

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND THE WAR.**

BY WILLIAM LAWSON, LL.D.

[Read November 24th, 1916.]

**Introductory.**

My first duty on occupying the chair is to return my best thanks to the Society for electing me to the office of President for this, the 70th Session of its existence. I was elected a Member of the Society on January 31st, 1882. Dr. Neilson Hancock was then the President. The title of the paper read on that evening by Mr. John Ferguson was "The present position of the Irish National School Teachers as regards salaries, pensions and residences." At the present day the question of the teachers' salaries is occupying public attention, and a demand is made for an increase, especially in the case of women teachers. I may have something to say later on in this Session upon this subject—Education in our National Schools, which is one of the social problems which will have to be dealt with in the future.

On June 24th, 1884, I was elected a Member of the Council, and on January 20th, 1893, I was elected one of the Honorary Secretaries, my colleagues then being W. F. Bailey, now Mr. Commissioner Bailey, and Jonathan Pim, now Mr. Justice Pim. I held that office up to the meeting of the Society in June last. It is usual to select a President from one of the Vice-Presidents, so it is an exceptional honour to promote me direct to the Presidential Chair. One of our Honorary Secretaries, Dr. Ninian Falkiner, Superintendent of the Statistical Branch of the General Register Office, has since the commencement of the war been on Army Medical duty in England, and the work has been carried on by Mr. Herbert Wood and myself. It devolves on the Society to elect someone in my place.

Many changes have taken place in Ireland since the year 1882; the most notable are the system of Fixity of Tenure and Fair Rents, established by the Land Act of 1881, the conversion of tenants into purchasers by the Land Purchase Acts, the introduction of Local Government by the Act of 1898, the establishment of the Congested Districts Board, and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. This Society has had considerable influence, by its papers and discussions, in focussing public opinion and bringing about these and other reforms, and it may be of interest to give a brief sketch of the origin and work of the Society, which I take from a leaflet which was issued in 1910:—

On November 23rd, 1847, at a meeting held at the Royal Irish Academy, under the presidency of His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin (Dr Whately), it was resolved on the motion of Captain Larcom, R.E. (afterwards Sir Thomas Larcom, Bart.), seconded by Professor (afterwards Judge) Longfield, "that a Society be established in Dublin for promoting the study of Statistical and Economical Science to be called the Dublin Statistical Society." This Society was founded under pressure of the serious economic problems which were then calling for solution, and it was hoped that by a thorough scientific study of the existing conditions some remedy might be found to alleviate the evils which were having such a disastrous effect upon the country. Dr. Neilson Hancock and Mr. J. A. Lawson (afterwards Mr. Justice Lawson) were the first Honorary Secretaries of the Society. Dr. Hancock may be said to have been the founder of the Society, as the preliminary meeting was held in his room in Trinity College. He was at the time Whately Professor of Political Economy in the University of Dublin, which office Mr. Lawson had also filled. There were 81 original members, which number was increased to 110 before the end of the first session.

In the year 1882, after the meeting in Dublin in the previous autumn of the National Association for the promotion of Social Science, it was resolved to extend the sphere of the Society's activity to all questions of Social Science, and the name of the Society was changed to its present title of "The Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland." With such an extended outlook, the Society has found no lack of subjects of immediate and pressing interest to discuss, amongst which may be noted Poor Law Relief, boarding out of pauper children, co-operative societies, education, necessity of State provision for the education of the deaf, dumb, blind, and imbecile, factory legis-

lation, connection between disease and over-crowding, statistics of crime, strikes, and trades unions, savings banks, plans for extinction of the National Debt, decimal coinage and the metric system, taxation of Ireland, private bill legislation, amendment of the laws of Landlord and Tenant, Land Purchase, Forestry, Purchase of Railways, and many others dealing with the social and economic condition of the country.

The system of treating such subjects in a calm and scientific spirit, with a rigorous exclusion of party politics, has been the means of enlightening public opinion and frequently of influencing legislation. Special committees can be appointed for promoting the investigation of any particular subject.

The Society has also been of assistance in aiding the Trustees of the Barrington Lecture Fund to choose efficient lecturers to visit the towns of Ireland and deliver lectures on Political Economy.

#### **Proceedings of the Society since the Commencement of the War.**

It was suggested that the operations of the Society should be suspended during the war, but the Council were of opinion that the war called for the consideration of all manner of economic questions, e.g., public expenditure, private thrift, increase of home produce, diminished dependence upon foreign supplies, and the like, and that those of us who were debarred by age, physical infirmity, or other good cause, from taking an active part in the war, would be well employed in discussing these and kindred questions, and endeavouring by clear thinking to create a sound public opinion in this country. To quote from the recent work of a well-known Irish author: "What too many people in Ireland mistake for thoughts are feelings. It is enough for them to vent like or dislike, inherited prejudices or passions, and they think that when they have expressed feelings they have given utterance to thoughts."

Mr. Stanuell, our President, read two interesting addresses, one on November 13, 1914, on "The effect of the War upon Irish Agriculture," and the second on November 19, 1915, on "The Example of Belgium—A possible effect of the war upon Ireland."

In these addresses he advocated the increase of tillage, including foodstuffs for cattle, a dead meat trade with England, and the utilisation of by-products commonly called offal, instead of exporting fat cattle and stores; he showed how Belgium by industry, intensive culture, co-operation,

and cheap transport. had become self-supporting, and held it up as an example which Ireland might follow. Professor Oldham read two very interesting papers on "The Finance of the War, and the Economic Interests involved in it." Professor McWeeney, our great authority on Bacteriology, contributed a very valuable paper on "Immunity against Infectious Diseases with special reference to Anti-Typhoid Inoculation." This paper was reprinted as a pamphlet and widely circulated amongst members of the R.A.M.C., and others.

Mr. Doyle, Assistant Registrar-General, and our Honorary Treasurer, in a paper on "Housing" discussed the methods to be adopted for the improvement of working-class dwellings in cities, a subject which is ever present to us in Dublin.

Mr. Shannon Millin dealt with another pressing subject, "Child Life as a National Asset," and Mr. Arthur Williamson, Principal of the Rathmines School of Commerce, concluded last session in June with a very interesting paper on "Post-War Functions of Commercial Education." This paper was to have been read on April 28th, but, owing to the Sinn Fein Rising, no meeting could take place at 93 Stephen's Green. I learned afterwards that our President, Mr. Stanuell, was courageous enough to go to the place of meeting, and returned home safely. It will thus be seen that though our meetings in 1915 and 1916 were fewer owing to the war, the subjects discussed were of prime importance.

#### **Proceedings at British Association at Newcastle.**

In carrying on during the war we have only followed the examples of the Royal Statistical Society in London and of The British Association for the Advancement of Science, with both of which we are in correspondence. At the meetings of the Association at Manchester in 1915, and at Newcastle in 1916, which I attended as a delegate of our Society, many interesting questions bearing on the war formed the subject of the proceedings of Section F. (Economic Science and Statistics). The greater part of the transactions of this Section at Manchester in 1915 were published in book form by the authority of the Council under the title "Credit, Industry, and the War," edited by Professor Kirkaldy (London, Pitman, 1915). The proceedings of the Section in Newcastle were opened by an address from Professor Kirkaldy, entitled "Some Thoughts on Reconstruction after the War." This was followed by the presentation of a Report on "Means for

promotion of Industrial Harmony," in which Professor Scott, Sir Hugh Bell, Lord Grey, Mr. Aneurin Williams, Mr. Jackson and others took part. Professor Kirkaldy's Address, and this Report, entitled "Industrial Unrest," will be found in a book published by the authority of the Council, entitled "Labour, Finance, and the War" (Pitman, 1916). The following is an abstract of the Report of the Committee:—

**Industrial Unrest.—Abstract of the Report of the Committee,** consisting of Professor A. W. Kirkaldy (Chairman), Mr. E. J. W. Jackson (Secretary), the Rt. Hon. Charles Booth, the Rt. Hon. C. W. Bowerman, Sir Hugh Bell, Sir C. W. Macara, the Ven. Archdeacon Cunningham, Professors S. J. Chapman, E. C. K. Gonner, W. R. Scott, and Messrs. S. Ball, H. Gosling, Howard Heaton, and Pickup Holden.

The Report was drawn up in three sections:—

- A. The causes of industrial unrest.
- B. Attempts at diminishing industrial unrest.
- C. Recommendations.

#### A. Causes.

1. The desire for a higher standard of living.
2. The desire of workpeople to exercise a greater control over their lives, and to have some determining will as to conditions of work.
3. The uncertainty of regular employment.
4. The monotony in employment.
5. Suspicion and want of knowledge of economic conditions.
6. The complaint that some labour is irregular and less satisfactory.
7. The effects of war measures.

#### B. Attempts at Diminishing Industrial Unrest.

These include:—

1. Conciliation and Arbitration Boards.
2. Arbitration (a) Voluntary.  
(b) Compulsory.
3. Profit-sharing and co-partnership.
4. Co-operation.

#### C. Recommendations.

The aim of this investigation was to discover certain general principles which must underlie an harmonious

economic organisation. Before the problems of industrial unrest can be solved, these principles must be applied to particular industries. With their special application this Committee has not dealt, and the recommendations put forward include only broad principles possible of wide application.

They may be divided into groups as they concern:—

1. The general attitude and outlook of employers and workmen.
  2. The machinery for dealing with disputes.
  3. The organisation of industry.
  4. Post-war arrangements.
1. (i) That there should be greater frankness between employers and workpeople, and that they should discuss industrial matters together or through duly accredited representatives.
  - (ii) That employers should consider the cost of labour, and not the wages earned by individual workmen.
  - (iii) That the fundamental facts and principles of industrial and economic life should be known by both.
2. (i) That employers and workpeople should improve their organisations with a view to determining jointly the conditions under which industries should be carried on.
  - (ii) That in each industry permanent boards or committees be set up to consider all matters of common interest.
  - (iii) That there be a joint National Board to which local boards could refer unsettled disputes.
3. (i) That the necessity for co-operation between employers and employed be recognised by both.
  - (ii) That employers establish:—
    - (a) Associations of one trade in a given district.
    - (b) National Associations of one Trade.
    - (c) Local Federations of Trades.
    - (d) National Federations of Trades.
 ((b) and (d) being organised under a system of representation.) That workpeople establish unions and federations corresponding to the above.

- (iii) From the two National Federations there be elected an Industrial Council.
  - (iv) That the State give recognition to approved associations, unions, and federations under carefully devised regulations, the State being the representative of the consumer and of the community.
- 4 (i) On demobilisation, that district boards of really practical men be established to consider and adjust difficulties, especially as to replacement in industry of men who have joined the Forces.
- (ii) As to agreements and regulations in abeyance for the period of the War. The industrial community will have an opportunity for considerable reconstruction. The new organisation suggested should take this in hand.

On the second day the Section was engaged in the consideration and discussion of a Report on the replacement of men by women in industry, of which the following is an abstract:—

**Replacement of Men by Women in Industry.—Abstract of the Report of the Committee,** consisting of Professor W. R. Scott (Chairman), Mr. J. Cunnison (Secretary), Miss Ashley, The Rt. Hon. C. W. Bowerman, Professor S. J. Chapman, Ven. Archdeacon Cunningham, Mr. W. J. Davis, Professor E. C. K. Gonner, and Mr. St. G. Heath.

The activity of the Ministry of Munitions, the schemes for the "dilution of labour," and the scarcity of skilled male labour have brought about in the second year of the war a marked development in the demand for female labour. At the present time (July, 1916) over half a million women have replaced men who have left their occupations for more urgent national service.

The women who have taken the men's places have for the most part had previous industrial experience, though seldom (in industry proper) of the kind of work they are now doing. Many of them are married women, or single women transferred from other occupations. Generally the supply has been drawn from the neighbourhood, but some of the munitions establishments have attracted women from a wide geographical area, not always limited to the British Isles.

Besides the employment of women on trams and rail-

ways, in banks, and as postal servants (positions open to the public view), replacement has occurred through the whole of industry. Few women are to be found taking the place of highly skilled men; but large numbers have released the unskilled and those termed, in engineering, "semi-skilled." But when the work of the men involved a degree of skill and experience which women seldom possess, new machinery of a more automatic kind has been introduced (sometimes to such an extent as almost to transform an industry), and subdivision of processes has changed highly skilled work into a series of repetition operations which can be accomplished by relatively untrained workers. This has to be borne in mind when women are stated to be doing the work of skilled men.

The success of the women on these repetition processes is marked. They learn quickly; they are good time-keepers; they have, so far at least, stood the strain of long hours extremely well, and their manual dexterity enables them to achieve good results in the way of output on repetitive processes. On work demanding greater judgment and adaptability the evidence of their success is not so great; but their industrial training has been short.

For some time the employment of women on men's processes was opposed by Trade Unions, which still in some industries bring forward strong objections to replacement. But in the most important industries agreements have been reached between men and employers as to the conditions on which replacement may be carried out during the period of the war. Those conditions usually include an agreement as to women's wage-rates and a guarantee of the re-employment of the men replaced.

The wages of women in war-time have been influenced by the fixing of a minimum for certain kinds of munition workers in certain classes of munitions establishments; by the competition of munitions with other industries in the demand for female labour; by the pressure of the Trade Unions; and by the general rise in prices. The fact that even in districts where the competition of munitions is keenest the wage-rates for women in other industries, on processes involving similar skill and exertion, have not always risen to the munition level, suggests that the withdrawal of the minimum regulation twelve months after the war will lead to a fall in women's wages. But it is unlikely that they will fall to their general pre-war level.

The fact that not a great proportion of the women war workers were previously occupied suggests that after the war the problem of a large surplus of women may not be so serious as has been feared. The married women are for the most part in industry only for the period of the war; and inquiry among women workers generally shows that many of them have no desire to remain in competition with men. But this involves the question of the increased demand for women on repetitive processes; and if, as seems likely, the subdivision of processes and the highly automatic machinery introduced owing to war conditions have come to stay, there may be a change in the relative demand for skilled and for unskilled labour to the disadvantage of the former.

The Report in full will be found in the book to which I have just referred and well deserves persusal.

The third day was devoted to the consideration and discussion of a Report on the Effects of the War on Credit, Currency and Finance. It dealt with Credit, Currency, Prices, Foreign Exchanges, Economy, Individual and National, and War Taxation and Finance. I take the following on the last two subjects from the Abstract. The Report in full will be found in the book I have referred to.

#### VI. Economy, Individual and National.

There are various types of saving which are of unequal value to the nation. Mistakes arise from thinking in terms of money. We ought to think "in terms of commodities." It is clear that the best saving is in imported goods; next in goods which "are produced under conditions of diminishing return"—e.g., "saving in the use of wool, coal, food of all kinds, cotton, etc., is highly beneficial." Economy in public expenditure is "even more necessary."

#### VII. War Taxation and Finance.

Report discusses relative advantages of financing war by loans and by taxation. It is a matter of some doubt whether much additional revenue can be obtained by further taxation of commodities except petrol and spirits. If further revenue is required it must be obtained by a more scientific and equitable income-tax. At present taxation of working-classes is based on their consumption of necessaries (apart from tobacco and intoxicants); canon of "ability to pay" ignored. Amount of tax paid by working man through sugar, tea, and other duties depends on size of his family and not of his income.

Conclusion.—Contributions required from working-classes should be taken by income-tax on wages collected through the employer at time of payment

### Irish Problems.

The social problems which press for consideration in Ireland, and especially in Dublin, are so numerous that I can only deal briefly with some of them, but in the consideration of them it is well to bear in mind the suggestions contained in these Reports. Industrial Unrest, as it is termed, has existed and exists in this country, and especially in Dublin, but from the different circumstances which prevail it is not so large a question as in England. Dublin has been the scene of many conflicts between labour and capital resulting in strikes, but these have for the most part been strikes of unskilled labourers engaged in the work of distribution or transport, not of skilled labourers engaged in the work of production, as in England. We have lately had a strike in the building trade, which delayed for a considerable time such operations as could go on during the war, for now no building costing over £500 can be erected without the consent of the Ministry of Munitions. The bakers threaten us with a strike, and the latest form of strike is that of the gravediggers at Glasnevin. As I write there seems a prospect of a settlement in the case of the bakers, as the Board of Trade has, under the powers conferred by the Conciliation Act, 1896, appointed a person to act as conciliator. That Act is called "An Act to make better provision for the preservation and settlement of trade disputes" S. 1 provides for the registration of Conciliation Boards constituted for the purpose of settling disputes between employers and workmen by conciliation or arbitration. S. 2, empowers the Board of Trade, when a difference exists *or is apprehended* between an employer and workmen, or between different classes of workmen (a) To enquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference; (b) to bring about a meeting of the parties or their representatives under the presidency of a chairman agreed on or nominated by the Board with a view to an amicable settlement of the difference; (c) on the application of either party to appoint a person to act as conciliator, or (d) on the application of both parties to appoint an arbitrator.

(2) The conciliator is to inquire into the causes and circumstances of the difference by communication with the parties, and otherwise endeavour to bring about a settlement of the difference, and report his proceedings to the Board of Trade. The words "*or is apprehended*" are im-

portant as they enable the Board to intervene before a difference exists. The Munitions of War Act, 1915, provides for the settlement of differences in respect of employment on munition work and makes the award on any settlement binding on employers and employed, and imposes a penalty for failing to comply with the award. It also prohibits lock-outs or strikes in connection with such differences, unless the difference has been reported to the Board of Trade, and 21 days have elapsed since the date of the report, and the difference has not during that time been referred by the Board of Trade for settlement, and imposes a penalty for acting in contravention of this enactment.

The Report on Industrial Unrest comments on this introduction of compulsory arbitration, and affirms that on the whole both labour and capital are strongly opposed to the principle, though they accepted its introduction as an emergency measure during the war.

A few years ago we had a strike among railway workers, following on a railway strike in England, which was terminated by Government intervention, whereas the strike on our railways came to an end without any such intervention. The most serious strikes in Dublin have been of quay labourers and carters, by which the unloading of ships and the transport of goods were held up with serious loss, not only to shipowners and merchants, but to the public, and, of course, to be labourers themselves.

Employment at docks and quays is fluctuating, and especially so in Dublin, and the uncertainty of regular employment conduces to industrial unrest. Unskilled labour unfortunately prevails to a large extent in Dublin, and how to improve the condition of this class is one of the most serious problems we have to deal with, and try to find some solution of it, if there be one. A very able contribution to this subject was made by Mr. Chart in a paper entitled "Unskilled Labour in Dublin, its Housing and Living Conditions," on March 6, 1914, which will be found in volume xiii. of the Society's Journal, p. 160. He there states that about 24,000 men, more than a quarter of the adult male population, were engaged in unskilled labour. He points out that quay labour has been decasualised in Liverpool, thus removing one great cause of unemployment. I may add that unemployed insurance might assist also in this connection. Technical education and manufacturing industries Mr. Chart suggests as partial remedies, but there is no doubt that the main thing to be attempted is to improve the housing and living conditions of this class of labourers. A good indication of the industrial position of the City and of the opportunities of em-

ployment for the working classes is contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the Local Government Board to inquire into the housing conditions of the working classes in the city. I quote from p 8—"Dublin does not lend itself to comparison with the large manufacturing centres of the United Kingdom. There is no predominating industry affording employment to a large portion of its population; and, apart from brewing, distilling, the manufacture of soda water and biscuits, it has no special trades of its own, the other trades carried on being mainly those which are essential to supply the requirements of every community." It appears from the Table given on page 8 of that Report that of the heads of the 25,822 families occupying the 5,322 tenement houses in the city only 4,573 are working at rates regulated by Trades Unions, and 8,246 at wages not regulated by Trades Unions. 1,542 are labourers, 1,195 charwomen, 906 old age pensioners, owners 639, so that the earnings of the majority are likely to be of the lowest. The figures supplied by the Corporation show that 20,108 families occupy one-roomed dwellings, or 78 per cent. of the entire lettings; and of this number of families, 12,042 families consisting of 73,973 persons occupy one room, which gives an average number of occupants per room for these 12,042 families of 6.1.

The want of sufficient sanitary accommodation for these tenement houses is notorious. The Corporation Bye-laws provide that there is to be one water-closet for 12 persons, a very insufficient requirement; but it appears from the return contained in Appendix XXV. of the Report that of the 5,322 tenement houses, 1,161 have only one water-closet to 20 or more persons. This Report, as regards Tenement Houses, was considered by a Committee of this Society, and its Report was read on March 27th, 1914, and will be found in Vol. XIII., p. 176. The consideration of schemes for building new dwellings was deferred until the Appendix to the Report was published, which took place later in the year. Meantime the War came, and with it the necessity for economy in public as well as personal expenditure, and our Committee did not further consider to Report as regards the erection of new dwellings.

The Returns contained in Appendix X. of the Report show an annual loss on all the Building Schemes, save one, which loss has to be charged to the rates, the deficit in 1913 in the case of the Foley Street Dwellings amounting to £2,389 18s. 4d.; and yet the Corporation are proceeding with the additional schemes referred to in the Report. Not being able, owing to the war, to obtain a loan from the

Board of Works, they have arranged to borrow a large sum from American lenders at a high rate of interest to carry out two other schemes, at Fairbrothers' Fields and on the McCaffrey Estate. These schemes in all probability will result in a further loss and burden on the rates, already too high, the average rate for the past ten years having been 10/5 for the North Side and 10/1 for the South. The Report states that the Corporation schemes are incomplete and too scattered, as they often deal with small areas when larger ones could have been undertaken with more advantage, and suggests building on the outskirts, and the submission to the Local Government Board of a complete scheme of housing for the working classes in the city. It recognises the economic objection to the municipality undertaking building on so extensive a scale, but suggests that as the legislature has sanctioned the making of grants to build houses for rural labourers, it should do the same for urban workmen. The Dublin Chamber of Commerce has appointed a Housing Reform Committee to carry out reforms on the lines of the Report, and it is to be hoped that it may influence the Corporation to carry out the recommendations of that Report. What is wanted at present is a stringent enforcement of the Bye-laws, the closing of houses unfit for habitation by Magistrate's order, and the enforcement of penalties for nuisance as defined by the Public Health Act, 1878, which provides that any house, or part of a house, so overcrowded as to be dangerous or injurious to the inmates is deemed to be a nuisance. One-roomed tenements should be abolished as far as possible, and the house converted into flats, with separate sanitary conveniences for each flat. Illustrations showing how this can be done were shown on the plans submitted by Mr. Fisher Unwin at a lecture on "A Town Plan for Dublin," delivered by him on November 17th, 1916. These plans were the work of competitors for a prize offered by Lord Aberdeen for the best Town Planning Scheme for Dublin, and which was awarded to Professor Abercromby, of Liverpool. They are to be exhibited in some place accessible to the citizens. Vistas of new streets, new railways, with a central station, new public buildings and gardens, were thrown upon the screen. They are intended only as suggestions of what might be done to improve and beautify the city. They must, however, be dismissed as Utopian. The designs for small houses and cottages to be built on the outskirts with gardens and open spaces should be of great use in carrying out a scheme such as suggested by the Report. A visit to the neighbourhood of London or Liverpool will show what has been done in the establish-

ment of Garden Cities close to large towns. Pressure should be brought to bear on owners of tenement houses to put them in repair, and convert them into flats with proper sanitary conveniences, or the Corporation might take over the best of them, following the example of the Social Service Societies referred to in the Report, and remodel them. This has been done in Glasgow.

### **Intemperance.**

This is another social evil which calls for treatment, and its prevalence is not unconnected with the housing question, for it is too often found that drink is the cause of the poverty of the occupiers of tenements. Prohibition of the sale of drink is advocated in some quarters, but it is not a practical policy; much, however, could be done by reducing the number of public-houses in our towns, and in Dublin in particular, and in improving those that are left, and making them places for the sale of food as well as of drink. This, of course, involves legislation, the nature of which has often been pointed out in and out of this Society, but it is one of those post-war problems that will demand attention. Meantime, the opportunities of drinking have been lessened by the restriction of the hours of opening public-houses, which have been made from time to time during the war.

### **Rural Problems.**

The most pressing of these is to increase the production of food, and to make the country less dependent on supplies from abroad. This means increase of tillage, the need of which has already been adverted to. This need is accentuated by the regulations just authorised to be made by the Board of Trade with regard to food supplies. It is, however, difficult to get the Irish farmer to change his habits and his method of using his land. It was said that when he was converted from a tenant into an owner, the magic of proprietorship would induce him to till the soil more than before, and to get as much out of it as he could. As a general rule, this anticipation has not been realised. It is less trouble to keep land in grass, and to meadow or graze it. The Co-operative movement initiated by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society has done a good work, and the operations of the Congested District Board in the Congested Districts, and the Food Production Campaign initiated by the Department of Agriculture in 1915, have shown what can be done in this way. The Irish farmer is now, owing to the war, getting high prices

for his live stock and for his produce. He is not affected as the English farmer is by the withdrawal of labourers for active service. Co-operation is necessary to ensure cheap transit and a good return for his produce. If more labour is required by individual farmers, it may be obtained from the surplus population of our towns, which has been increasing from time to time, while the rural population has been diminishing, and especially by the employment of women. This would tend to ease the housing and living and conditions of workers in towns, and improve the position of those who continued to live there. An example as regards this last has been set in England, where women are largely employed upon the land, as well as in the towns.

### Women Workers and the War.

This gives me an opportunity of referring to the question dealt with by the Report of the British Association, an extract of which I have given, namely, *The Replacement of Men by Women in Industry by reason of the War.*

In the first two or three months of the war, owing to a severe industrial depression, there was a falling-off of the number of women employed in industrial occupations, and it was not till April, 1915, that the figures for female employment reached the pre-war level. Three circumstances came to their aid—(1) the Government demand for great quantities of Army clothing, food, leather, etc.; (2) the demand for munitions; and (3) the growing demand that women should undertake men's work, which was followed by a relaxation of Trade Union rules.

By the beginning of 1916 practically the whole of the easily available reserve of female labour had been drained, and scarcity of women began to be reported in many industries, particularly in those which, in ordinary times, are the special field of women's employment.

In July, 1914, the number of occupied women in the United Kingdom, as estimated from Board of Trade returns, was 5,020,000. In mid-April, 1916, the number had risen to 5,490,000, an increase of 470,000 in twenty-one months of war. This increase, compared with what the normal increase in that time would have been, calculated according to the Census Returns for 1901 and 1911, viz. : 94,830, is not all due to new workers. Probably fewer women married, certainly fewer women retired from industry on marriage, and former workers, who had retired from industry on marriage, returned for the period of the war. This increase of 470,000 is made up of non-industrial, 182,000; industrial, 288,000. It appears from the above Census

Returns that, while there was in the ten years, 1901-1911, an increase in most groups of industry, there was in that period a decrease in domestic services, agriculture, and clothing. The decline in domestic services and in agriculture continued during the war, the former from 1,695,000 in July, 1914, to 1,593,000 in April, 1916, and the latter from 160,000 to 130,000 for the same dates. But a comparison of the numbers in agriculture in April, 1914, and April, 1916, shows an increase of 37,000 in the two years, and the last Board of Trade Return shows a further increase of 66,000 between April and July, 1916. (See Table below). In clothing trades there is an increase; but there is a decrease in the printing and allied trades, caused by a decreased demand for labour consequent on the restricted supply of paper, and by slackness in the publishing trade. In April, 1916, it was estimated that 523,000 women were directly replacing men, and that 737,000 women were replacing the men either directly or indirectly. There is no contradiction between this figure and the figure 470,000 given above as the net increase in the number of employed women since the beginning of the war.

The Report, from which I have taken this information, contains detailed reports based on evidence collected by investigators in London, Birmingham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Glasgow, and other cities, and well deserves perusal. The Report points out that there are certain cases in which women are taking up the exact work which the men have left, *e.g.*, women are acting as 'bus and tram conductors, taxi-drivers, ticket collectors on the railways, and postmen. These cases happen to be open to public view, and are obviously simple, direct replacement, and give the impression that women have generally stepped into the men's places. Within industry proper, however, the degrees of replacement are many, and, economically the degree of replacement is important as bearing on the position of female labour after the war.

The following table issued by the Employment Department of the Board of Trade shows the further increase up to July, 1916. It does not include such occupations as nursing the sick and wounded, small dressmaking establishments, and domestic service. Returns of women engaged in nursing the wounded are only available to the end of May, 1916, and since then have, of course, largely increased. Then the total was 30,000. Of these, roughly, 9,000 were employed by the War Office, Admiralty, or in Territorial General Hospitals; 21,000 by the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John, of whom 10,000 were voluntary workers.

NUMBERS OF WOMEN DIRECTLY REPLACING MEN IN THE MAIN  
OCCUPATIONS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

OCCUPATIONS.	Estimated Number of Women employed, July, 1914.	Number of Women reported by Employers as directly replacing Males.		Percentage of Replacement (Numbers employed in July, 1914—100).	
		April, 1916	July, 1916.	April, 1916.	July, 1916.
Industrial occupations ..	2,117,000	213,000	263,000	10·1	12 4
Commercial Occupations ..	454,000	152,000	201,000	33 6	44·2
Professional Occupations ..	67,500	12,000	15,000	18 4	21 8
Banking and Finance ..	9,500	21,000	26,000	219·0	270·1
Hotels, publichouses, .. cinemas, theatres, &c. ..	175,000	27,000	31,000	15·5	17 7
Agriculture (Great Britain) ..	130,000	37,000	66,000	28 5	50·8
Transport (not municipal) ..	15,000	24,000	31,000	160 0	209·3
Civil Service ..	66,000	30,000	38,000	46·2	57·6
Arsenals, Dockyards, &c. ..	2,000	13,000	69,000	674 0	3,440·0
Local Government (including teachers and transport workers under municipal authorities) ..	184,000	18,000	26,000	10 0	14·2
<b>TOTAL .. ..</b>	<b>3,220,000</b>	<b>547,000</b>	<b>766,000</b>	<b>17·0</b>	<b>23·8</b>

An interesting publication, entitled *Women's War Work*, issued by the War Office in September, 1916, shows the extent and the variety of the operations in which women are engaged. It is illustrated by photographs, showing the marvellous work women are doing for the War. It contains a list of Honorary Secretaries of Women's County Committees for agriculture in England, Scotland and Wales, and of the Board of Trade Women Agricultural Organising Officers. I am not aware of any figures to show to what extent women have replaced men in Ireland.

**Infant Mortality and the Notification of Births Acts, 1907  
and 1915.**

This subject is intimately connected with the living conditions of our tenement house population. It was referred to in Mr. Shannon Millin's paper on *Child Life as a National Asset*, already mentioned, read on December 17; 1915, but as a good deal of information on the subject has been obtained by me from England and Scotland, which may assist the working of the Notification of Births Acts in Ireland, and throw light on the methods adopted for the protection of Infant Life, I was asked to give the Society the benefit of my investigations. I hope to do so on a future occasion, when I am in possession of further information. I only wish now to make a brief statement on the subject, to show how important it is. The returns made

by Medical Officers of Health in our large towns proved that the mortality of infants under one year old was very great. It was sought to check this by requiring the birth of the child to be notified to the Medical Officer of Health within 36 hours after birth, and this is now obligatory by the Acts above mentioned, save in rural districts in Ireland. The Act of 1915 goes much further, and authorises a local authority with the sanction of the Local Government Board to make arrangements for attending to the health of expectant mothers, and nursing mothers, and of children under 5 years of age. A Committee has recently been appointed by the Dublin Corporation to carry out a scheme with the assistance of two voluntary bodies—the Infant Aid Society and the Women's National Health Association. Questions will arise on the working of this scheme which can well be discussed on the reading of a paper on the subject.

#### **Distinction between position of Farmer and Manufacturer.**

The possibilities and prospects of increased crop production were dealt with in the Presidential Address of Mr. E. J. Russell to the Agricultural Section of the British Association at Newcastle. He there says: "The farmer sows his crops for profit, and clearly ought to select the most profitable for the purpose. This can only be done by keeping accounts. No crop ought to be grown that does not pay its way: it should be displaced by one that does." And again: "Besides these improvements in crop production, which affect all farmers, even the best, there are two other ways in which we can hope for further developments. One is to raise the ordinary farmer to the level of the good one. A vast amount of educational work has to be done to spread the knowledge of the best methods, varieties, manures, etc. The other is to extend the area of the land under cultivation. Grass land only produces about one-half of what arable land yields, and it is imperative to the proper development of the country that some of it should be broken up. The farmer knows this, but he does not put his knowledge into practice. There are two main reasons why he does not adopt all possible devices for increasing crop production. In the first place he cannot always afford the risk. There is one fundamental distinction between farming and manufacturing that is often overlooked in discussions on the subject. Except in rare cases—sugar beet and some kind of seeds, the farmer does not grow for contracts, but always for what manufacturers would call 'stock.' The manufacturer makes a contract

to supply certain goods at a certain price, he knows what his machinery will do, he can insure against many of his risks, and get out of the contract if others befall him. He knows to a penny how much he will be paid, and so he can calculate to a nicety how much he can afford to spend, and how far he can go in introducing new methods. Now the farmer cannot do this. He cannot be certain what yield or what price he will get. The whole thing is a hazard which cannot be covered by insurance. Obviously, then, the farmer must leave a big margin for safety, so he balances his risks by laying down some of his land in grass where the risks are at a minimum. But when you ask him to intensify his methods and, as a necessary corollary, to break up some of his grass land, he has a perfect right to ask who is going to bear the extra risk." Mr. Russell then gives Mr. Middleton's striking comparison between the average farm produce in Germany and in Great Britain, showing that each hundred acres of cultivated land

In Great Britain	In Germany
Feeds 45 to 50 people	Feeds 70 to 75 people
Grows 15 tons of corn	Grows 33 tons of corn
„ 11 tons of potatoes	„ 55 tons of potatoes
„ 4 tons of meat	„ 4½ tons of meat
„ 17½ tons of milk	„ 28 tons of milk
„ Negligible quantity of sugar	„ 2¼ tons of sugar

He comments on this as follows:—"The German cultivator is not better than ours, nor is he more enterprising, neither is his soil or his climate better. The result is attained because in Germany the risks are balanced when only one-third of the cultivated area is in grass, leaving two-thirds for arable cultivation; whilst here the farmer believes they can only be balanced by putting two-thirds of the land into grass, and leaving only one-third for arable cultivation."

Mr. Russell is referring to the English farmer. But what about the Irish farmer, who has a much smaller fraction in tillage, and sometimes none?

Mr. Russell adds:—"It is essentially a question of distribution of risk, and it ought not to be beyond the political insight and economic wisdom of those whose business it is to settle these matters." The second factor which operates against the most intense production, Mr. Russell says, is that agriculture is more than a trade, it is a mode of life. "The farmer lives on the top of his work, he has few evenings away from it, no week-ends, not much holiday, and still less prospect of retiring on a fortune; his life has to

centre on his farm. Few people set out solely to make money, and most farmers and landowners look to find their pleasure as well as their profit on their land. And so it comes about that things are not always arranged to ensure the maximum of crop production. Trees and hedges are left because they make up a pleasing landscape; excuses are found for them, and in some places they may be really useful, but over much of the country the land would produce more without them. Copses are left, pheasants are bred, foxes and hares are preserved, and rabbits spared, not because they add to the food-supply, but because they minister to the pleasure of the countryside, and in spite of the facts that the crops would be bigger without them, and that the plague of sparrows might be considerably less if it were not for the gamekeeper.

“It would be wholly unreasonable to expect the farmer to lead to a life of blameless crop-production unrelieved by any pleasure, and it would be social folly of the highest order to make the young farmer exchange the innocent pleasure of an occasional day’s shooting or hunting in the country for the night’s pleasure in town. I am not going to attempt to justify the syndicate-shoot or the reservation of great areas of land for the pleasure of a few. But I think we shall always have to be content with getting less crop-yields than the land might produce because we must always keep up the amenities and the pleasures of the countryside. We must maintain the best equilibrium we can between these somewhat—but not wholly—conflicting interests.

“And as agriculture strikes more deeply at the roots of human life than any mere trade, so agricultural science possesses a human interest and dignity that marks it off sharply from any branch of technology; it is, indeed, one of the pillars of rural civilisation. For the farmer’s daily task brings him into continuous contact with the great fundamental processes of Nature, and the function of agricultural science is to teach him to read the book of Nature that lies always open before him, and to see something of the infinite wonder of every common object in the fields around him. The investigator in agricultural science is out to learn what he can of these things, and to pass on his knowledge to the teacher, who in turn has to put it into a systematic form in which the young men and women of the countryside can assimilate it. After knowledge comes control. When we know more about the soil, the animal, the plant, etc., we shall be able to increase our crop yields, but we shall lose the best of our work if we put the crop-yield first. Our aim should be to gain knowledge that will

form the basis of a true rural education, so that we may train up a race of men and women who are alive to the beauties and the manifold interest of the countryside, and who can find there the satisfaction of their intellectual as well as their material wants. If we can succeed in that, we shall hear far less of rural depopulation; instead we may hope for the extension of that type of keen healthy countryman which has always been found among the squires, farmers, and labourers of this country, and which we believe was already increasing before the war. With such men and women we can look forward with full confidence to the future."