

SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN IN THE NORTH.

On March 2 I got to Newcastle, and lectured to the Socialistic Discussion Society in the Good Templars' Hall. This society was started some time ago by comrade Pease of the Fabian Society, and has been very useful in bringing Socialism before the public. The audience seemed in favour of the views I took of Socialism and the labour movement. On March 3 I went to Backworth in Northumberland, and addressed about 1000 of the miners now on strike. They received Socialism very well indeed, and were anxious to hear more about it. On Sunday March 6 I addressed two meetings, one at the Sandhill, a place where large numbers of men meet on Sunday mornings, and another in the Haymarket. Both were very successful.

The position of the mining population in Durham and Northumberland is very trying just now. In Northumberland 20,000 men are on strike against a reduction of 12½ per cent. on the wages of all who are earning more than 3s. per day. If the resistance to the reduction fails in Northumberland the Durham mine-owners will undoubtedly insist upon a similar reduction. The Northumberland men are very determined and hopeful, but it is far from certain that they will succeed. The combination against them is powerful and well organised. At the same time there is only too much reason to fear that the labour leaders are not unwilling that the strike should fail. This may seem a hard thing to say, but evidence is strongly in favour of it. The labour leaders are, to say the least, half-hearted. They know that the fight between capital and labour must, in the long-run, end in favour of the capitalists, if the antique methods of trades-unionism are to be the only weapons. Their reluctance to continue the fight is, from the orthodox point of view, justifiable. If the present system is unalterable, as they think, the future of the workers is quite hopeless. To struggle against reductions is only adding to their sufferings. These men, however, refuse to submit without a struggle; and even if they fail—as let us hope they won't—they will have shown that sturdiness of spirit which is only too scarce among the people to-day. The workmen have listened to counsels of moderation too long; they are sick and ashamed of submission to one after another of the slurs cast upon them. If they succeed in warding off the reduction they will still be discontented, and if they fail they will go back to the pits with sore hearts and bitter feeling.

The breach between the miners and their leaders is widening, and before long, I feel sure, the old system of organisation and the old lines of the movement will be radically altered. And there is much need for alteration. I was told by some of the leading men here that the miners were better off now than they had ever been before. If this were true it is a poor boast. There are plenty of miners (not coal-getters though) working for less than 3s. per day; and I was told that, after deducting cost of powder, lamps, and other like charges upon the wages received, the average amount taken home by the miners was from 10s. to 15s. per week. But whether the miners are a little better or a little worse is of little consequence. The main point, and the one ignored by the leaders, is that they are not nearly as well off as they should be. And it is very plain that the miners are ready for a thorough revolutionary movement. Next week I shall have a good deal more to say upon this aspect of the question.

I have now arranged for a thorough campaign amongst the men of Northumberland and Durham. On Friday last I issued a programme of meetings and a short address on a leaflet. I sent a paragraph to all the papers, which many of them inserted. I called upon the editor of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* and explained my object: was courteously received, and invited to state my views and plans in a special article. This I have done, and the article, which appeared in the issue of Monday March 7, seems to have made a good impression. John Williams, of the Social-Democratic Federation, had been here a week before I came, and H. Parker, sent by the Strike Committee of the Socialist League, about ten days earlier. At the end of last week J. Hunter Watts also turned up, so that there is now quite a force of Socialist speakers here. The talk is chiefly of Socialism, and it is easy to see there is a strong feeling in our favour. I have worked quite harmoniously with the S. D. F. members, and hope to continue to do so.

There is a splendid chance of pushing the Socialist propaganda here. The workers have got tired of the orthodox movement, and are ready to embrace Socialism. There is no part of the propaganda of such practical and pressing importance as the support of a vigorous missionary expedition among the miners and iron-workers of the north. I trust that friends of the propaganda will not fail to subscribe what they can to the expenses.

I shall write fully every week on the progress of the campaign.

J. L. MAHON.

RIOTOUS BEHAVIOUR OF POLICE IN HYDE PARK.

LAST Sunday, Hyde Park was made the scene of another scandalous attempt on the part of the police to create a riot. The usual meetings were being held near the Marble Arch by Socialists, Home Rulers, and Christians. Shortly after the speaking had begun about fifty police, led by an inspector, appeared on the scene, and began to hustle the people about who were standing on the pathways. It must be understood the way was quite open to all who desired to pass through, so it was an act of pure officiousness on the part of the police to interfere at all. If they wished the pathway to be kept clear, the proper way was to have asked the speakers to invite those who wished to listen to them to come inside the railings. Instead of acting in this common sense manner they hustled the people about in a most disgraceful fashion, which ultimately so exasperated the crowd that they formed themselves in tolerably compact masses and retaliated in like manner on the police. Some mounted police appeared on the scene, which was the signal for more pushing and rushing. Two men were arrested because they objected to be dragged by the police. This riotous behaviour completely spoilt our meetings. This game of the police is a very artful one. They wish to make these disorderly scenes Sunday after Sunday for a few weeks, and get lying newspapers to report "riotous scenes caused by Socialists in Hyde Park," and so endeavour to create an opinion in the public mind that a new rule must be issued prohibiting all meetings in the Park. We ask all friends of freedom to prevent this miserable little trick of the police being successful. In future it would be well to invite the people that listen at our meetings to keep within the railings, and so prevent the police having any pretext for hustling and creating disturbances. I ask the men who read this to consider whether they are prepared to pay police rates, not to get protection but to get assaulted. These policemen, who ought to be looking after preventing the burglaries and other crimes that are continually being perpetrated, are to be found bullying the citizens who feed and clothe them, who have met in their own park to discuss public affairs. This is not the thin-end of the wedge that has been got in long ago, this is evidently a deliberate attempt of the police to suppress public discussion. We have yet to learn that Englishmen are prepared to tolerate such impertinence! One would have thought Sir C. Warren would have left the business of creating disturbances at public meetings in the hands of the Fowler, Kelly, and Kenny gang, but it seems not.

ALEX. DONALD.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE AMBLESIDE RAILWAY BILL.

If you can spare sufficient space I would like to lay a few facts respecting the above project before your readers, so that they may judge whether the outcry raised against it (mostly by ignorant outsiders) has good cause or not.

It is proposed to project the Kendal line from Windermere to Ambleside, a distance of only six miles, and not through the "Lake District" but a trifling portion of it. The line will run through woods most of the way, and will thus be hidden from view. It will keep at a considerable distance from the margin of the adjacent lake, Windermere, which although the largest is also the least interesting.

As things stand at present tourists are landed at Windermere Station, an uninteresting place two miles from the Lake, and if, as is natural, they desire to go to Ambleside they must take the coach and pay 2s. or else walk, and this for persons who are only down for the day is a great inconvenience, and an unnecessary expense to those who like myself are not in such favoured circumstances as Ruskin or our friend W. Morris. Once arrived at Ambleside, no one objects to a mile or two of walking to Rydal and Grasmere, but it doesn't pay most folks if they have walked the other part of the way as well. In the *Commonweal* 'Notes' last week, we workers are enjoined to wait for the Socialist millennium before we enjoy the Promised Land even for a day. The Ambleside people will benefit greatly in cheaper coals and provisions, and the artisans of the North will benefit if the hindrances to a proper enjoyment of the neighbourhood are removed. We Cumberland and Westmoreland people yield to no one in our love and respect for the beauties of the district, but we are unanimous in favour of the Bill, and if we had local autonomy would pass it speedily.—Yours fraternally,
Carlisle, Feb. 27.
Tom Muse.

[It seems to me that our friend in his enthusiasm for railways is unconsciously playing into the hands of the capitalist robbers, who are the only persons who will be really benefitted by it as things go. In the first place this railway is meant to be the first step in the invasion of the Lake country, and will certainly not stop at Ambleside if the projectors can help it. The question is nothing less than this, Is the beauty of the Lake country, and the natural wish that people have to see it and enjoy it, to be handed over to be exploited without limitation by a company who looks upon the public as so much material for exploitation? If it is to be so, its beauty will soon be a thing of the past, and when you have taken the trouble to bring people into the once lovely and romantic country they will find that they have come indeed, but come to nothing, and might almost as well have stayed at home, and had far better have strolled into some country side less renowned for beauty, and therefore not so tempting to the runners of those horrible pests, the tourist railway and the tourist hotel. The intention of the capitalists in this matter is to make the Cumberland and Westmoreland "show-country" a mere appendage to their filth-heaps of Manchester and Liverpool, and they allege the necessities of their filth-heaps as a reason for this. But the rest of the country have a good right to say, The concoction of your filth-heaps is no valid reason for your destroying the wealth of the whole country, nay, the wealth of the world; something of the natural beauty of the face of the country has been left in spite of your foul greed and disregard of other people's rights, and that, wofully little as it now is, we are at last impelled to guard against your greed. For my part, while admitting that it is seen in queer places, I cannot help thinking that the spirit which takes this view is a part of the great wave of social feeling which will one day sweep away monopoly and enable every one to have his due share of the pleasures of the world; whereas the feeling of jealousy of local interests and prejudices, even when expressed by a Socialist, is but the remnant of the unsocial feeling forced upon him by the present conditions of life. One may say in passing that the presence of the railway in a new district is not a benefit to it; it brings more trade to it, more employment, and therewithal more competition for employment; it cheapens one thing and raises the price of another; or, if it cheapens things generally, it is clear that it will lower the wages of the labourers, though doubtless it will increase the incomes of those who live on them, which once more is its object. I entreat our friend not to help in killing the goose that lays the golden eggs; it is true that to the company which wishes to exploit us it is of no importance that the golden eggs should cease to come, since they will be other people's eggs; but to us the rest of the public, both that are and that are to come, it is of much importance. Short-sighted brutality wherever it is met with, and whoever and whatever its source may be, is *unsocial*, and should be attacked by all Socialists.]—ED.

'The Industrial Problem Solved,' by W. B. Robertson (Modern Press, 1d.) is a brief but forcible exposé of the current fallacies anent overpopulation and overproduction. It is worth reading.

The verbatim report of the debate on "Is Socialism Sound?" between Annie Besant and Mr. Foote, is announced as shortly ready, price one shilling. We hope that the "cheers" which followed Mr. Foote's melodramatic attitudinising, and other expressions of the audience, will be omitted. The "points" are generally lost when the matter is printed, and the average reader has little interest in the particular feelings—sometimes very partisan—of the audience.

TAKING HIM AT HIS WORD.—At a public meeting held at Enderby, in the Harborough division of Leicestershire, on Thursday evening, March 3, the following resolution was carried unanimously: "That this meeting, accepting in all good faith the statement made in the House of Commons on Monday Feb. 28 by the the Financial Secretary to the Treasury in reference to the wages of copyists employed by the Government, that 'men who are in the position of trustees of public money are bound to see that public money is not wasted beyond what is the market price of labour,' beg to call the attention of the Secretary to the fact that in the present condition of the labour market Secretaries to the Treasury might be obtained for less than £2000 each per annum; a Lord Steward of Her Majesty's Household, who would do something for his salary, at less than £2000 per annum; a Lord Chamberlain for less than £2000 per annum; a Master of the Horse, possessing some practical knowledge of horses, at considerably less than £2500 per annum; Grooms-in-Waiting for less than £334 each for a few weeks' waiting; and Lords-in-Waiting who would consent to bear her majesty company at dinner without being paid £702 each for about six weeks of such honourable duties."

CHARITY.—It is a mistake to suppose that the rich man maintains his servants, tradesmen, tenants, and labourers; the truth is, they maintain him. It is their industry which supplies his table, furnishes his wardrobe, builds his houses, adorns his equipage, provides his amusements. It is not his estate, but the labour employed upon it, that pays his rent; all that he does is to distribute what others produce, which is the least part of the business.—Dr. W. Paley, D.D.