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EDITED BY ARTHUR BRENTON

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# THE NEW AGE

INCORPORATING "CREDIT POWER."

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

Mr. Alfred Watkin, the president of the Manchester and District Bankers' Institute, in his inaugural address on October 25, devoted attention mainly to the present high taxation in this country. What he said, or what he assumed, regarding its "paralysing" effect on trade was in line with orthodox financial propaganda. For instance, when he spoke of the "loss of capital resources" he was reflecting the attitude of the big banks towards taxation, which is fundamentally based on its effect on the rate at which "capital" can be "replaced." "Taxation prejudices reserves": this is the central point of their attack. But they generally mask this attack by the use of indefinite statements calculated to convey the impression that taxation prejudices the taxpayers. The unsophisticated taxpayers would, if they were asked, say that the two propositions were the same—that the prosperity of the community was bound up with the health of its reserves. This is a fallacy. The accumulation of reserves by financial and commercial institutions is indistinguishable from the collection of taxes. A business concern which sells goods costing £1,000 for £2,000 and distributes only £500 in dividends, has levied a tax of £500 on both its customers and shareholders to that amount. So far as their pockets are concerned they are clearly in the same position as if the whole profit of £1,000 had been distributed and the Government had taken £500 in taxes. In this case the bankers' proposition that such a levy on the community "paralyses" trade when the Government does it, and stimulates trade when a commercial institution does it, needs much more elucidation on the part of these propounders than they choose to offer to the public.

Students of Social Credit will be aware that there is more truth in the converse of the proposition. For under the taxing-system the Government does at least spend the same amount of money as it collects, and spends it while it is collecting it, and produces proof every year that its receipts and expendi-

ture have balanced for that year. At least that is the principle of the "balanced Budget," under which, while the Government is obliged to collect as much as it spends, it is also obliged *not to collect more*—at least as a normal deliberate policy. All surpluses or deficits on taxation account ought to be accidents—as they are. The Government is not expected to accumulate reserves, and does not do so. There is therefore no visible ground for the suggestion that the financial operations of the Government "deplete reserves" or cause the loss of "capital resources." We would like the bankers to enlighten us on this matter. Suppose we imagine the extremest case, namely that the Government took all our incomes from us and spent them for us. Or suppose the opposite—that it abolished all taxation and left us to do our own spending. How would either of these policies necessarily deplete or strengthen reserves?

Reflection on this question will show that the significance of taxes does not consist in their amount but in the *direction* of their expenditure—in the sort of things and services on which the money is spent. The general character of a community's whole expenditure of income is governed by the proportions in which the spending is voluntary (private) or involuntary (public). The bankers' interest is to reduce the proportion handled by the Government, because that will increase the proportion handled more directly under their control. In this competition for control between the financier and the statesman the true interest of the public lies in resisting the financier. Autocratically as a Government behaves nowadays in prescribing what the public must buy and pay for, it does at least go through the form of consulting the electorate and getting a more or less definite general mandate to do what it does do. For example, the South Paddington election was fought to decide between four competing policies, each of which involved an element of Protection, and for that reason involved an interference with the banking principle of allowing trade to flow freely in accordance with the "natural law" of supply and demand. The anony-

mous Protectionist manifesto by bankers some time ago did not indicate their abandonment of the Free Trade principle, it signified their intention of identifying themselves with Protection if the people decided to have it. It was an advertising manoeuvre. They had appreciated that the business community, under the whip of trade depression, had taken the bit of financial tradition between its teeth and would gallop off in one of two directions—fiscal reform or credit reform. To the bankers the first was much the less of two evils, so they were; and are, now content to let the horse take this new road. But they still hold to the principle of Free Trade, and would have compelled the nation to maintain it if they could have done so without letting the public see that they were exercising compulsion. As it is they are quite safe, for by making a virtue of their impartiality on the question of fiscal policy while everybody else is quarrelling about the precise form of its application, they look to be the only people who can be trusted to drive the State coach—and that is what they are most concerned about. They know very well that whatever road they drive along they are able to make the old coach bump just as uncomfortably as it did before, and can rely with certainty on the passengers' clamouring sooner or later for another change of route. Mr. Snowden in office is their Minister: Mr. Snowden out of office will be their *agent provocateur*. He is already preparing for the function if or when the electorate tie the Protectionist ribbon on the bankers' whip. "The Truth About Protection—The Worker Pays" is the title which the Labour Party print on a recent pamphlet reproducing his speech in the Commons on July 16. It is not the truth about Protection at all; it is, however, likely to be the truth about how the bankers will manage affairs within a Protectionist system. The pamphlet can be regarded as a veiled invitation to the bankers to administrate the new fiscal system so as to inflict special hardships on wage-earners, under which they will be ready to listen to Mr. Snowden's "I told you so," and rally behind him in an agitation for a "Return to Free Trade and Prosperity." There is no reason at all why the worker need be hit any harder than the employer under a Protectionist system. But there is more than one device by which he could be hit under it. For example, not long ago the Civil Servants were invited to consider whether they would like to have their salaries and existing cost-of-living bonuses merged and permanently consolidated. Well, how they would like it clearly depended upon whether prices rose or fell after the consolidation. And it is obvious that if salary and wage earners were to enter upon a Protectionist period, bringing fixed consolidated wages to meet progressively rising prices, they would soon be in financial difficulties. And so would everybody else whose income did not rise and fall with prices. Happily, so far, no section of the wage and salary-earning class has committed itself to such a gamble; and Mr. Snowden has no more ground for warning them than for warning anybody else against a changed fiscal policy. To make such warning good he would have either to announce that the cost-of-living bonus was going to be abolished, or if not, to prove that, under the existing method of calculating the index-figure, rises in prices would outstrip the compensatory rises in bonuses. If he will commit himself to either of these propositions we will sit up and listen to him; but until then we must treat his warning as a Mansion-House nightmare's-nest.

To revert to the question of heavy taxation, the bankers' objection to it elicits popular sympathy based on the fallacious assumption that the less the taxes the more the community will have to spend. The same assumption underlies agitations against

profiteering whether by commercial or professional interests. Thus Mr. Laski, whose address to the Ethical Union we review elsewhere, when indicting the legal profession for its expensiveness, seems to be under the impression that if you lop off some of its charges you can distribute the saving in the form of bread and butter to the rest of the population. *John Bull's* article, to which we refer in the same review, says that the cost of running the judicial system comes to more than £1,000,000 per annum exclusive of court fees and solicitors' and barristers' charges. Herein is the same assumption that taking food off a judge's dinner plate means putting food on to someone else's. Nothing of the sort. Every penny the lawyers drop the bankers will pick up. At the end of September the British banks held £270,000,000 worth of investments. Although they may have political reasons for holding some of them, it still remains a fact that they are potential sellers of securities to this amount, and that one of their main axioms is that investment is not their proper business—that bankers should keep their assets free and not locked up. So if the legal profession disgorged the £1,000,000 the ultimate consequence would be that the bankers would be able to plant that value in securities on to the market and pick up the money. And, as Mr. McKenna has repeatedly pointed out, when banks sell securities credit is withdrawn from circulation and destroyed. The political taxing system at worst only transfers credit within the community, but the bankers' reserve and investment system takes credit away from the community. The fact that the banks may subsequently create and issue new credit equal in amount to that which they have withdrawn is a mitigating circumstance from a financial point of view, but they select who shall use the credit, and where it shall be used, and for what purposes without the slightest reference to the interests of the public, who are fundamentally the owners of all financial credit. The bankers' concern about high taxation is really a concern about controlling expenditure. Taxes do buy you certain things—ruinous as the cost may be—and you are shown what you have got for your money. But the bankers' taxes buy you nothing. They confiscate your money; but publish no Budget—so nobody is aware of the fact.

Mr. E. W. MacAlpine, late Editor of the *Sunday Times*, Sydney, contributes an interesting article on Mr. J. T. Lang, the new Premier-Treasurer of New South Wales, to the *Manchester Guardian* of October 30.

"He is called a dictator by his opponents and is the best-hated man in Australian politics. . . . He has little personal popularity and does not court it. . . . A move to challenge his leadership when Labour was in power in 1927 resulted in a sudden recasting of his Cabinet and the leaders of the revolt finding themselves outside the Labour movement."

During his previous Administration he forced the Workers' Compensation Bill through the House. After it became law he called the permanent officials concerned together and asked how long it would take to set the machinery in motion. They replied: "At least several months. 'I want it working on Monday week,'" he replied, "and if it is not ready then I will go up there and set it going myself." "Everything," comments Mr. MacAlpine, "was in working order by the date he desired."

In an interview which he had with Mr. Lang two months ago, one of Mr. Lang's remarks was that in his reading of history he was

"repeatedly struck by the fact that the statesmen who amounted to anything were always those who proceeded to do what everybody said was impossible. The impos-

possible,' he added, 'is usually only impossible in the minds of those who don't want to do it.'"

On the question of Australia's "insolvency" Mr. Lang said it was nonsense. The value of Pitt Street, Sydney, alone, would, he said, liquidate all New South Wales's debts. Mr. MacAlpine says that even Mr. Lang's opponents regard him as one of the ablest Treasurers the State has had. When last in office he stubbornly opposed the State's entry into the Federal Loan Council which the then Federal Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce, set up to unify Australia's borrowings; and it was not until after he was defeated that the State joined the Council.

From this account it would appear that Mr. Lang is able and ready to bring administrative forcefulness behind his policy. Readers who have followed our comments in previous issues on the Australian situation, including those in last week's issue on Mr. Lang's programme and his victory at the polls, will realise that he is the very type of man to deal with the problem in the way we suggested. He is called a dictator—and we hope the epithet is deserved; for in his position now he must dictate or be dictated to. As we suggested, his policy should be to provoke an ultimatum from the financial interests who will now be advising and assisting his opponents—to find out as quickly as possible what they can and are prepared to do to block his programme. Upon which, either he gets on with it immediately, or he resigns office. The moral effect of his resigning, if accompanied by a full exposure of the reasons, need not be doubted, provided that he gets out before anything has happened in the community to cause a loss of confidence in his policy. Seeing that this policy, in part, consists in a refusal to enforce changes recommended by Sir Otto Niemeyer, he could at least carry this part out just as certainly in Opposition as he can in office. He would still command a clear majority in the Legislature, and could reject Bills brought in by a minority Government. If, on the other hand, there was another appeal to the electors, the new facts they would have before them might well form a basis on which Mr. Lang could ask for an even stronger mandate than before, especially if in the meantime he had discovered how to promote the interests of the community without penalising any single section of it. Such items in his programme as

- Curtailement of leases.
- Division of big estates.
- Regulation of interest on mortgages.
- Prohibiting foreclosures on homes.
- Restoring the Fair Rents Courts.

may or may not have been strong factors influencing the Labour vote. We cannot possibly know, so cannot pass an opinion whether they should reappear in another Labour programme or not. What we do say is that the results aimed at by these measures can be secured otherwise and without coercion. A Government which can control credit-policy and knows the Social Credit technique can safely ignore specific money-exactions because their effects will be counterbalanced by issues of national credit. The burden of rents may seem large in proportion to the amount of money that the tenants can scrape together, or in proportion to the income of the whole community. But that is primarily the fault of the bankers whose credit policy is designed to produce this situation. But the real measure of the rent-burden is not the number of monetary units drawn in rents but the number of production units drawn by the landlords. Human beings live on things, not money. And for anyone to say that because the landlords in a community have drawn, say, half the total money, therefore the rest of the community can consume only half the total goods is nonsense unless he can show that the landlords

have actually consumed the other half. There is a definite limit to a person's desire and capacity to consume goods and services, however large his income is. The stacks of unsold wool and wheat in Australia are concrete evidence that the profiteers and rack-renters of Australia have not run off with all the clothes and food. What they have run off with is pieces of paper which they could have spent on consumption if they had wanted to, but to a great measure did not. Very well, the proper credit policy for a Government is to clear the market of the goods they leave—to empower the rest of the community, who need the goods, to buy them. Saving them is of no benefit to anybody—not even to the people who might have bought them—for the power of production is continuous and is always increasing. The faster the market is cleared the faster it can be replenished. Nor could the rich sections of the community raise any intelligible objection, unless they were able to show that the policy had caused them to go short of something they wanted in the shops and were ready to pay for.

The *Times* Correspondent cables from Melbourne as follows:

Commenting on the mysterious report that the (Labour) Caucus instructed Mr. Lyons, the Acting Treasurer, to request the Commonwealth Bank to prepare a scheme for issuing credits upon the country's assets, Sir George Pearce, the Leader of the Senate Opposition, declares that "the Senate majority will force a double dissolution rather than allow the people's savings to be jeopardised by these wild theorists. . . . Only Mr. Lyons' threat to carry the fight into the open prevented the extremists from going the full length of their desires. . . . Sir Otto Niemeyer and Sir Robert Gibson, Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank, arrived from Sydney to-day and conferred with Mr. Lyons." (Our italics.)

It is a curious coincidence that last week we should have referred to the rejection of Mr. Lloyd George's Budget by the House of Lords in 1909. Mr. Asquith, as we mentioned, went to the country and came back pledged to extract guarantees from the Lords that they would leave money bills alone, and pledged to refuse office until he had succeeded. He broke both pledges; and even at this day nobody can tell exactly what powers the Upper House might exercise in the event of the Lower House passing a money-bill which the banks regarded as dangerous. For the Liberal and Conservative Front Benchers went into secret conclave on the issue and came to an understanding which they did not think necessary to announce. Just as municipal policy is decided in saloon bars, so is political policy decided in Society houses. And it is clear that the political policy of leaving the powers of the Upper House undefined suits the bankers, because they can use either House to check the other without there appearing to be any infringement of Constitutional principle. Our unwritten Constitution has manifest advantages, but its fluidity lends itself to exploitation by the manipulators of liquid assets.

Mr. Lang will do well to note, by the way, that Mr. Lloyd George's financial policy at the time, and since, has been directed to breaking up the land monopoly—a policy identical with that reflected in the items in Mr. Lang's programme that we have been discussing. And since up to the present no Chancellor of the Exchequer has held office unless approved by the City, it can be taken for granted that bankers are neutral to the policy of fleecing landlords. Hence, since Mr. Lang's main idea is to mobilise opinion and support against the banks, his attack on rents, etc., is not only technically futile, even if successful, but is an unnecessary provocation to electors who live on rents. He would only be

justified if he could show that his rent-policy would undermine the banks' control of general policy. We remember that the City refused Mr. Theodore a loan because of his attempt to modify land-leases in Queensland; and this, we concede, suggests that external financial interests regard the leases as hypothecated security for their loans. But even so, the order in which to undo the mischief is first to free the Australian land-holders from the bankers' exactions, and then, if necessary, to limit their own. A Government which understands the right technique can issue credit on terms which will induce everyone who lives by selling goods or services to lower his prices, or to give more goods for the same money.

To come back to Melbourne, both Sir George Pearce and Mr. Lyons should be challenged to explain how an increased amount of credit in circulation "jeopardises savings." All existing savings have come out of past credits; and if banks lent no credit there would be no savings. It is the repayment of bank loans which "jeopardises" savings. It is true enough that a large issue of new credit will lower the purchasing-power of previous savings—but only if it is allowed to. The Social Credit price-regulation policy will eliminate this risk if carried out concurrently with the credit-issue policy. Under this dual policy the purchasing power of everybody's income and savings—whether he be a manufacturer, trader or workman—will increase, not decrease.

We print elsewhere the first part of Mr. W. M. Hughes's (ex-Premier of the Australian Commonwealth's) "Reply" to Sir Otto Niemeyer, an authentic copy of which has recently reached us from Australia. All the newspapers' references to it up to date have had to be confined to cables from their "Correspondents," or comments on their messages. We feel sure that many experienced British editors will recognise the high political importance of the full version, and will take advantage of the present opportunity to quote it and comment on it. The New South Wales election gives it even more news-value to-day than it would have had when published some six weeks ago; so we look to see a generous measure of publicity given to it in the leader and correspondence columns of every independent organ of responsible opinion.

"Mr. Stanley Argyle, leader of the Opposition in the Victorian Parliament, said to-day that the New South Wales election result amazed him. 'Mr. Lang's policy,' he declared, 'can only increase our difficulty in obtaining credit a hundredfold. It is a national disaster for which the whole of Australia must pay.'—Daily News Correspondent, October 27.

"The decisions of the Federal Labour Caucus have been received on all sides with bitter disappointment. Not only is the estimated total yield of £8,000,000 far below requirements, but the methods by which this sum is to be raised are considered inequitable and unsound.—The Times, Nov. 1. Cable from Melbourne Correspondent.

"There is reason to believe that the proposals include the diversion of a portion of the reparations payments from the Sinking Fund of the National Debt, which would be a distinct breach of the existing understanding between all the Australian Governments. It is doubtful if it could be done without special legislation.—The Times, Nov. 1. Cable from Melbourne Correspondent.

"There is amazement that Civil servants whose salaries are below £750 should escape taxation, while it is proposed to put a super-tax of 5 per cent. on incomes of £500 and over derived from personal exertion. . . . Less fortunate fellow citizens like bricklayers have just been forced to accept a reduction of 14s. a week. Labour may yet have cause to repent this unexpected discrimination.—The Times, Nov. 1. Cable from Melbourne Correspondent.

## Professor Laski on the Law.

A booklet\* of twenty-two pages reproduces a lecture given by Professor Laski before the Ethical Union on October 22. He discusses anomalies in the administration of law by the lawyers, anomalies of the sort that one can read about any day in *John Bull*.† His conclusion is that: "We need something more than a Jeremy Bentham every century to goad his fellow lawyers into a reconsideration of legal foundations." Professor Laski has overlooked Lord Hewart's recent book, which was devoted precisely to such a reconsideration. This omission is significant, for the Professor's thesis, in spite of his indefiniteness, can be seen to be a direct negative to that of Lord Hewart. Professor Laski insinuates that it is the lawyer who impedes justice, while the Lord Chief Justice has declared that it is the Departmental administrator. One would certainly have expected that a Professor of Political Science in an institution so important as the University of London would have publicly noticed Lord Hewart's arguments and conclusions, and not have left his hearers under the impression that there was no responsible answer to his indictment. The "Object" of the Ethical Union is stated on its literature to be: "To advocate the supreme importance of knowledge, love, and practice of Right." Very well; surely it is of supreme importance that before this Body commits itself to love and practice the idea that "Right" requires a restriction of the liberty of power, it should make sure whether the liberty of the subject is oppressed by the Law or, as Lord Hewart declares, protected by the Law. Of course, if it be a governing principle with the Union that it is wrong to have disputations on such matters, the silence of Professor Laski is understandable. Or has he not yet heard of *The New Despotism*? Someone complained the other day in, we think, the *Evening Standard*, about an example of "administrative lawlessness" (as Lord Hewart would call it) on the part of the Postmaster-General. He said that a gentleman went away from home for three months leaving his telephone receiver locked up. After he got back he received an account for calls. In spite of his protest and his proffer of evidence that these calls could not have been made, he had to pay up; for Parliament had legislated prohibiting him from seeking the aid of the Law by investing the Postmaster with the power of adjudication on such matters—and the Postmaster decided that he had made the calls.

"I am a university teacher," Professor Laski says, "whose own subject borders at every point upon the law." Yet nowhere throughout his lecture does he indicate having any knowledge of the 40,000 Departmental Orders in existence which make the bureaucrat the judge in suits to which, under the Rule of Law, he would appear simply as one of the parties. One of his complaints about the lawyer is that he has been inefficiently educated; "he has been shown nothing of the interrelations of law with economics or political science." We will submit one does not give an illustration. We will submit one. Some time ago Judge Cluer was asked to approve an agreement under the Workmen's Compensation Act

\* "Justice and the Law." By Harold J. Laski. (Ethical Union. Price 3d.)

† As a matter of fact, *John Bull* of October 25 contains a flaring article spread across two pages entitled "Justice With Weighted Scales." It is an anonymous indictment of the Law for its delays, its costliness, and its cruelties, and could easily have been contributed by Professor Laski himself but for its manner of expression. Its content and spirit are the same as those of his lecture.

wherein some workman, totally incapacitated by an accident, had accepted an offer of a lump sum of money from the insurance assessors in full settlement of his claim for compensation. When the Judge opened the document and saw the amount, he indignantly tore it up and threw the pieces out into the court among the ducking and dodging officials, telling the parties to go away and to bring back a proper agreement. We suggest that the reformed education of lawyers which Professor Laski contemplates might tend to eliminate judges of the type of Judge Cluer—for the "interrelations of law with economics" might be so taught as to embody the principle that the rights of the subject should be made dependent upon the financial resources of the State. In such an event, a judge in the position of Judge Cluer in the case referred to, would, in reviewing the agreement, have allowed more weight to the principle of protecting the solvency of the insurance funds than to that of protecting the injured workman's standard of life.‡

Professor Laski remarks that there is "no teaching tradition in the Inns of Court." As a contrast he points out that

"the students of Harvard and Yale, Paris, Bordeaux, Berlin and Hamburg, go out, not merely to practise, but also to improve. They become missionaries for new ideas. They clamour for experiment. I do not discover men of this temper among the general run of English lawyers."

From our observation of affairs we think it reasonable to suggest that if the students at Harvard and Yale went in for less improvement and experiment, the gangsters and gunmen in Chicago might be less immune from conviction than they are. When it is remembered that "new ideas" cover such "experiments" as the acceptance by judges in the United States of bribes from criminals, Professor Laski's use of the formula amounts to so much slop. Does he know himself what he means by it?

The proposition to eliminate lawyers from the settlement of business disputes comes of the same parentage as does the proposition to eliminate the middleman from the conduct of commerce, and the proposition to eliminate the politician from the conduct of government insofar as trade and commerce are affected. Let us tabulate the new synthesis.

To be abolished.	To be substituted.
The private director.	The accountancy expert.
The independent proprietor.	The merger.
The merchant.	The manufacturer (i.e., the merger).
The political Government.	The business Government.
The judge and the barrister.	The Departmental bureaucrat and his officials.

Summing up, these "reforms" comprehensively amount to the abolition of private rights in favour of autocratic "business" control. If this principle be conceded, there is no resisting its corollary that the jurisdiction of the Courts shall be sacrificed to the jurisdiction of the Banks. We elaborated this

‡ For instance, Professor Laski speaks approvingly (p. 14) of the policy in Ontario of setting up a Workmen's Compensation Board. "There are no lawyers and no appeal to the Courts." The Board receives the doctor's report, and has power to approve compensation "agreed upon by the employer and workman." The "expenses of administration in Ontario are 2 per cent. of the assessments upon the employers" . . . "business men have insurance at cost against compensation." Professor Laski's argument is that, without lawyers, compensation is prompt for the workman and cheap for the employer. The reader may like to reflect how Mr. Justice Cluer's workman would have got on under such a system. It is a foregone conclusion that the ridiculously mean settlement would have gone through—for can anyone suppose that after the insurance assessors had got this man to agree to the amount, the insurance interests (who virtually are the Compensation Board) would have intervened and insisted on scaling it up as Judge Cluer did? No: the Law's delays are not the unmixed evil that Professor Laski insinuates.

general conclusion when we reviewed Lord Hewart's book, so will content ourselves at present by referring readers to our remarks on that occasion.

The true indictment against the Lawyer should be based on the fact that he has allowed his power to protect the Liberty of the Subject to be surreptitiously taken from him by the money-monopolists. In the same measure as he has lost his power of independent jurisdiction so has he lost his claim to independent emoluments. The bankers have stolen his job and are now inspiring attacks on his salary and fees. His original functions can now be performed more efficiently and cheaply by bureaucrats acting under the advice of the banking and insurance interests. Clearly, if the solvency of the State is to be accepted as a paramount consideration, the right of the Subjects where money and property are concerned is not susceptible of adjudication by reference to the Rule of Law. The Legal Profession, having renounced its responsibilities, cannot logically defend its privileges. Time and time again you hear a Judge say to a litigant: "The Court sympathises with you, but it has unfortunately no power to redress your grievance."! The moral is exactly the opposite to that which Professor Laski preaches: the Legal Profession, far from assenting to further filching from its responsibilities, should make a determined bid to regain those which it has lost. How it can proceed to do so is another matter.

Speaking of obstacles to reform he says:—

"I doubt the possibility of really basic reform so long as the present disparities between rich and poor continue."

This is almost entirely nonsense. The one germ of sense in it is the vague suggestion that basically the reform of the law is bound up with the reform of the economic system. So long as financial credit is a bankers' monopoly the Law Courts can only pronounce bankers' judgments. The Legal Profession cannot break this monopoly by its own power, but it can add its influence to the general movement in the country against financial monopolistic repression.

## The League of Nations Dinner.

Gog and Magog, like two huge pagan gods of war, looked louringly from their high pedestals in the London Guildhall upon the distinguished guests assembled by the Lord Mayor to dine in honour of the League of Nations. They seemed to grin in massive derision at the rather vague (though doubtless sincere) hopes for world peace and world disarmament expressed by the eminent people who rose to follow the speech made by the Prince of Wales. For these twin giants, each in his semi-dark corner, symbolised in one's mind that brute strength which has always been the final means to settle a dispute; and one imagined them chuckling rather horribly as they decided that the will to peace, however real, is never likely to prevent man or nation from fighting to save its existence.

But then Gog and Magog have quietly been watching humanity for a long time, and advancing years have perhaps made them sceptical. True, years may even have made the giants deaf, so that when the incense of steaming meats reached their nostrils they possibly took it all as some grand feast in honour of Mars. When Mr. J. H. Thomas, for example, gesticulated with more and more energy as his words of enthusiasm for the League's ideals drew to their closing oratorical flight, perhaps the giants understood him to be inciting his audience to "Go out and fight the foreign foe!" The ironic humour of this imaginary situation was pleasing to the mind, and if the fancy seems blameable it was certainly induced by having to sit for three hours facing those towering wooden images.

And to be serious, would it not be a good notion, whenever international relations became strained, to invite representatives of any bellicose powers to one of these splendid Guildhall banquets? Hostile thoughts would surely disappear with the excellent food and wines. With coffee and cigars the mellowed ambassadors would be pleased to renew whatever treaty was in danger of being broken, and a replete Lord Mayor would have achieved what hungry diplomacy had failed to settle.

## Quips At Quite-ness.

Sometimes, when you have been waiting for your train, your eye may have chanced to fall on some advertising-poster which an anonymous wag has "improved" in a way which the publisher did not intend. A frequent example of this pastime—for such it must be—is the sketching in of a moustache on the pictured face of some beautiful actress. Whether you have considered the addition an improvement or a disfigurement, or have been amused or irritated, has, of course, depended on the mood you were in at the time. I once saw a poster which declared that: "Quite-So Builds Bonnie Babies"; on which somebody had scrawled the word: "Liar." This conjunction of a dogmatic affirmation with its direct negative induced me to reflect (for I had nothing else to think about at the time) that perhaps after all the announcement might have been better worded: "Does Quite-So Build Bonnie Babies?" This, of course, would have provided an obvious temptation to some wag to scrawl "No" across it; but he would have had to be a lower type of wag than the other to do so. The spirit of the interrogation mark would have cheapened the humour of the annotation.

These thoughts have come to me just now as a consequence of my glancing through M.B.Oxon's recent book.\* I can picture him prowling along through the silent tube-tunnels in the dead of nights, touching up the posters at the stations. In the morning the passengers would read for instance that whereas the efficacy of Quite-So might be quite so, yet it might not—or not quite—or, if quite, not always—that although the administration of Quite-So may frequently have accompanied the development of bonnie babies, yet the administration of mother's-milk has accompanied the development of other bonnie babies—that many babies have not grown bonnie on Quite-So—that some have even died after taking it.

For M.B.Oxon cannot bear a closed philosophy. To him any hypothesis, however widely accepted, is still an hypothesis—it is much like a world's champion boxer who must be ready at any time to defend his title against challengers. M.B.Oxon's reaction to a champion hypothesis consists in trying to discover another which might whack it if properly trained. He does not look only for young blood: he is as ready to drag an ex-champion out of retirement to fight for the title as he is to bring out a new challenger. For a dogmatist may be challenged on two grounds; the one, that he has forgotten something old; the other, that he has not yet apprehended something new. And so through an intellectual thoroughfare crowded with religious, psychological and philosophic dogmatists, M.B.Oxon hurries along without any particular respect for whose corns he treads on.

"To the scientific mind," said Mr. Chapman Cohen recently in the *Freethinker*, "any hypothesis is admissible in the endeavour to get at truth." He recalls, in this context, how Dean Swift once propounded a theory that all the Bishops in Ireland were disguised highwaymen. The Dean's argument was that since they had the word of the Government that wise, good and upright men were always appointed bishops, and since these wise, good and upright men never arrived in Ireland, he thought the explanation to be that they were waylaid by highwaymen who killed them, stripped them of their clothes, disposed of the bodies, and then came to Ireland in their stead and took up the positions and salaries. This is an

excellent illustration of the fact that hypotheses are only truth-testing implements, and must not be confused with the truth itself. Such element of confusion is characteristic of all dogmas; so M.B.Oxon has good moral sanction for his chosen pastime of perverting them whenever he can.

But when he invites his public to make a synthesis of his perversions he is putting them a pretty stiff task! He says of his "Scraps" that if you put them together you may get some idea of the whole from which they are broken. I think that he, or his publisher, ought to have offered a prize for the nearest guess—and a good fat prize too, considering the nature and size of the problem. When you have to resolve a jig-saw puzzle you do have all the pieces to play with. But M.B.Oxon's book provides you with twenty-eight pieces, this being the number of theses contained in it; whereas, for all you know, he may have thousands more locked up in his mind—all being parts of the same "whole" from which the published twenty-eight have been broken off.

However, it is possible to solve a picture-puzzle without having all the parts, so long as the parts you do have are key parts, and belong to a definite picture. Emerson used to advise young literary aspirants that they need not expound the whole of their meaning in their writings—that intelligent and thoughtful readers appreciated an author's leaving something to their imagination—but, he warned his listeners: "Be sure that you know the meaning yourselves." In other words, Don't cheat your readers into wasting their time searching for what is not there. By reason both of their brevity and of their clarity of expression, M.B.Oxon's clues do give one the feeling of assurance that he is aware of the point of their convergence, and that he has set their several angles of direction accordingly. So readers who take the trouble to follow them may find themselves helped towards a quickened sense of the solidarity of Things in General—a result which, in itself, would be a satisfying reward for their effort.

Thus my review of Mr. M.B.Oxon's book must take the form of advice to competitors. My advice is: read through the twenty-eight essays without trying to taste the meaning of any one of them. Don't put the work on your palate: let your stomach do it. Be courageous and drink the lot. What happens will depend upon what type of subject you are. The mixture may work as an aperient, or an emetic, or a narcotic, or an astringent, or an aphrodisiac, or lots of other things. No one can tell. The essays are not in logical sequence but in sublogical combination; and must be dealt with accordingly. It is quite possible that your mind could misapprehend every one of the twenty-eight essays in the book, and yet your spirit comprehend the whole book. So now, go ahead and see if you can discover the master-synthesis—the sort of poster which M.B.Oxon would display if he were inconsistent enough to hang one out at all.

HERBERT RIVERS.

### South Paddington Election Result.

Beaverbrook Conservatism	11,209
Official Conservatism	10,268
Socialism	7,944
Rothermere Conservatism	494
Indifferentism	21,207
Total electorate	51,122

Indifferentist majority, 9,998. Indifferentist poll, 42 per cent. of the total electorate. Result as before—self-disfranchisement! "And we go marching on" was Lord Beaverbrook's exultant comment on his candidate's having taken second place. It is rather Parliament that has received marching orders.

## Drama.

### Cheri: Stage Society.

Among the Incorporated Stage Society's productions during the season just opened will be "The Borrowed Life" (Komisarjevsky producing), "Three Flats," and either a modern play—Japanese or European—or an Elizabethan comedy. In the work of lifting the bushels from the lights of English dramatic authors, as well as in trying to prevent London from degenerating once more to parochialism, the Stage Society is without rival. The list of plays and authors introduced to the English theatre for the first time records an achievement but for which our theatrical poverty would have been far more intense.

It is difficult to see why the Stage Society chose "Cheri." Lacking information, I suspect that it was conceived as a novel, and I regard any dramatization of a novel as foreign matter in the theatre of the Stage Society. Secondly, if the play belongs anywhere it is to the commercial theatre in which there is no pit or gallery. It may thrill the wealthy, but as an amoral wealth fantasy for people who have to earn their livings, it is so decadent as to be definitely repulsive. Cheri, at twenty-five is the lover of a woman close on fifty. Both possess tons of money. His mother (or his foster-mother) marries him to a girl of nineteen whose simplicity, purity, innocence, and childlikeness, arise neither from her heredity nor her environment. But there it is, anyhow, and naturally the youth who has tasted the combination of matronly affection and voluptuous perversion provided by the older woman stages a quarrel with his wife and goes back to the older woman.

If the play was not first a novel it is nevertheless the work of the novelist mind. In a novel one has licence to express one's own reactions to the nastiness of one's characters, to mock them, to expose them. In drama the author is under a creator's obligation to exercise both the love of God and His Judgment Day, disinterested understanding and mercy. In this play only one character receives these. The jury is prejudiced against the rest. Seeing Othello, nobody hates Iago more than any other character. Seeing this adaptation from the French of Colette and Léopold Marchand, by Una, Lady Troubridge, one feels contemptuous of the lot, knowing that the creator intended one to feel contemptuous of nearly the lot. Cheri is a play of insignificant character. No character in it makes any effort to mould itself from within. They do not provoke any moral conscience, but aesthetic and biological conscience, which has a right to exist even in art. Anyone who disagrees is referred to Nietzsche and company. The play is redeemed as far as possible by a magnificent performance as the old faithful dog by Mr. Alan Napier, and an excellent presentation of child-like simplicity by Miss Gladys Tudor. But the characters are not a dramatist's creations. They are a novelist's descriptions.

### The Playboy of the Western World: Criterion.

Synge's satire of the Irish character, which hails the boy who killed his father as a god, jeers at him, as merely as an ordinary liar when it turns out that he did not murder his da', and, finally, handles him as a criminal and scapegoat when he tries to live up

to his heroic reputation, was generally accepted by critics as the best of the Irish plays. It is certainly enjoyable entertainment not to be missed. But critics must be sleeping with Van Winkle who repeat this statement after O'Casey. That, in spite of his satire, Synge was romantic and O'Casey realist, does not disqualify either for comparison. Cyrano is romantic, but like many other romantic works, it is great work. But Synge is also sentimental, with some of the sentimentality that comes through, for example, the humour of Mr. W. W. Jacobs and Mr. Eden Philpotts. May it be said that they grandmother their imps? Secondly, if one protests that Synge's play appeals less strongly to theatrical sense than to other senses, the reply is invariably, "But what beautiful language." Almost everything I wrote of George Moore's style in his *Essene* play a week or two ago applies to Synge. As Moore's style is the lullaby in English, Synge's is the lullaby in Irish. His barmaids, flappers, potmen, designing widows, and boozers, all speak beautiful, highly-polished, magnificently edited, Irish lyric poetry. One has been to the theatre to experience a literary style. But that, as Hans Andersen often said, is something, so don't fail to go. Mr. Fred O'Donovan's Christopher Mahon is excellent. He invariably excels in the recitation of lyric fairy-tales. Mr. Harry Hutchison as Flaherty, Messrs. J. A. O'Rourke and E. J. Kennedy as the twins—no Irish play seems complete without boozier-twins—and Miss Nathalie Moya as Pegeen Mike, are good company. The audience, in spite of the dialect, understands every word, which says something for the arts, now nearly extinct in England, of oratory and elocution. Miss Cathleen Drago's Widow Quinn was good in manner, deportment, and business, though not yet good enough. And she spoke much too fast for this Irish, highly metaphorical, dialogue; or, rather, illegitimately to borrow from music, her rests were too short. Mr. Tony Quinn's performance as Shawn Keogh, the simpleton, was much better than his work in "The Far-Off Hills." But he should still more endear the simpleton to the audience. The music-hall comedian achieves it, and so can the stage comedian.

### The Grain of Mustard Seed: Ambassadors.

Last time the Ambassadors Theatre presented a short play, it threw in a first-class curtain-raiser. The substitution of a pianist for the curtain-raiser on the present occasion was doubtless decided on after thorough consideration. Possibly so much in one evening was found to overwork the post-war mind. But music in England is merely regarded as a setting for a *conversazione*. Its purpose is to drown other people's voices and to ease the embarrassment of publicly hearing one's own. Possibly, therefore, Mrs. Gamble was thoroughly satisfied that her performance provided the audience with an opportunity for a real, good, talk.

"The Grain of Mustard Seed," by Mr. H. M. Harwood, was worth reviving. Politics on the stage are a wet-blanket as a rule, but not even politics can swamp Harwood's capacity for cynical epigram. There are patches less brilliant than some of his other work, particularly in the first act. But much of "The Grain of Mustard Seed" is probably too near the actual truth to be brilliant. The political policies of the play are not very thought-provoking, but they could hardly be expected to stimulate thought, since the occasion is an election. Nevertheless, Harwood's presentation of the way in which men clever enough to be dangerous are absorbed and married into the circle, or discredited, is amusing and enlightening. If anything but confirmed habitual inferiority made a people governable, Mr. Harwood's play would have been banned, as in Russia anything which reminds the worker of his confirmed, habitual, in-

\* "Scraps." By M.B.Oxon. (Daniel. 6s. net.)

feriority is banned. "The Grain of Mustard Seed" was first produced ten years ago. It is a sufficient comment on politics and progress that the play is still quite up-to-date. It would have been a mistake to rewrite a line of it, and the author did well to resist, what must have been, for him, a very strong temptation. Mr. A. Bromley-Davenport's Lord Henry Markham is a classic piece of acting. Miss Mabel Terry-Lewis's Jane Strood, Mr. Stafford Hilliard's George Corbett, M.P., Mr. H. G. Stoker's Captain Rivers, and Mr. Fewlass Llewellyn's "taxpayer," are also well done.

Some of the other actors were at times guilty of inaudibility. Miss Madge Snell's Mrs. Corbett was bad. It is impossible to imagine, having seen a Strood, in the person of Miss Mabel Terry-Lewis, that Mrs. Corbett had been bred from the Strood stable also. Mr. Nicholas Hannen failed to give the genuine inner fire to the reformer. He gave me the impression of masquerading as a reformer, and of being very doubtful whether he could deceive anybody.

PAUL BANKS.

## Music.

Concert tickets have been pouring in like the shower of the pack of cards at the end of "Alice in Wonderland"—but there have been none that justified my submitting myself to the boredom of listening to, nor gave any reason for wasting valuable space in THE NEW AGE with accounts of these multitudinous insignificances. The most interesting event of the past few weeks has not been any concert, public or private, nor of any kind, but the publication of a set of records of the second Sibelius Symphony by the Columbia Company under the auspices of, and at the expense of, the Finnish Government. One might dilate at length upon the marvellous phenomenon of a Government which, first, like the Finnish Government, grants a great musician an income in order that he may devote himself freely to composition; the Finnish Government actually did this thirty-two years ago when Sibelius was still comparatively a young man, and next, because it considers his larger works are insufficiently known outside Finland, as indeed they are, finances the issue of a large work like the second Symphony, which we are told—and the information is marvellously welcome—is only the first of a series of similar issues. One does not know which to admire the more, the intelligent artistic foresight that originally prompted the life grant to this great Master, or the granting of the grant itself, which would have been admirable had Sibelius been less superbly great than he is. And each is honoured—Finland, above all, in the possession of such a Master, and Sibelius in the possession of a fatherland which can produce such a Government.

The Second Symphony is, it appears, dated from as long ago as 1902, but it remains to this day, and strikes one coming upon it as a new acquaintance as a most wholly original personal and individual work, the equal of which in strength and directness, in single-heartedness, in purity and beauty of spirit, there are only two other composers—Bach and Mahler. Here is a real greatness and nobility of musical spirit expressing itself with a glowing, spontaneous eloquence, without a scrap of affectation or attitudinising, without any of that conscious, pumped-up, and deliberate magnanimity, that laboured and factitious nobility that disfigures Elgar at times.

The expression of the Sibelius Second Symphony is lofty and exalted, not because the composer has been enjoying a warm bath of moral rectitude, such as one, rightly or wrongly, feels Elgar in his Land of Hope and Glorification moods indulges in a little too freely and a little too complacently, but because of the inherent nobility and loftiness of the thought as such. The extraordinary directness of expression masking a great subtlety and fineness of musical idea. The seeming and at first sight surprisingly abrupt transitions, the passage from point to point by a leap instead of a saunter, the remarkable twists *à-retours* that the most well-worn and *usés* of counters of musical speech receive, combine to produce on audiences and the normally unintelligent listener an effect they find unpleasantly disconcerting. Mr. Newman's plain man (so *very*, *very* plain) feels he is being unfairly treated by a composer who presents him with the phenomenon of one of the most recondite, subtle, original thinkers in music that have ever lived, and who expresses himself in an idiom of such an unsensational and lucid kind that he is cheated out of taking refuge from the composer's incomprehensibility down the "rabbit-modern" or "futurist," or "expressionist" "holes, holes obviously closed by the "ordinariness" of the composer's utterance. Equally out of place is this great Master, thank God, among those appalling gatherings of modernity snobs that break out yearly, now here, now there, over the face of Europe. Even the plainest of plain men can hear that. And as plain men demand some sort of toeing of a line, whether it be their line or someone else's does not matter, before they can feel comfortable or comfortably uncomfortable, it will readily be seen how completely uncomfortable they must be when confronted with one of those rarest of rare beings, an absolutely independent spirit, *nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*, who persists in toeing no line but the one he marks out for himself. No, it simply isn't done—like that!

### L.S.O. Queen's. October 27.

Knowing what we all do of the L.S.O.'s performances of late years, Dr. Mengelberg has in his short association with the orchestra (who have had the great good sense to engage this great musician and artist and marvellous orchestral trainer, so to speak, as permanent conductor), accomplished the marvellous. Now, the L.S.O. play with some near approach to unanimity, their wood-wind chords sound something quite like chords and less like the *arpeggi* that have hitherto done duty; the brass, too, attacks on pitch and does not slip down in every *diminuendo*, but obviously to expect even a genius like Mengelberg to make a Concertgebouw or a New York Symphony out of the L.S.O. is to ask the impossible. There is *not* (in spite of tenuous claims as to being the best orchestral material in the world) the material there. The L.S.O. brass and wood-wind, like all English brass and wood-wind, have a thick, coarse, muddy quality lacking in clarity, glow, brightness, and definition that is an inherent lack in instruments or players, or both. A brass tone at once of the fullness, richness, and brilliance of Dr. Mengelberg's own body, the Concertgebouw, will never arrive here until, as I have said before, a new breed of players is produced. I am glad to see that the L.S.O. are giving the fact that is insufficiently known here that the bringing of the New York Symphony Orchestra to the pitch that was the wonder and amazed delight of us all when they played here under Toscanini last June was the work of Mengelberg and not Toscanini. As a moulder of orchestras, Mengelberg is an unique phenomenon, and it is time his supreme greatness

received more recognition. The programme was not especially exciting—the first Beethoven Symphony was remarkably well played, however, with an attention to phrase, tone and nuance that is a pleasure to hear from a London orchestra.

A "Gothic Chaconne" of the Dutch composer Dopper, sound unimaginative journeyman work with descents fairly frequent into shattering commonplace, and indeed more than once we caught a glimpse of that Monastery Garden which caused an eminent critic to be overheard remarking that some of it was pure Ketèlberg.

The young Polish pianist, Horowitz, played the massive and imposing Rachmaninoff third piano Concerto with fabulous brilliance and virtuosity, but with not a great deal else. Delightfully musical always, a tone never harsh, bad, or ugly, there was a lack of mental force behind the playing, while the style was too small altogether, and a certain shallowness of approach to the work one found upsetting, indeed, a kind of pert flippancy made itself often too noticeable and a cheapening of rhythms savouring too much of the methods of the jazz pianist. This cheapening and making tawdry of a rhythm is a thing no description can convey any hint of—it must be heard . . . and although it may be *metrically* accurate enough, it is sufficient wholly to destroy the character of a passage or work, and once heard it is unmistakable.

KAIKHOSRU SORABJI.

## The Films.

### Old English: Marble Arch Pavilion.

The sole *raison d'être* for this picture is George Arliss, who repeats his virtuosity of "Disraeli," and achieves another *tour de force*. But it is an achievement with a difference. Mr. Arliss *was* Disraeli, he soaked himself in the role and got under its skin in a manner which is as rare on the stage as it is on the screen. In "Old English," one is all the time conscious that Mr. Arliss is playing a part, playing it superbly, be it emphasised, but it is George Arliss impersonating and not *being* Sylvanus Heythorp. This production is photoplay pure and simple, belonging even less to the cinema than "Disraeli," and lacking in rhythm, while there is no working up to a crescendo, since the ending on the death scene is too obvious a conclusion, and one that is led up to throughout. Mr. Arliss is well supported by an almost entirely English cast, no one of whom has very much to do, and although the introduction of an American girl as Heythorp's granddaughter seems a stupid concession to the box offices of the Middle West, the young lady is charming, and speaks with only the slightest of accents. A pleasing little impersonation was also that of a parlour maid by another young actress whose name escapes me.

### London Workers' Film Society.

This Society inaugurated its current season by giving a triple bill at the Scala on the Sunday before last. The first item was "Refuge," a German film which had its English premiere at the Avenue Pavilion in May of last year, and was not worth doing again. It is a dull production, not specially well acted, and by no means well photographed, of the doings of people in whom it is impossible to be interested; although described as "one of the few productions of the commercial cinema that attempts to portray faithfully certain phases of working class life," its characters appeared to me mainly typical *petite bourgeoisie*. Cuts by the Censorship which—such is the working of

the Wardour Street mind—obscure the fact that the leading character is a Communist back from a visit to Russia, may, however, have contributed to my imperfect enjoyment.

The second item was "Glimpses of Modern Russia," interesting as the first production to be undertaken by the Society itself. This is purely a montage film, in which Ralph Bond has successfully assembled a number of short topical and news strips. I should like to see this type of montage developed further, and hope the Society will give us more of it. Finally, there was "The Roof of the World," an interesting record of the Russo-German scientific expedition to the Pamirs organised in 1928. It is noteworthy for some superb cloud and snow photography, and for glimpses of a land which is, I believe, shown on the screen for the first time.

### The Film Group.

I have received a manifesto from the Film Group, whose programme deserves, and should receive, the support of everyone interested in the art of the film. The aim of the Group is to cater for those people "who have come to look upon the cinema as something more than a popular form of amusement," and who are at present catered for only by a few societies. While the work of those societies is of the greatest value, their scope is limited, and there is no machinery for providing a link between lovers of the cinema, and, above all, no medium for the interchange and stimulation of ideas. The Film Group has set itself to fill those gaps, and its proposals include the establishment of a regular theatre in London for the presentation of the best silent and sound films, the acquisition of interesting films not generally available, the provision of a bureau of information, and the acquisition of copies of rare classics in danger of disappearing without trace. The movement would deserve backing even if only for the sake of the last-mentioned object; when it was last year sought to show "Greed," which I rank as among the four best films ever made, at a London theatre, the only copy which could be found was run to earth after months of search, and was, I believe, discovered in Mexico.

A detailed scheme for the establishment of a theatre in Central London is already in being, and the group is now endeavouring to ascertain the extent to which the scheme is likely to secure support. Those interested should communicate with the Hon. Secretary, at 41, Manchester Street, W.1.

DAVID OCKHAM.

## Verse.

By Andrew Bonella.

Inside and out, Mr. F. L. Lucas's little book\* is one that I can honestly and warmly recommend—a fact for which my readers will be grateful if they are half as tired of reading my destructive criticism as I am of writing it. I mention the outside because any civilised reader, however free from bibliomania, must prefer to read good writing printed and bound as befits its quality; and this four-and-sixpenny volume has the distinction with which the Cambridge University Press contrive to stamp all their productions. There is nothing "artistic" about it, no fancy "typography" riddled with misprints, but just good printing which makes one wonder why all the other publishers cannot do the thing as well. It may be, of course, that the Cambridge University Press has financial advantages; but to the

\* "Eight Victorian Poets." By F. L. Lucas. (Cambridge. 4s. 6d.)

layman it looks as if the outlay has been in intelligence rather than in cash.

Mr. Lucas writes a delightful introductory essay on poetry in general, and apologises for producing another book about it. "The difficulty," he says, "for some reason, is to read it. There are so many easier things to read—books about poetry among them. . . . It is not without misgiving that I have added yet one more to the number of guides; and it would be far better for the reader to shut this book at once than to let it curtail at all the time he needs for a proper reading of the Victorian poets themselves." Mr. Lucas need not be afraid, for, in spite of his "popular" medium—the book is founded on B.B.C. talks—he gives a freshness to points of view that are not, as he admits, new in themselves, and dishes up his scraps of biography with an art that is stimulating rather than cloying. This is, in fact, about as good a "popular" book as could be written on the following poets: Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Clough, D. G. Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris, and Hardy; though I should like to have seen Meredith in Hardy's place. In passing, I must protest against one of Tennyson's happiest phrases, being ruined by what one can only imagine as a hideous misprint: "too full for sound or foam" should, of course, be "too full for sound and foam," which makes better sense, since sound and foam both belong to that state of the sea which the fulness of the tide precludes.

If Mr. Lucas has a fault it is a certain femininity of style and outlook. Even his charming tolerance is sometimes a little prim. And dare one suggest to one who is pre-eminently a man of taste that it is in bad form to use *quite* so many French quotations in the course of English criticism of English writers? Here is a characteristic passage taken, not from the book under review, but from an article on Dorothy Osborne in a back number of "Life and Letters": "I confess that to preserve these letters I would gladly sacrifice all the haystacks and wagon-loads of theological controversy which that quarrelsome age produced, including the prose of Milton himself. Real grace is so rare a thing in English Prose, as compared with the French." A confession indeed! There are times when all of us prefer the modest Guinness or the humble Bass to the oldest brandy in the world; but these are the moments of our weakness rather than of our strength, and brandy is still the king of liquors. Can Mr. Lucas deny that this sentence of Milton's is worth all the pretty letters that were ever written in English or even French: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."? And again, charming as Dorothy Osborne's letters are, how do they compare in sheer grace with what is also a considerable work of art, The Sentimental Journey?

Mr. Lucas must forgive me for exceeding my rights as reviewer: it gave me real pain to find so unworthy a sentiment in so fine an essay. May I make amends by drawing attention to his brilliant article on Beddoes, that queer character and splendid poetic failure, in the October "Life and Letters."

Miss Cranmer's "April Time"† contains some very pretty lyrics. I can make little of Mr. Chisholm's‡ political satire, being unversed in Australian politics; but Australian readers of THE NEW AGE would probably enjoy it. It is written in the traditional couplet form and goes with a good swing.

† "April Time and Other Poems." By Elsie Paterson Cranmer. 1s. 6d. (Copies from the author at 29, Kingston Lane, Teddington.)

‡ "The Magicians." by Henry Chisholm. (Lothian Publishing Co., Melbourne and Sidney. 6d.)

## Reply to Sir Otto Niemeyer.

By W. M. Hughes.

I.

(Ex-Premier of the Australian Commonwealth.)

Sir Otto Niemeyer's visit to this country, his reception by the heads of the Federal and State Governments, and the tone and matter of his Report have excited widespread interest. There is something about his Mission that the people do not understand; which disturbs their minds; which rouses their resentment. What they want to know is the real purpose of Sir Otto's visit and by whom it was arranged. They have been led to believe that he came in response to an invitation by the Federal Government, but they feel that, even if the Government issued the invitation, outside influences inspired it.

From the moment it was announced that Sir Otto was coming, speculation was rife as to the purpose of his visit. As the days passed it became evident to all who took any interest in the welfare of their country that powerful influences were at work, skilfully moulding the minds of the people to receive him and his gospel in fitting spirit. The Press, almost without exception, laid itself out to create the right atmosphere, regardless of all else. Every day the people of Australia—and of the world—were reminded of the unhappy position in which the country stood. Everything that could be said to the credit of Sir Otto and to the detriment of Australia was shouted from the verge of bankruptcy—that only drastic remedies could save us from national dishonour and economic disaster.

The effect of this deliberate and unpatriotic propaganda upon public credit and private enterprise was deplorable. Confidence in the future of the country was badly shaken; the share market, already depressed by the efforts of the Press along the same lines, almost collapsed; stocks tumbled precipitately; enterprise received a fatal check; and unemployment rapidly increased. The Press campaign did incalculable harm. Prosperity is a state of mind inspired by vision, courage, and common sense. Depression grows by what it feeds on; if people believe that the future is black they will button up their pockets and so precipitate or intensify that depression which could have been averted had not fear clouded judgment. Australia has been built up by those who had faith in its future, and only by faith backed by works can it be saved.

"Speak, Lord, for Thy Servant Heareth."

As a result of Press propaganda, Sir Otto was received in a fitting spirit. His movements were shrouded in an air of mystery like that of the Grand Llama or an Indian Medicine Man. The public heard of him only through the Press, and so were unable to make due obeisance to him. But from those privileged to the right of entrance to Australia, homage. The heads of the Governments of Australia seemed to have been overwhelmed at the honour of sitting at his feet. They heard his lightest word with bated breath. When he told them what they all knew well enough—that the financial position was serious—they listened with reverential awe with which the ancients heard the Oracle. When he spoke to them as a schoolmaster talks to children—telling them, the elected representatives of the people of Australia, how they ought to govern them upon they sat in respectful silence. When he lectured them on public finance and economics, emphasising their many and grievous errors; painting the future of Australia in a blackness that could almost be felt, and then wound up by telling them that their only hope was to turn over a new leaf, reduce the standard of the people's living; put aside their advised ambitions to encourage production—in which case the Bank would help them—they humbly thanked him!

If I have done these gentlemen an injustice; if in the presence of Sir Otto they comforted themselves in sturdier fashion, I am sorry; but the blame, if any, rests upon those responsible for the reports of the proceedings. And from these reports—which are all the people of Australia have to go on—it was Sir Otto who laid down the law, and they who meekly accepted it.

Whom Sir Otto Represents.

In my opinion this attitude was altogether wrong. If Sir Otto had represented the British Government, the position would have been different. But Sir Otto represents a private bank—he represents, not the people of England, but great financial interests. And although, like most other countries, we are just now in trouble, we are not going to shape our policy as any bank or group of financiers, no matter how

powerful, directs. So much he ought to have been plainly told.

Like the Curate's Egg.

Now let us come to close grips with his report. The first thing to be said about it is this—that, like the curate's egg, it is good in parts. Where it repeats what we all know we can accept it. Budgets ought to, and must, balance. This is fundamental. Governments *must* live within their means. Expenditure must be kept within the limits of revenue. But this should not be confined to governments alone; it ought to apply all round. Individual expenditure must be limited in the same way. As a community we have been living beyond our means. This must stop. We must not live on borrowed money. Loans should be restricted to enterprises directly remunerative, or which will enable the community to increase its productivity to an extent which at least will cover the interest and provide sinking funds on these loans. But we must also avoid the other extreme. Our slogan must be prudent economy and wise expenditure, for it is vitally important to remember that our troubles are in essence economic and only incidentally financial.

Australia's Debt—A Few Reminders.

We have been reminded *ad nauseam* lately that we owe a great deal of money; that for the last seven or eight years we have borrowed money recklessly. It was not necessary for Sir Otto to come here to tell us this. We knew it all too well. Yet a word or two may be said in extenuation. Australia owes £1,100,000,000—that is to say, about £170 per capita—as against £179 per capita in our sister Dominion of New Zealand. Of this £1,100,000,000—of which £200,000,000 has been incurred during the last seven years—nearly one-half has been raised within Australia. Of our total debt, over a quarter is the balance of our war debt. The war imposed colossal burdens upon us. Up to date it has cost us over £744,000,000, out of which £370,000,000 has been paid from revenue. And of the remaining £374,000,000—paid from loans—£273,000,000 were raised in Australia. So that out of revenue and local loans the people of Australia have raised and spent £643,000,000 on the war—or £36,000,000 more than the total overseas debt incurred by Australia in 140 years. But for the war we should not have been in any trouble at all.

But how have the millions of money borrowed for purposes other than war been spent? Some—all too many—have been spent foolishly; yet no country in the world has more to show for the money she has borrowed than has Australia. The overseas investor in Australian Loan Stock has ample security. In addition to the credit of over six millions of energetic and resourceful people in a great and rich country, there are 26,000 miles of railway—a greater mileage per capita than almost any other country—vast irrigation schemes, and magnificent public works, all owned by the people to whom he has lent his money. Even Sir Otto will not deny that our security is of the best. Australia has never defaulted, and she never will. She has never asked any favours—certainly she had never received any. The highest rate of interest is always demanded of her when she seeks new moneys or to convert old loans, and our burden of interest is made far heavier than it ought to be. Britain has remitted hundreds of millions owed by other countries, but she has never remitted one penny of our loans. Sir Otto did not mention this. Britain has many times lent money to nations which have defaulted in their payments. She has for years lent money freely to finance the dairy interests of Soviet Russia, Latvia, Esthonia, and Argentina, in order to depress the price of Australian and New Zealand butter on British markets. There is plenty of money for other countries, but for Australia—who spent hundreds of millions in helping Britain to win the war—for Australia, the best customer, bar India, that Britain has, not a penny.

And one other significant fact, too, Sir Otto passed over in silence. He dwelt reprovingly upon our loan policy during the last seven years—but he said nothing on how we spent the millions so lavishly borrowed—namely on a flood of imported goods, mostly British! Yet it was not until we stopped this ruinous business and by drastic remedies—perhaps too drastic—put an end to this policy of borrowing money from Britain to buy British goods, thus exhausting our credits in London and throwing our own workers on the streets, that the Financial and Trade Interests of Britain sent their representative to Australia to chide us because we have borrowed too freely!

We want to help Britain—we have helped her in very substantial fashion by giving her preference on our markets worth many millions a year—far more than the equivalent she gives to us, but our first duty is to Australia. Our policy must be one that will provide work for our own people.

(To be continued.)

## Review.

Star-Dust in Hollywood: The Truth About the Film City.

By Jan and Cora Gordon. (Harrap. 12s. 6d.)

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon introduce us to an incredible world, and in this most entertaining volume much light is thrown on the standardisation of manners, customs, habits, and amusements of the inhabitants of the United States, and on the lack of intellectual resources characteristic of the average American. Understanding of those national aspects helps us to understand why the American film, which still largely dominates the world's screens, is what it is.

The authors, as has been the case with other visitors to Hollywood, appear to be astonished not so much at the lavish way in which Hollywood throws money about, as at the manner in which so much expenditure is incurred with so little reason. For instance, one producing firm alone, a concern not distinguished for the excessively high standard of its pictures, employs some forty authors at £60 a week, plus occasional bonuses, to hatch out possible film plots. Should a plot materialise, which does not seem to happen very often, it is turned over to "continuity" experts at £100 a week before the real expenditure begins. On the face of it, this is an admirable method of encouraging originality, of which the screen is so sorely in need; but since Hollywood detests originality, and will either not use an idea which is not trite, or utilises it only after it has been mangled out of all recognition, one may ask why it should employ an expensive corps of authors even if money be no object.

Actually this practice is detrimental, since few young writers can resist the temptation to migrate to Hollywood, where at worst they are secure of very well-paid work for a few months, while at best they may achieve wealth and recognition beyond the reach of all but a very few best-sellers. "Hollywood is a real menace to the younger writers of America," say the authors, which is understandable when one realises the mentality for which the makers of scenarios have to cater. There is the small town sheriff, the Fundamentalist, the narrow-minded club woman with the craze for uplift, and the even more narrow-minded rural parson, and, finally, the gum-chewing flapper. "The young woman of the States, that product of English-German-Polish-Italian-Swedish-Russian-Portuguese intermarriage bred in an American climate, is the ultimate dictator of movie art." Unfortunately, she is also largely the dictator to the less uncultured communities of England and the European Continent.

Lack of culture in the American film industry begins at the top. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon tell a delightful story in this connection. An important motion-picture manufacturer took advantage of Maeterlinck's presence in the United States to press him to write a story for the screen. The author of "Pelleas and Melisande" was not enthusiastic, but on being told that he might choose his own subject, would be paid whether his work was used or not, and that he was to "do just your usual stuff, your ordinary stuff. Wot you make your name with," he eventually agreed. In due course his manuscript reached Hollywood and was reverently laid before the magnate. Ten minutes later, there was an uproar in the studio.

A subordinate ventured to ask the magnate whether the "stuff" was not all right.

"The play's all right," was the answer, "but what's the use of that? He's given me a hero what is a bee."

O God! O Hollywood!

DAVID OCKHAM.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

ETHICAL HISTORY OF CAPITALISM.

Sir,—It does not seem to me either that there was any essential connexion between Capitalism and Protestant Ethics or that what connexion there was is to be deplored. Calvinism in its most horrible form flourished in Scotland, where it was held that to make money and to save it were both unsuited to Christians. One of the awful results of the closer connexion with England from the end of the seventeenth century was that interest in morbid theology began to give place to interest in trade and commerce. This had been foreshadowed in the few years that Cromwell ruled Scotland. Hutcheson, in making the first great attack on the Calvinist nightmare in 1729, included a defence of wealth and money-getting in his plea.

But in so far as Calvinist, Lutheran, and Arminian looked on attention to commerce and industry as a duty of man, I think that it is to be reckoned in their favour, for it meant a greater interest in the affairs of this world and the hope of a greater superstructure of culture on the basis



of an improved material equipment. The official Catholic doctrine of the Middle Ages was pessimistic in the extreme. St. Gregory the Great, e.g., said, "Let us therefore with all our soul scorn this present world, as already brought to nought; let us close our yearnings for this world now at least, at the very end of this world's existence." Mediaeval heresies almost all sprang from districts where trade and industry were the most flourishing and so did later anti-clerical movements. And as I cannot think of any great cultural achievements, except certain stages of architecture, which have not come from trading towns and districts, the rise of Capitalism, whether occasioned by or co-incident with Protestantism, seems to me to be a fortunate event, though I quite agree that it was a far from unmixed blessing and in its traditional forms now dangerously outmoded.

H. COUSENS.

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## The Social Credit Movement.

Supporters of the Social Credit Movement contend that under present conditions the purchasing power in the hands of the community is chronically insufficient to buy the whole product of industry. This is because the money required to finance capital production, and created by the banks for that purpose, is regarded as borrowed from them, and, therefore, in order that it may be repaid, is charged into the price of consumers' goods. It is a vital fallacy to treat new money thus created by the banks as a repayable loan, without crediting the community, on the strength of whose resources the money was created, with the value of the resulting new capital resources. This has given rise to a defective system of national loan accountancy, resulting in the reduction of the community to a condition of perpetual scarcity, and bringing them face to face with the alternatives of widespread unemployment of men and machines, as at present, or of international complications arising from the struggle for foreign markets.

The Douglas Social Credit Proposals would remedy this defect by increasing the purchasing power in the hands of the community to an amount sufficient to provide effective demand for the whole product of industry. This, of course, cannot be done by the orthodox method of creating new money, prevalent during the war, which necessarily gives rise to the "vicious spiral" of increased currency, higher prices, higher wages, higher costs, still higher prices, and so on. The essentials of the scheme are the simultaneous creation of new money and the regulation of the price of consumers' goods at their real cost of production (as distinct from their apparent financial cost under the present system). The technique for effecting this is fully described in Major Douglas's books.

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