

STEPS TOWARD SOCIALISM.

A RECORD OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS.

Issued by the Local Government Information Bureau.

Vol. 1.

OCTOBER 1912.

No. 2.

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FOREWORD.

THE Local Government Information Bureau was established in 1899 to render assistance to Labour members on local governing bodies.

Its principle object is to provide legal and other advice for members engaged or desirous of engaging in municipal work, to give information on Bills introduced to and Acts passed by Parliament. It is conducted jointly by the Fabian Society and the I.L.P., and the annual subscription is 2/6.

Under the auspices of the Bureau, conferences of Labour elected persons have been held at Glasgow, Leicester, Derby, York, and other towns, and 12 Reports on Parliamentary Papers of special interest to members have been issued.

In order that the Bureau may be of still more service to the Labour Movement in general and its members in particular, it has been decided to issue an occasional miscellany under the title of "Steps toward Socialism."

In presenting this second number, the Editor asks members to make it known, and thus help extend the work of the Bureau.

Brief, pithy contributions will be welcomed, and should be addressed to the Editor, "Steps toward Socialism," Fabian Society, 3, Clement's Inn, Strand, London.

CAN THE COAL SUPPLY BE MUNICIPALISED?

The need for municipalising the coal supply is one of those matters which Labour and Socialist councillors should determine to bring immediately within the range of practical politics. It stands on all fours with railway nationalisation and nationalisation of the coal mines. In common with these two latter questions it is particularly ripe for discussion and settlement. The distribution of coal falls into the same category as the distribution of gas, electricity, water, or organisation of tramways. There is no problem of foreign competition. The market is entirely a home market—every house in every street.

SPECIAL ADVANTAGES.

Moreover, whereas the nationalisation of mines or railways—urgent and practical as these reforms are—will necessarily involve new legislation and more or less elaborate financial schemes, any average Town Council could inaugurate a system of municipal coal supply with comparatively little additional liability or additional organisation. The tramways in every city, penetrating as they do into all districts, form the key to the problem of distribution. District depôts or yards, fed by trucks passing over the tramways, would place every street within five or ten minutes' service by carts or motor waggons. The financial administration, both as to contracts and collection of moneys for coal supplied, could be organised with simplicity and ease by any of the municipal departments which are now responsible for collecting the charges for gas, electricity, water, or rates. The value of coal supplied to any household could, if preferred, be added to the ordinary gas, water, or rate demand notes. In the case of the poorest, who buy in small quantities, the district depôts could supply their requirements on the spot for cash at the lowest possible price.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRAMWAYS.

I have already referred to the part which the tramways of a town should play in municipalising the coal supply. The point is one of fundamental importance. Twenty years ago, when tramways were practically all in the hands of private companies, it would have been almost impossible to develop a feasible scheme of municipalising the coal supply. Since 1892, however, nearly every town of importance has municipalised its tramway system. Immense sums of money have been spent by every city in improving its tramway facilities, laying down new lines, extending the service, and perfecting organisation. The capital expenditure has been incurred. Why should the municipalised tramways not be exploited so as to serve the people with municipalised coal? So far as distribution is concerned no private firm or company can have any chance of competing against a Town Council which owns the tramway service. The single horse and cart, carrying a single ton of coal, could not continue against municipal trucks (each holding nine or ten tons) propelled along municipal tramlines by municipal electricity.

AN OUNCE OF FACT.

The Huddersfield Town Council has already proved the immense advantage of municipal distribution. Five years ago it made arrangements with three of the largest manufacturing concerns in the borough to deliver all their coal. The municipal tramways department designed and had constructed two special trucks for the delivery of the coal. Each truck holds from nine to ten tons of coal, and is worked by two men. The result has been that, although the Council charges only half the price to the manufacturers for carriage as compared with the price formerly charged by contractors, the tramways department makes a nett profit of nearly 100 per cent. The figures for last year are as follows:—Tons of coal carried, 13,000; receipts, £906; total cost to the Council, £490; or a nett profit of £416. The £490 includes all charges—interest on capital, depreciation, etc. To further indicate the substantial superiority of municipal distribution over private contractors it is only necessary to point out that in the same district where the municipal tramways deliver to manufacturers at 1/- per ton the private dealer charges domestic consumers from 2/- to 2/6 per ton.

CAN THE COUNCILS BUY CHEAPER THAN ORDINARY HOUSEHOLDERS?

The saving in distribution by utilising the tramways is, however, only one advantage which municipalisation offers the public. The main advantage is the price at which a public spirited local authority can secure coal as compared with the price paid by the domestic consumer.

Every Town Councillor knows that colliery proprietors and large merchants will offer a municipal Council rock-bottom prices for municipal orders with municipal security for prompt payment.

For several years now this matter has been put to the test in Huddersfield. Each year the Education Committee invites public tenders for specified guaranteed house coal for its 40 elementary and secondary schools. The result is that merchants and colliery proprietors offer to supply specified Silkstone house coal at 13/6 per ton delivered to the schools. For the same coal the householder is charged from 18/6 to 20/- per ton. The reason for this difference is perfectly well known. The Council places a large order. There is no risk of any bad debt. Municipal Councils do not go into bankruptcy. There is no need to employ canvassers seeking orders or collectors calling each week for a weekly instalment of the cost. The municipality is therefore in a position to eliminate the profit which at present goes to the middle-men. By municipalisation it can give the bulk of that profit to its citizens.

BEN. RILEY.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION BUREAU.

Conducted by the Standing Committee of the
I.L.P. and the Fabian Society.

Joint Secretaries:

WM. STEPHEN SANDERS, 3, Clement's Inn, W.C.
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SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1911.

Income.		£	s.	d.
Balance in Hand on January 1st	5	4	10	
Subscriptions during Year	20	7	6	
	£25	12	4	
Expenditure.		£	s.	d.
Paid to F.S. for Literature supplied	10	0	0	
Stationery and Postages	4	6	0½	
Paid to I.L.P. for printing "Steps towards Socialism," etc.	6	19	9	
Balance in Hand	4	6	6½	
	£25	12	4	

REPORTS ON ACTS—1910.

(In continuation of the Reports on Acts issued by the Bureau annually since its formation.)

No Parliament of modern times has passed so few Acts and yet made so much history as the Parliament of 1910.

Besides the Budget the following half-dozen Acts are likely to be of interest to the members of the Bureau:—

MINES ACCIDENTS (RESCUE AND AID).

$\frac{1}{2}$ D.

Enables the Home Secretary to order the supply and maintenance at mines of appliances for rescue work and ambulances, and the training of men for rescue brigades and ambulance work.

There are somewhat elaborate provisions for publication of the proposals, and for giving the employers the right of objection, and appeal to an arbitrator.

SMALL HOLDINGS ACT. $\frac{1}{2}$ D.

This Act gives tenants, turned out for the purpose of small holdings, the right to recover compensation for loss or expense directly attributable thereto. The money and legal costs are to be paid by the Board of Agriculture out of the Small Holdings account.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT. $\frac{1}{2}$ D.

A short Act to forbid aldermen from voting in the election of aldermen, or outgoing aldermen from voting for the mayor. Under the old system a party with a small majority of elected councillors have, in a case known to the writer, been kept out of power for many years.

POLICE WEEKLY REST DAY. $\frac{1}{2}$ D.

Every police authority in England and Wales shall allow policemen 52 days off in the year, and as nearly as may be, one day in each week.

County Boroughs are allowed four years for bringing the Act into operation, and apparently the Home Office has power to fix the date for County Authorities provided that it be not before July, 1914.

LICENSING CONSOLIDATION ACT. 8D.

This is one of those useful pieces of legislation prepared by a department and passed without a word. It repeals nine Acts, from 1828 to 1906, altogether, and part of four others, and it re-enacts the live parts of them as a Consolidated Act.

Presumably no changes in the law are made, as otherwise the Bill would have been controverted.

DEVELOPMENT AND ROAD IMPROVEMENT FUNDS ACT. $\frac{1}{2}$ D.

Increases the number of Development Commissioners from 5 to 8, and arranges about pensions in connection with their staff.

(For Report on Acts, 1911, see page 8.)

AN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAY.

PROBABLY not one person per million in the Kingdom is aware that in the United States of America, the stronghold of private enterprise, the last and dirtiest ditch which dying individualism will defend, there is now in existence a railway owned and operated by the State.

The Texas State Railway appears to be connected, in some unexplained yet suspicious fashion, with the Penitentiary Department, since it is a typewritten report made at the request of the Penitentiary Commission which is before me as I write. The line runs between "Rusk and Palestine," and is $32\frac{1}{2}$ miles long. It is equipped with three second-hand Mogul engines, one of which has "retired" during the year, possibly—I hazard a guess—in order to be sold to the South-Eastern and Chatham, who are likely buyers of second-hand and third-hand engines. Further, it had 39 freight cars and two passenger cars, none of which had "retired" during the year. The cars, it is stated, were new, but none the less "all the equipment is obsolete," as the report says, and though they "would serve this line as it stands locally," "I doubt not that connecting lines would now refuse to accept the cars of this line on interchange tracks."

The "trial balance to 31st December, 1910," which is before me, I confess I cannot fully explain. I gather it covers six months' operations. Freight revenue amounted to nearly \$9,000, say £1,800, passenger revenue to £640, whilst switching revenue is entered at nil, and non-transportation revenue at 50/-. The profits appear to stand at £900, which is not bad for two second-hand engines. The property is valued at a little over £100,000, and there is "virgin pine timber tributary to this line which must some day be manufactured and freighted." So the prospects of America's one State Railway are not as gloomy as might be supposed. When the virgin pine timber is being manufactured and freighted it may be grand enough to boast a printed report. At present it only rises to the heights of carbon copies on flimsy.

EDW. R. PEASE.

SPRAY BATHS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BRITAIN may be a very fine country, but as a nation she is mighty slow in getting a move on. It is sixteen years ago since Miss McMillan introduced spray baths to the children of Bradford, and one would have thought that the success of that experiment would have been the beginning of a national movement throughout the country in practical hygiene. But while Bradford set an example, one has to admit that the rest of the country has been slow to follow.

In Germany, the town of Mannheim had the honour of installing spray baths in one of its schools over thirty years ago, and to-day there is hardly a town or village throughout that Empire which has not its school baths. Indeed, bathing may be considered an integral part of the physical education in the German schools. But Germany is not the only country which is far ahead of us in this reform. We find that spray baths are installed in nearly all the schools in the larger Swedish towns, and in Christiania the movement has made such rapid progress that out of 23,000 school children over 16,000 were taking the baths.

In Austria, Switzerland, and Belgium good progress has been made, while in France, Holland, Italy, and Denmark much has also been done. It is true that in this country some of the larger Educational Authorities have built swimming ponds in their most recent schools, while others have made arrangements for swimming instruction being given in some of the Corporation Baths during the summer months.

But beyond the experiments in Bradford already referred to, and one insignificant installation of four douches in Pultiney School, London, no organised effort has been made to bring about this reform in this country.

After visiting many of the school baths in Germany, and after consulting with Dr. Frederic Rose of the London County Council and Miss McMillan, the writer introduced the subject to the Glasgow School Board a little over three years ago. The proposal naturally did not meet with much encouragement, but after a year of patient permeation among the members, teachers, and officials, matters were sufficiently far advanced to take a definite motion on the subject. Enquiries were made as to the accommodation, costs, etc., with satisfactory results, and finally the committee agreed to experiment in two schools. The

schools chosen were situated in densely populated districts and where spray baths were a veritable God-send.

In designing our baths it was agreed to adopt the principle of a single spray for each child. These sprays, which are about six inches in diameter and finely perforated, are connected to the main pipe by means of pipes set at such an angle that the spray falls upon the child at shoulder height. (Timid children are afraid of water coming suddenly on their heads.)

At the junction of the main pipe, a special automatic mixing crane is connected, so that even in the event of negligence on the part of the attendant, the temperature of the water never exceeds a certain degree.

The floors of the rooms where the baths are erected were already laid with granolithic, so that we found it cheaper to form the troughs (about six inches deep) on the top of the existing floors.

Adjoining the bath-room is a dressing-room fitted up with seats around the walls, hooks for the children's clothes, mirrors, combs, and brushes.

The success of these two centres during the first year they were opened proved their usefulness conclusively, even to the bitterest opponents, and it is gratifying to record that another four centres have been opened, and plans have been passed for two more.

That the success of the baths is becoming known and appreciated is evidenced by the fact that applications are being received by the Board for more baths in different districts of the city.

When the baths were opened, the parents of the children received a circular calling attention to the facilities offered, and they were asked to sign the necessary form. No compulsion was used, but the first week the papers were signed by 280 parents in one school, and by over 400 in the other. The attendance increased week by week, and to-day over 60 per cent. of the children attending the two schools have their weekly bath.

The baths have been highly appreciated by teachers, children, and parents, as the following reports testify.

One headmaster writes: "The spray baths have proved a great success, the number taking advantage of them showing an *increase week by week*. The baths are beneficent to health, and promote habits of cleanliness and tidiness, noticeable results being a marked improvement

in the appearance of the children, a decrease in the offensive odours of the class-room, and an increased attention to the condition of the under-clothing. The children are more active, both at work and play."

The second headmaster says: "It is only necessary to watch the children bathing to understand the pleasure and sense of comfort they are giving to children *who, in many cases, never before had a bath.* The baths are so much appreciated by those who use them that keeping a pupil from the baths is the severest punishment that can be inflicted and the one most dreaded. As a means to discipline I find the baths excellent, as the children are taught to go to, and come from, the baths without the slightest supervision."

The opinions of the parents are equally emphatic. One writes (and this class of parent is not given to letter writing): "They are the grandest things that were introduced into schools for poor folks' children, who are not in a position to have them in their own homes."

Another says: "I'm very pleased the Schule Bord gies my boy a guid bath every week, as the tub at home is too sma' for him noo."

The boys and the girls, too, for both sexes get bathed—the former are supervised by the janitor and the latter by a woman attendant—are quite enamoured with the baths. One boy, in writing an essay on them, remarked that "when under the spray he feels full of energy, and fit to keep goal at the next International Football match."

The claims, then, of the spray baths in public schools may be summed up as follows:—

(1) It is the cleanest, cheapest, and most rapid method of cleaning large numbers of children.

(2) It creates a desire in the children to acquire cleanly habits.

(3) It invigorates, and consequently increases the power of sustaining mental effort.

(4) It tends to diminish verminous conditions.

(5) The air of the class-room is greatly improved.

(6) The children are fresher and healthier.

(7) The condition of the underclothing is greatly improved as parents do not like their children to be seen by other children in a ragged condition.

(8) It contributes towards the decrease of infectious diseases (propagated in schools) by raising the general standard of cleanliness and health, thus rendering the children less liable to contract infection.

MARTIN HADDOW, M.I.E.E.
(Glasgow School Board).

PHTHISIS PREVENTION AT KENSINGTON.

THE I.L.P. in North Kensington started an agitation for better provision for phthisical persons just over twelve months ago. The position in the Borough is a curious one. South Kensington is rich and healthy. North Kensington is poor and often ill. South Kensington is well housed. North Kensington is overcrowded. South Kensington sends high Tory representatives to the Borough Council. North Kensington sends Tories for the most part lower in the social scale, a few mixed Liberals, and two members of the I.L.P. Our experience teaches us that a high Tory is better than a wobbly Liberal, and that while you may get a majority for a Labour proposal with the high Tories, you cannot find it amongst the Liberals. The former are sometimes open to conviction. The latter are overburdened by fears for the rates. For these reasons, in addition to others, the I.L.P. found it profitable to prepare their case with great care, so as to catch the interest of the best of their opponents on the Council.

A tuberculosis dispensary had recently been started by private subscriptions, and for a long time phthisis had been voluntarily notifiable in the borough, but there was no way of dealing with the cure of early cases or the segregation of late ones. Though there was a great deal of visiting, with advice and disinfection, the whole administrative dealings with tuberculosis led to little in the end. Because there was no provision for sanatorium treatment and effective cure notification was very rarely made except through the Poor Law officers, for whom it was compulsory. It is useless to notify phthisis patients if nothing is to be done for them, and we felt that to leave the whole question of prevention and cure, except for these small attempts by means of visiting and disinfection, to a voluntary institution which would inevitably be guided by the principles of the C.O.S. and personal caprice would result in a great waste of the people's chances of good health.

At the same time, a recent conference of Metropolitan Boroughs had suggested the establishment of one large sanatorium for London, to be under the management of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and this proposal had the sanction of the majority of the boroughs. The I.L.P. felt they could not do better than urge it forward. We therefore

asked the Council to receive a deputation, and this they did. We laid before them the following proposals:—

1. That they should urge the Metropolitan Asylums Board to establish a sanatorium for early cases, and another for late and hopeless ones, who now too often refuse the only refuge open to them, the Poor Law Infirmary, and therefore run the risk of infecting whole families.

2. Until such a proposal should be adopted we urged that the Council should pay for beds at one of the existing sanatoria, making a start with six beds for the first year. We suggested also that the Council should make it known by handbills and notices on their public buildings that it supported these beds, and also that the tuberculosis dispensary established by private persons was open to everybody, and that the Borough Council was willing to help patients notified from it.

3. That the Council should provide open-air shelters which people might use at their own homes, and also single beds and other suitable apparatus in cases where there was need of them. (This may be done under Article IX. of the Tuberculosis Regulations of January, 1909.)

4. We suggested that in view of the fact that 100 persons suffering from phthisis in this borough were known to occupy only one room, the Council should take steps to provide another room for the use of such patients.

We pointed out that these proposals were not at all revolutionary, and that several municipalities, including Brighton, Leicester, and Liverpool, had made special hospital or sanatorium provision. Liverpool, indeed, had appointed an assistant Medical Officer of Health, whose principal duty it was to search out suitable sanatorium cases. Birmingham has for a long time had a sanatorium for early cases, and not long since opened one with fifty beds for later cases. Amongst other municipalities Newcastle-on-Tyne, Woolwich, Westminster, Southwark, Bermondsey, and Bethnal Green already provided beds at existing sanatoria.

We reckoned that the cost of these proposals need not be more than £450 for the first year, and that though for a few years after it might be more, it would be a burden counterbalanced by the improved health of the rest of the community, and one which the whole of Kensington

should justly pay, since it was so largely the result of the poverty of one part only. This is very clearly shown by the fact that out of an average 160 deaths each year from this disease 120 take place in North Kensington.

At the request of the Council these facts were put before the Public Health Committee in the form of a Memorandum, and a special report was issued by the Medical Officer of Health in January. On this report a special sub-committee of the Public Health Committee drew up a series of proposals. They adopted our proposal to provide beds up to six in an existing sanatorium, and to provide open-air shelters or single beds in special cases. With regard to late cases they took the line that the Poor Law Infirmary was there for all poor people, and that nobody did actually consider it any hardship to go into it. But they made a revolutionary proposal that for those incurable cases in which a payment, with a minimum of 7/6 a week, might be made by the family, the Council should make arrangements to pay the remaining share of maintenance at some institution for incurable patients.

These proposals, with the exception of the last, were all adopted by the Public Health Committee, and finally by the Council in February last. The estimated cost is £400, and the scheme is so far experimental, and will come up for revision next year. In the meantime we are hoping to get the Council to take steps to make their scheme better known to the public, and we are also hoping to educate public opinion so that the revision next year will be in the direction of widening this part of Public Health work, especially in the direction of dealing more effectually with incurable cases and with housing. But it is worthy of note that our Councillors on this occasion received strong support from the Tory Mayor, who delivered a very effective speech in favour of the scheme.

It is considered by some that these preventive measures are merely palliative, and that to go to the root of the matter we need radical change in housing conditions, and a Right to Work Bill which would ensure a decent supply of food to every worker. This, it is true, would go a great way, perhaps the whole way, in preventing the disease, but such work is not to be done very quickly, and in the meantime we have to deal with people in the early stages of the disease, when they may themselves be cured, and we have to prevent worse cases at a

later stage from spreading the disease amongst the members of their families. We have, in fact, before we can fully carry out our desires in the direction of decent housing and decent wages, to develop a healthier generation who will carry on the fight more strenuously for these first demands of a civilised people.

MARION PHILLIPS, D.Sc. (Econ.).

NOTE.—Since the above was written, the Local Government Board have issued an order making the notification of consumption compulsory, and urging Local Authorities to take steps to set preventive measures of the kind indicated above on foot. The Insurance Bill has also given a great impulse in the direction of sanatorium provision. These two steps should greatly strengthen the hands of Labour Representatives.

MODEL TRADE UNION CLAUSES FOR PUBLIC CONTRACTS.

Inquiries are often made by Labour representatives for a form of Trade Union conditions clause or clauses for insertion in tenders for work to be done for public authorities by contractors. The Birmingham City Council, mainly through the instrumentality of the Labour members of that body, has recently revised its Trade Union clauses so that they cover not only the work done by the contractor for the Council but also work done generally by him. The following is the amended clause, which we commend to the notice of Labour members on public bodies:—

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS TO COMMITTEE.

(Clause 15.)

Contractors tendering for or executing work under this Council must then and at all times during its execution be paying to the whole of their workpeople (except such as may be employed under special provisions agreed upon by the employers and the local organised bodies of workers) not less than the Trade Union or standard rate of wages in the several districts where their workpeople are actually engaged in the execution of the work, and must also be observing the hours and conditions of labour as well as the aforesaid rate of wages recognised by the associations of employers and the local organised bodies of workers in the various trades in the several districts where the work is being done.

No contractor shall be allowed to tender for work who does not pay the Trade Union or standard rate of wages, or observe similar conditions in his ordinary business.

Should the Council have, in its opinion, reasonable grounds for believing that the above conditions are not being complied with the contractor shall be required to produce proof (to the satisfaction of the Council) of his compliance with the said conditions.

The contractor shall not assign or underlet the contract, or any part of it, or sub-contract, except with the consent of the Council acting by its executive officer, and upon such conditions as it may think fit. The principal contractor shall be responsible, however, for all work done by such sub-contractor, and for its being carried out under the same conditions as if executed by himself.

When a sub-contractor is specially nominated by the Corporation, acting by its architect or other executive officer, the principal contractor shall, when required by the Corporation, cause the sub-contractor to enter into the same obligations as regards labour and conditions of labour as are contained in the principal contract, and having done so shall be under no responsibility to the Corporation for the acts of the sub-contractor in these respects, but shall, when requested by and under the indemnity of the Corporation, enforce such obligations against the sub-contractor.

Clauses embodying the above-mentioned conditions shall be inserted in all contracts for work, and contractors shall be required to signify their assent to them in writing. Failure to comply with any of the conditions set forth in such clauses shall, at the option of the Council, leave it within the power of the Council to cancel the contract. When any breach of these conditions shall have been proved to the satisfaction of a Committee, a notification of the name of the contractor or sub-contractor so proved to have been in default shall be sent to every Committee of the Council, and such contractor or sub-contractor shall not again be employed by any Committee, unless the Council shall have given special leave.

This instruction shall not apply to purchases of materials or patented articles or of stores and miscellaneous articles.

The several Committees of the Council, when inviting tenders, shall notify these conditions to all persons or firms concerned.

REPORTS ON ACTS—1911.

THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT, 1911. 1/3.

Was the principal work of the session. For reasons of space an analysis of this Act is not attempted here.

PARLIAMENT ACT. 1d.

This famous Act has only seven sections and a preamble which declares that a Second Chamber constituted on a popular instead of hereditary basis is intended to be substituted for the House of Lords.

Meantime, Section 1 enacts that a Money Bill shall become law whether the Lords pass it or not.

Section 2 provides that any other public Bill if passed in three successive sessions, whether of the same Parliament or not, shall become law. Provision is made for amendments due to lapse of time, and amendments to which the Lords agree.

The duration of Parliament is limited to five years.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES) ACT. ½d.

This provides that the publication of a false statement of fact in relation to the personal character or conduct of a candidate shall be a corrupt practice. A good defence shall be that the person had reasonable grounds for believing, and did believe, the statement made by him to be true. The election will not be "avoided" if the candidate was not personally authorised or consented to the publication, or unless it has in fact affected the result. (The word "avoided" is probably a printers' error for "voided".) This is an Act which some Socialists should study. Reckless personal charges are not unknown in Socialist electioneering.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (COTTON CLOTH FACTORIES) ACT, 1911. ½d.

Empowers the Secretary of State to make regulations relating to the humidity and ventilation of these factories as recommended in the Second Report of the Committee on the subject.

COAL MINES ACT, 1911. 9d.

This is one of those valuable Consolidation Acts. Five old Acts are virtually repealed, and parts of two others. The present Act creates a code for the management of mines.

SHOPS ACT. 2½d.

This valuable measure enacts a half-holiday (from 1-30 p.m.) for every shop assistant (with certain exceptions relating to Bank Holidays), and requires shops to be closed one day a week at 1 o'clock. The occupier may fix his own day unless the local authority do so with the approval of the majority. The local authority may exempt any class of shops in an area from the closing order, but not from the provision of a weekly half-holiday. The Government may hold a public enquiry in any locality. The closing section may be suspended in holiday resorts for four months in a year, and also the weekly half-holiday, if a fortnight's holiday on full pay is allowed.

The local authority is the Town Council, Urban District Councils with 20,000 inhabitants, and County Councils.

Post offices, licensed premises, refreshment houses, shops for sale of bicycles and motors, newspapers, perishable foods, tobacco, and medicines are exempt.

The first schedule specifies the time to be allowed for meals.

RAG FLOCK ACT. ½d.

This is an Act to forbid the manufacture of bedding from dirty rags.

OLD AGE PENSIONS ACT. 1½d.

This makes some small technical amendments in the Act as to the calculation of means, and of age, residence outside the country, etc. It qualifies British-born widows or deserted wives of aliens, and gives pension officers wider powers of appeal.

SMALL LANDHOLDERS (SCOTLAND) ACT. 3½d.

This is a very important Act for the Scotch. It applies the Crofters Acts to the whole of Scotland, and creates a Land Court to carry out its provisions. The general effect is to deprive landlords of the power of evicting small holders capriciously, and generally does much to put them in their place, if they have any. So few of our readers are of the nature of Scotch crofters that an analysis of this Act is superfluous. But it is an excellent example of the drastic legislation which is possible even under a Liberal Government in a country where the Conservatives are systematically repressed.

POULTRY ACT. ½d.

Nothing is too trivial for our present Government. They virtually abolish the House of Lords, and the next, in this Act to wit, require that fowls be kept clean whilst being conveyed by land or water.

PROTECTION OF ANIMALS ACT. 2d.

This is another Consolidation Act. It repeals seven Acts and parts of two more, and re-enacts their provisions, all neatly arranged.

OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT. 1½d.

This is also a Consolidation Act, passed for the better provision of copy for the newspapers in the German spy season. To the layman it seems all very silly. The easiest way to stop furtive photographing by foreigners would be to supply picture post-cards of our precious fortifications, and so support home industries.

LUNACY ACT, 1911. ½d.

A little technical Act chiefly for providing two more commissioners in lunacy.

EDUCATION (ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS) ACT. 1d.

This Act deals with contributions from one authority to another in respect of children who live in one area and go to school in another, and exempts school buildings from Building Bye-laws.

MONEY LENDERS ACT. ½d.

This Act forbids moneylenders to call themselves banks, or imply that they are banks, a quite valuable law. It also secures the interests of bona fide holders for value of securities taken from moneylenders.

AERIAL NAVIGATION ACT. ½d.

Forbids "air craft" to sail over areas prescribed by the Secretary of State. The word is an excellent one, and Parliament is to be commended for its choice of language.