall soon see Mr. Acland back in the House of Commons. Education is a national question in which we are all concerned. It is a question which ought to be settled, and which must eventually be settled by consent and agreement. There are honest differences of opinion on one side and on the other. Let us recognise that Churchmen may be biassed, and that any of us may be biassed. But we have honest opinions on the subject, and I believe, and am certain, that our opponents have honest opinions on the subject as well as ourselves. But what has been done? Taking advantage of a great majority given to the Government through national emergency they are going to force a Bill upon us nominally to co-ordinate education in all its branches and to place education under one authority. That one authority in a vast number of places will be a denominational authority practically free from financial responsibility, and retaining practical control in its own schools. We know that this Bill threatens our great School Boards—threatens the work of patriotic educational experts, who for years have laboured in the cause of the higher education so neglected by the Government. There is no provision in this Bill for increased educational efficiency. There is no provision in it for increasing the efficiency of the teachers. There is no guarantee in it that secondary education will be given to you either in quality or in quantity to a degree necessary to enable us to keep pace with the rival nations of the world. The Government had no mandate for this Bill. The Bill is not a national Bill, it is not an educational Bill, it is not a fair Bill.

The Act of 1897.

The Government has a sorry history over education. Their course during the past seven years is strewn with wreckage. We remember the Act of 1897—forced through the House of Commons, a House of Commons containing nearly a couple of hundred Liberal members, who were returned by two million voters in this country. That Bill was forced through the House of Commons in the teeth of the Liberals by brute force, by the Government majority. I do not suppose such a thing ever happened before, but that Bill was actually forced through

the House of Commons without amendment. Every one of our suggestions was ignored. The Bill was passed in the form in which it was brought in, for the purpose of relieving Voluntary schools at the expense of the taxpayers of the country.

Prolonged and Strenuous Opposition.

We shall meet this Education Bill with a prolonged and strenuous opposition, and we warn the Government that if it is passed in its present shape and without large amendments it cannot be a settlement of the question. If it passes into law I suppose we shall be constrained to obey the law. Whatever happens I, at any rate, as a member of the House of Commons, shall obey the law until I am prepared cheerfully to take the penalty for breaking it, and to go to prison, because I think it is a matter of conscience. But, at any rate, I can say I don't think that an Act such as that can have any moral claim on the loyalty of Liberals in the country. What with taxation, what with rating relief, what with education, and various other matters, surely there is enough done and about to be done by the Government to bring us together as a party.

The Duty of Getting Rid of the Government.

And what reason is there for disunion? Is it the war? Why we all accept Lord Rosebery's speech as a basis. The Government themselves appear to have accepted it as a basis. I am not going to say anything more about that, because I think at this crisis the less we say about the war and about the settlement the better. Is there anything as regards future legislation which is to separate the Liberal party? A friend asked me for a policy. Is not our difficulty that we have too many policies? I quite agree that, out of the numerous possibilities before you, you must make your selection. I have always understood it has been the duty and the object of the Federation to ripen opinion, to bring before its members various subjects for consideration in order to ascertain if opinion is ripe in regard to them, and then to put them forward with the degree of strength proportionate to the support given them by Liberals representing all parts of the country. But the work of selection must be the work of a responsible Government. Of course there are certain things which are obviously far more important and pressing than others, but for my part I will not put any single measure first and foremost. At any rate I will put them all behind one thing, and that is the duty of getting rid of the Government. I will undertake to say that if I could be put into a room with any five gentlemen from this audience we could come to a common-sense agreement as to three or four or five or six measures which are so important as to require the earliest possible attention on the part of a Liberal Government, and that is enough for us.

Practical Agreement.

I won't go beyond that, and I won't put any one question before another, but I say that there are several questions of great and urgent

importance which will have to be dealt with by a Liberal Government whether they like it or not, if and when it is formed. But there is no reason why we should quarrel about that now. Some of our friends have cleaned the slate or lightened the ship. All I can say is that I cleaned my slate and lightened my ship seven years ago. I don't want to be told to do it now. It is a very easy thing to do. Then there is no reason why we should disagree about either this or that measure being proceeded with. Do we quarrel about Imperialism? Why, in the true sense of the word, all Liberals are Imperialists nowadays. I think every Liberal is loyal to the Empire. Every Liberal is anxious to develop our colonies to the utmost extent in his power. Every Liberal takes the keenest interest in every part of our Empire and desires to see it grow strong, prosperous, generous, and wise. And if he fulfils all these things he may call himself a true Imperialist. Then, where do we differ?

The Irish Question.

I have got to come to the Irish question. There are many honest differences of opinion about the Irish question among Liberals. That I know as well as anyone, but I should like to caution some of my friends who, in alluding to these honest differences of opinion, do not quite realise that to ask for the confidence of the country on the ground that they have been in error for sixteen years is not likely to have a very happy result. I do not for a moment say they all confess to have been in error; I am not for a moment imputing that to Lord Rosebery. I know quite well that Lord Rosebery has never been a very enthusiastic Home Ruler. Latterly he has called attention prominently to the changes in the aspect of this question, but outward changes, and he has written these words in illustration of what he means: "After an eruption the cone of Vesuvius is apt to assume a new shape. The blind would be justified in declaring that they saw no alteration. The obstinate might make the same assertion, but the new cone would still differ from the old. So of Irish government." Yes, a new cone may appear upon Vesuvius. The outline of that great mountain may change, but the old volcano is still there. That is the main fact at the present time of the Irish question. Prevalent as are the differences amongst us as to the methods of treating the Irish question, I say that they do not justify disunion.

The Problem to be Solved.

What is the problem in a very few words? It is to devolve to an Irish authority the power to manage Irish affairs in Ireland, and the wish and the intention of every Liberal who is a Home Ruler—as I am, for instance—the intention and determination are to transfer that power to Ireland without in the slightest degree impairing the authority and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. I have never heard of a Liberal who wished to give Ireland an independent Parliament—independent of this country. Yet things have been said of that nature. It is said the Boers want independence. It does not follow

they will persist in demanding it. No; but the Irish people want what they conceive to be just. Don't let me get away from my point. I stated what the object of a Home Ruler is, but in order to carry it into effect you want a strong Liberal majority. I know as well as any man that any rupture in the party on this question, or any other, will make it impossible for the Liberals to deal in any way with Ireland or anything else. So I for one am not going to cut off my nose to spite my face.

No Insuperable Differences.

The differences are not insuperable. Some people think Home Rule very unpopular; but was it very unpopular in Bury, where Mr. Toulmin stood as an unmistakable Home Ruler, a typical Lancashire industrial town, which has gone Unionist ever since 1886? I pass by that. Lord Rosebery is for erecting a superstructure on the basis of county government, and he is in favour of devolution for Irish affairs. He is in favour of a reform of Dublin Castle. He would like to give them even a Colonial Parliament, if we could get so far in a scheme for Imperial Federation. Sir Henry Fowler is in favour of devolution, in favour of reforming Dublin Castle, of giving to Ireland an extended power with regard to local affairs. I agree with these statements; they are all included in my own views. Let us see what our young friend the Liberal League has to say: "The reconciliation of Ireland to the Empire, and the relief of the Imperial Parliament from its present congestion are objects which must be kept steadily in view, but should be pursued by methods which carry with them step by step the sympathy and support of the British nation." Rather vague, but I quite agree with it. I should like to have seen a little more firmness, more evidence of a master hand in the drafting of that sentence, but I quite agree with it. Its general sentiments quite harmonise with mine. Then there is Mr. Asquith. The Liberal party has to look to him for great and good work now and in the future. He says: "I have not abandoned, and I do not know any Liberal who has, the ends of our Irish policy." None of those expressions justify disunion in our ranks. No man can tell in what form, in what atmosphere, and under what conditions will rise again the question of Irish government in a practical form. For example, everyone knows that the House of Commons is heavily overburdened. You may reform your rules as much as you like, but unless you go in for a great and drastic change the House of Commons will continue to be overburdened with the business it has to transact. Is it not likely, then, that some great proposal for devolution will come to the front?

A Case for Statesmanship.

I ask you to bear in mind points of agreement. Let us be cautious in our disputes. Let us not commit the fatal mistake of formulating our differences with our friends. The solution of the Irish question is not beyond the power of statesmanship. You and I have opinions,

and we are entitled to express them. Differences there must be, but what is statesmanship? Is it not the trained faculty of seeing and weighing facts, of estimating national wants and dangers, and, subject to the relative power of political forces, of deciding how far you can advance safely and effectively on the broad road of national progress? Are we to quarrel among ourselves like a parcel of children who do not know how to agree? I will not believe it; there is no evidence of it here to-night. I say to you, play your part like men; be not unworthy of those who have gone before. Unity is our first necessity. Unity in aim, unity in organisation, unity in action—that alone can succeed; that alone will bring victory to our endeavours.

Vote of Thanks to Mr. Gladstone and Adherence to Liberal Principles.

Dr. R. SPENCE WATSON (ex-President of the National Liberal Federation) proposed the following resolution:—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Mr. Gladstone for his presence and speech to-night; assures him and the Parliamentary leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of the loyal confidence of the Liberal party; cordially endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Bristol, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal party to power whenever the country is next appealed to.”

He remarked that the first section of his resolution spoke of Mr. Gladstone's speech. He ended that speech by asking them to prove themselves worthy of those who had gone before them. He bore a beloved and revered name, and to many of them political life had not been the same since their great leader left them. By his strong, manly, and useful speech that night he had proved himself worthy of him who went before him. The next section of the resolution spoke of the leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament. He (the speaker) need not enlarge upon the merits of the two men—Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—who had served them loyally and well in the dark and troublous days, and whose services they would never forget. They next came to the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings. There were only two of these resolutions upon which he would say a word. The first would be upon education and the Education Bill of the Government, and he wished to endorse every word that had been said about the splendid speech, the perfect speech, which Mr. Acland made that day upon that Bill. That speech would shortly be published, and he begged every man and woman in that great assemblage to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. That speech ought to be the deathblow of the Bill, which aimed at being the deathblow to their only true national schools. What was wanted in this country was a complete system of national education, beginning with the primary schools and ending with the Universities—a system of education under which every form should be open

to every boy and every girl, irrespective of the pocket of the parent, and only requiring one qualification, and that was that the child should be fit to receive the education. If that was what they wanted then this farce of a Bill, with scarcely one word about education in it from beginning to end, was not only a mockery, it was a crime against the nation. The other resolution he would mention was that on the bread-tax, which had been so largely alluded to, and all he would say about that was that he feared that many of the men who spoke upon it had not considered—they did not really know—what that bread-tax really meant. It was an iniquity which struck at the very poorest of the poor. There were men and women there in that hall who knew he was speaking the truth when he said they knew of poor women under such circumstances of need that when they had visited them they found closed shutters and darkened windows in the day time so that the children should not know that day had come and commence crying for the bread that the hard-working mother was unable to purchase. Dr. Watson characterised it as a scandal that any statesman should be found who would say that 13s. a week was enough and to spare for any working man. Why that statesman would give as much as that for a bottle of wine and think no shame. That bread-tax ought, and would if they did their duty, sound the death-knell of this abominable Government. He had said it before, and he said it again—"Accursed be the Government which dared to lay its hand on this article of necessity for the very poorest of the people." Mr. Gladstone had given them good advice. Were they earnest as to the last clause of that resolution? Did they pledge themselves that they would return their own party to power at the next general election? Were they prepared to put their backs into the work at the next general election? They had a golden opportunity as a party, now, if they would only seize it when the occasion came; and, if they meant what they said, depend upon it the doom of the present Government was sealed.

Mr. BIRRELL, K.C., in seconding the resolution, said that living as they did in strange times, they were glad to see the children of great men adhering to great memories. Mr. Gladstone, of necessity, knowing all that he did know, both of their strength, which was undoubted, and of the power of their organisation, which in many places was great, felt himself constrained to address to them not merely words of assurance, not merely words of hope, but words of advice as to their duties in their own homes. He had ventured to suggest that there was a beam in the eye even of the National Liberal Federation. He could only say, as its unworthy president, that he was ready to accept words of advice, words of warning, words of direction when they came as they did on that occasion from a true friend. Let them see what they could do to organise public opinion in every constituency of the country. He could not believe that at the next election there would be in England or Scotland a single constituency left uncontested. The spirit of the people must indeed be dead, if what they had already

been called upon to endure was not enough to make them arise in their wrath, and say there were certain principles so dear to their hearts that there was no sacrifice they would not make in order to see that they were saved from violation and destruction. With regard to the tax on bread, they had had one or two honourable members in the House of Commons, on the Tory side, well-informed and well-instructed men, who knew what they were talking about, and among them Sir Edgar Vincent, a great financier, who distinctly said that no Government in the world would have thought fit to have aroused this commotion for so small a result had they not intended to proceed further with it. And then there was the Education Bill. Why, the one gleam of brightness in their political life during the last twenty years had been seeing the rising in the midst of their great towns these School Board schools. Of all institutions in the country which he would have thought were safest from attack their Board schools were those; and yet they had been selected by the Government for their especial wrath. He believed the country was becoming aroused to this great question, and he was satisfied that in Bristol there was a genuine feeling which it would be the duty of those who were engaged in politics to see was fanned. He hoped all the delegates would take back to their homes a fixed determination to put an end to a Government which had mismanaged everything abroad, and was now threatening to bring ruin and destruction upon the people at home.

Mr. C. E. HOBHOUSE, M.P., speaking in support of the resolution, said that as the sole representative in Parliament of Liberalism in Bristol he tendered his sincere thanks to Mr. Gladstone for that address.

Mr. J. E. BARLOW, M.P., said they recalled the fact that the cheque tax had gone. They must offer renewed energy in the opposition they were offering the Government. He hoped that before the end of their endeavours, if they did not defeat it now, they would repeal the odious impost of the worst Conservative Government that they had had for many years.

Vote of Thanks to the Chairman.

Mr. GLADSTONE moved :—

“That this meeting expresses its best thanks to the president of the Bristol Liberal Federation for his conduct in the chair.”

He remarked that he was much obliged to the speakers to the previous resolution for what they had said, and he thanked Mr. Birrell particularly that he had taken what he had said with such kindness and such good humour when he ventured to make some suggestions about the Federation. He was under some apprehension when he rose to speak, but Mr. Birrell had relieved his fears, and, indeed, had met him perhaps half way. He had said that his

office let him see perhaps the worst side of political life. Perhaps it did. But, on the other hand, perhaps it enabled him to see rather more clearly the best side. It enabled him to know that there were numbers of men in this country who were ready to make any sacrifices for their opinions and for their conscience, who were working day after day for their political faith every year, neither hoping for nor expecting a reward. Such men he was continually brought into contact with, and though the office of a Whip might have disadvantages, it also had the result of giving him most interesting experiences. He should be glad to report to his chief, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the fine temperature in the Bristol political atmosphere, and to say that however hard and strongly they fought the Education Bill and the bread tax he might depend upon it that it would have the hearty concurrence and approval of every man and woman who had attended that great meeting. He earnestly wished he could propose that resolution with the hope that Mr. Townsend would come back to them in the House of Commons. He was so good a supporter and so useful a member in the House of Commons, that he only wished he would come back to them.

Alderman W. HOWELL DAVIES (President of the South Bristol Liberal Association), in seconding the resolution, reminded the meeting that the bread tax had been imposed on the country by a member for Bristol, and he hoped that when the time came Bristol would record its vote unanimously against that tax.

Mr. W. H. B. HOPE (North Somerset) said it appeared to him that the predominant note at the meetings of the Federation in Bristol had been to be "up and at the enemy." The party must do as much as possible by meetings and speeches in season and out of season to turn out this Government, and to bring back into repute the Liberal principles in which they all believed, and which they believed to be the foundation of good government.

The resolution was put to the meeting and carried with cheers, and the Chairman having replied, the great gathering broke up.

Vote of Thanks to the Chairman

Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents.

On Thursday morning, May 16th, the Liberal Secretaries and Agents attending the Bristol meetings were entertained at breakfast at the Royal Hotel on the invitation of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P., the Chief Liberal Whip, and the President of the National Liberal Federation. Mr. Gladstone presided, but Mr. Birrell was not able to be present, having been called back to London. After the breakfast Mrs. Herbert Gladstone took a seat in the gallery to hear the speeches, and a reference to her presence led to an enthusiastic demonstration, which was gracefully acknowledged.

Mr. GLADSTONE said: After the exhaustive and exhausting speeches of the last two days, I begin with the feeling that I must apologise to you for troubling you with more words. At any rate, I feel that a man who after much speaking for two days can make a speech after breakfast on the following morning is a man who can make a speech anywhere. But I wish on my own behalf, and on Mr. Birrell's behalf, to give you a hearty welcome this morning, and to express the hope that this annual gathering will be of much advantage to us all. I regret exceedingly that Mr. Birrell had to leave Bristol last night under pressure of legal business, of which I was very glad to hear, and he wished me to tell you how very sorry he was he was not able to welcome you here this morning in person. Well now, gentlemen, this is more or less, I take it, a business gathering. We are all here for one purpose, for one object, and your object and my object more immediately is the question of organisation. I have often been asked by my friends during the last three years: "Why don't you come out on a platform; why don't you leave your office; why don't you put principle before party—there is a great national issue, why do you spend your time humbugging about in a party office?" Well, gentlemen, it is comparatively easy to take to a platform and to speak your mind. It is not easy when there are great differences of opinion, deep-seated and earnest, to keep a party in that state of efficiency which is necessary for success. I was glad to take up the post which I still occupy. I have conceived it my chief duty to try as well as I can to keep the engine oiled and in good condition in the hope that before long we shall be able to put full steam into her and go ahead. And I don't much like it when the engine driver and the fireman, and the guard and other officials use my coals to throw at each other, and I think that it is our duty at all times, and at all seasons, to discourage such action. I have no doubt, gentlemen, you are as familiar as I am with that well-known English institution, the tug of war. Well now, we are told by some of our friends that when they set up an organisation apart from those usually associated with the party, we must not mind this; that is, it is all for the same object, and that we shall all pull together. Yes, that may

be true ; but let us suppose you have two rival teams at a tug of war, of equal strength and equal weight, and that one side says : " It will be better to have two ends on our side." Though the two ends bear on the centre, everybody knows perfectly well that a single united team at the other end of one rope will haul over the other. Therefore I for my part regret it exceedingly when separate organisations are started ostensibly in alliance, perhaps honestly meant to be in alliance. Still, I regret them, because I know it means a dangerous division of force which must, in the long run, do harm and not good. And I repeat to you, gentlemen, the warning which I ventured to give last night : Beware of all influences which may seek to divide you, from whatsoever motive. Stick to the ship, work for the ship, and it will answer in the long run. Now, gentlemen, there is just one word that I wish to say that I did not say last night. There is much talk about the programme of the Liberal party. We have had it set forth that our efforts are to be limited to certain great questions. But there are one or two points which it seems to me have been omitted by our friends who are so insistent on the limitation of our policy. First of all, you have got to consider the question of labour votes. I don't want to make too much of it. I believe that the best sections of labour men throughout the country recognise that it is to their interest to work heartily and loyally with the Liberal party, but we want to extend their numbers and their influence, and I do hope that we shall be able to make such arrangements under which labour will have greater and fairer opportunities of fighting seats at the next election than they have had before. I welcome the action of the miners in deciding to run candidates, and so far as I am concerned I shall do my utmost to meet them where my opportunities lie in arranging that they shall have a fair contest in certain divisions where their influences ought naturally to be recognised. I hope that more constituencies will follow the excellent example of Derby. The election of Sir Thomas Roe and Mr. Bell has answered admirably, and in Mr. Bell the House of Commons has one of its most useful members. We can well have more such men as Mr. Bell in the House of Commons. But when we think of labour questions and of labour auxiliaries, is it true, as some of our labour friends say, that both political parties are alike, that one is of no more use than the other? There are still ramparts erected between labour and the exercise of their full rights and influence. What of our registration laws? What of that plural vote of which I have had bitter experience—the plural vote which disfranchises dozens, or even scores, of seats which would be Liberal if the contest was limited to those residing in the constituency? What of expenses connected with elections? For my part, I should like to see the legal expenses cut down at least one-half, and more especially those detestable expenses which are always presented by our friends, the returning officers. These things all stand between labour, as I say, and the exercise of its full influence, and are you going to get these things altered by the Conservative party? It is perfectly clear that these things must be dealt with by the Liberal party, and I have

myself insisted for the last ten or fifteen years that it was the interest of all sections of labour to work with the Liberal party for the removal of those ramparts, even if there was no other point of union between us. At any rate, that work has to be done—nobody can deny that—and the only force that can do that work is the force of the Liberal party acting with all the sections of labour. I have wondered sometimes when I have seen the speeches of some of our distinguished Liberal friends in which they insist that all our efforts must be directed to two or three points, and when I do not see these most essential matters mentioned at all I can only explain it by supposing that those illustrious men have not had altogether the humble training which you and I have had in election matters, that they do not really know the material, though perhaps rather humble, difficulties of the party, and that it is not from lack of goodwill but from lack, perhaps, of a little necessary elementary knowledge that these matters are left aside from the ken of very illustrious persons. I say that you can do a great deal to help forward the Liberal cause. You can do a great deal, each one of you, to check fissiparous influences. You can do a great deal to make the path of labour representation somewhat easier—each one of you in your own divisions or counties. I hope and believe that you will all do everything that lies in your power to produce the success which we hope will soon crown our efforts. Gentlemen, we have had great meetings here, but great meetings are not enough. We must have better work in the constituencies—not all the constituencies; for instance, in West Leeds it is all right, and in other divisions that I know of, but we must have better work in a great number of constituencies. Man after man comes to me and says, “I am ready to be a candidate.” I say, “Very well; there’s such and such a constituency”; and he asks, “What has that constituency to offer?” I turn up its record for 1885-6, 1892-5, and 1900, a sorry record of defeat or of no contest attempted. I say with all the persuasiveness in my power, “This constituency has great possibilities about it. Of course, it has never returned a Liberal candidate yet, but observe how the register has increased; working men in great numbers have come in; it is a great opportunity for bringing them in, and if you bring them we shall win.” “Well,” he says, “that is all right; what is the organisation? Is there an association? is there a Liberal agent?” And I have to say, “Oh, no; but of course there will be if you will go down. What they want is a candidate, and as soon as they get a candidate they will have an association, and no doubt you will provide them with an agent.” Well, the flesh is weak, and I am bound to say that prospects of that sort do not seem to sufficiently attract the gentlemen who offer their services. There are hundreds—ay, hundreds—of constituencies that ought to put their houses in order. I do not say it should be on the scale of a palace or mansion; but if it be a cottage, provided it is well equipped according to their powers, there is a place to go to, a place to work from, friends to work with, men who are keen, who are collected, organised. Then

your candidate can go and look for himself, and he finds men in earnest, he finds men ready. Then, of course, he will be much better able and much more ready to throw himself into the work, to take up the constituency and fight it, not for a few months, but for years, perhaps again and again, until the constituency is won. We can take a good lesson from our opponents in this respect. They know how to sit down in a constituency and how to work it. Many of us know from bitter experience how persistently they do it. They took a lesson in the old days out of our book, and we have to take a lesson out of their book now, and no one can do more to help matters on than you, each in his own way, each in his own place. I have said nearly all I have to say. I hope we shall go from Bristol strengthened and refreshed, and not allow all that has been done to pass away into the air, and to be of no effect. I think there is much to encourage us. I think we ought really to feel that things are moving forward a bit, and as the country is getting more and more tired of this Government, so it is looking with more hope to the future of the Liberal party. I thank you for coming this morning, and I hope you feel that your visit to Bristol is not, and will not be, in vain.

Dr. SPENCE WATSON (Ex-President of the Federation) said that many of the difficulties of the Liberal party might be surmounted by united action. In his own north country they lost some of the rich men of the party who contributed largely to their funds, but they had secured more subscribers amongst the working-men, with the result that they had very nearly doubled their income. He thought the education question ought to bring the great mass of working-men to the Liberal side. They were suffering from the competition of other nations, and wanted all the educational facilities we could have. They wanted an education that would be better not only for the individual but for the whole nation. The chances of the Liberal party throughout the country depended on unity, and, if they were united in their efforts, now was the time to do great things. He had had a great many years' experience of political work, but he never knew a more hopeful period than the present time. They must have their hearts and eyes set upon the great principles of Liberalism, and if they would only fight next time as they never fought before, and see that their machinery was in good effective order, they would give a good account of their enemies.

Mr. EDWARD EVANS, Junior (Chairman of Committee of the Federation), was next called upon. He did not think there ever was a time when the party ought to be more united, and he believed the rank and file were thoroughly united. With regard to outside organisations he did not fear their influence perhaps so much as some did. At any rate he felt that if they only remained united they would succeed. After appealing for support to the agents' benevolent fund, Mr. Evans said he considered that the Bristol meetings of the Federation had been amongst the most successful they had held, not only in

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the unity of purpose that had been evidenced, but in the excellence of the speeches, especially those of Mr. Acland and of Mr. Gladstone. On behalf of the executive committee he thanked the Bristol friends for their hospitality and kindness.

Mr. HUDSON, in response to calls, said that nobody had done so much to pull the Liberal party together in the last few months as his Majesty's Government, and whilst thanking everybody they might as well thank them. These Bristol meetings had been very encouraging. Mr. Gladstone's advice to them was of the best, and the sooner they began work in earnest the sooner they would reap their reward.

Mr. HENDERSON (Gateshead) moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Birrell for their hospitality.

Mr. W. ARNOLD (Gloucester) seconded the resolution, which was adopted with applause.

Mr. GLADSTONE, in his reply, said that he hoped that Mr. Henderson would before long blossom out again as a candidate for Parliament. Many good men were not successful last time. He agreed with a previous speaker that the political merits of the West of England had been rather ignored on this occasion, and that the fight in the South-West of England was one of the most redeeming points at the last general election. It was full of hope, and he and those with whom he was associated would pay very close attention to every constituency in the South-West that was fought or was fought unsuccessfully at the last election. A great deal ought to be done to improve the position of the Liberal agents in this country. They all made great sacrifices for the Liberal party, doing persistent and valued work, which received most imperfect remuneration. For his part he would spare no effort to improve that position so far as he could, and at all times they might depend on him for sympathy, and he hoped and trusted that in the future they would be able to get more practical support, more material support, from him than they had had in the past.

This concluded the functions of the Federation.

OTHER GATHERINGS.

In addition to the Meetings reported in the preceding pages, the following gatherings were held. Considerations of space prevent them being more than merely chronicled.

Monday, May 12th.

The Ninth Annual Meeting of the Society of Certificated and Associated Liberal Agents was held at the Royal Hotel. Previous to the Meeting the Agents of the Western District Branch of the Society entertained their colleagues at Tea, and in the evening a successful Smoking Concert and Conversazione was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Russell Rea, M.P. (Gloucester).

Tuesday, May 13th.

The Board of Management of the Gladstone Benevolent Fund for Liberal Agents met at the Royal Hotel on the morning of this day.

In the evening a Reception was held at the Colston Hall by the President and Officers of the Bristol Liberal Federation. Upwards of 3,000 guests were present, including the Members of Parliament, Delegates and other representative Liberals attending the meetings, and Members of the local Liberal Associations. Mr. Alderman Townsend (President of the Bristol Liberal Federation) extended a cordial welcome to the visitors to Bristol, and speeches were also delivered by Mr. Howell Davies and Sir Herbert Ashman (Vice-Presidents) and Mr. Birrell (President of the National Liberal Federation).

Wednesday, May 14th.

A Public Meeting of Liberal Women was held in the Lesser Colston Hall, under the joint auspices of the Bristol Women's Liberal Associations and the Women's Liberal Federation. Miss Priestman presided, and among the speakers were Lady Aberdeen, Miss A. Leigh Browne, Mrs. Corrie Grant, Mrs. Ramsey, Mrs. L. B. Swann, Dr. Spence Watson, Mr. W. S. Clark (Street), Rev. Hugh Wallace, Rev. R. Lyttle, and Mr. C. H. Roberts.

At the conclusion of the great Meeting in the Colston Hall a Smoking Concert was held at the Liberal Club, Corn Street, under the chairmanship of Mr. J. W. Arrowsmith. Mr. Gladstone was present, and there was a crowded attendance. In the interval the Chairman expressed his pleasure at introducing Mr. Gladstone to the Members for the first time since his election as their President. Mr. Gladstone then addressed the gathering.