

FOURTH ANNUAL DINNER.

THE Fourth Annual Dinner of the Society was held in the Royal Victoria Station Hotel (Great Central Railway), Sheffield, on Wednesday, April 26th, 1922, at 7.15 p.m.

The President, Prof. W. E. S. TURNER, O.B.E., D.Sc., occupied the Chair, the company including the Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor of Sheffield (Alderman Charles Simpson), Sir Albert J. Hobson, LL.D. (Pro-Chancellor, The University, Sheffield, and late President Association of British Chambers of Commerce), Sir W. H. Hadow, D. Mus. (Vice-Chancellor, The University, Sheffield), the Very Reverend W. Foxley Norris, D.D. (Dean of York), Mr. A. L. Hetherington (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) and Dr. M. W. Travers, F.R.S. (Past President of the Society). An apology for absence was received from Col. C. W. Thomas (President of the Ceramic Society).

The following were the toasts :—

I. “The King.”

Proposed by the President.

II. “The Glass Industry.”

Sir ALBERT J. HOBSON, LL.D., in proposing “The Glass Industry,” said that what perhaps occurred to him most of all at the present time was that the whole of the industries of the country were in an unsatisfactory and disorganised state, and he ventured to assume for the moment that the glass industry was not very much more prosperous than the general run of the industries. If that were so, he thought that we needed to look at the whole subject and try to get some conception as to why things were as they were, and what was the best way to alter them.

The products of industry throughout the war were in very short supply, and we were mortgaging the future with reckless disregard for the consequences. One of the results of this was that we got into a period of greatly inflated prices which enabled enormous profits to be made by manufacturers and very large wages to be paid to the workers. Unfortunately, the manufacturers' profits were very largely in the nature of fairy gold; they had turned to brown leaves since; for the manufacturers had been subjected to

war taxation, and after having been persuaded to inflate all their commodities to the top price, taxation was levied on them on the top of these prices. The excess profits turned out to be levied, not on realised profit at all, but on anticipated profits, which were not being realised in the balance sheets that were being presented for the post-war periods. The wages that were paid to the workers were of a somewhat more solid character, although he was afraid that the greater proportion of these wages were extravagantly spent, and therefore the one opportunity in a hundred years of the working classes getting well in front of their engagements had not been used as one would like to have seen it used. His experience was that it was always an advantage to have around one workmen who were prepared to save money. It was a curious thing, but the habit of saving grew on one, and the more prosperous a workman became the steadier he was because of that prosperity. We had now come to the point at which we were falling away from these times of inflated values, and there were various ideas about which seemed to him to be very unsound and were vitally prejudicing the recovery of industry. He wanted to refer to one or two of them, and if they did not happen to apply particularly to the glass industry they at all events applied to the particular industries with which he was rather more familiar. The first fault that he had to find with the state of affairs at the present time was that there was a very general assumption throughout the country that it is not necessary to make things as sound and as well-finished as they were before the war. He had had to remonstrate with his own men about the bad finish of their productions, and he had been told with an air of indolent surprise: "Well, you don't expect them finished the same as they were before the war, do you?"—as if it were an extremely unreasonable thing to expect.

One had to reflect, however, that Great Britain, owing to the insularity of its geographical position, was dependent on other countries for its raw material or food, which had to be exchanged for our high-class manufactured goods. We, in our proud little island, could not live by taking in one another's washing; we had to live by our export trade; and the man at the other end of the world who took our goods in exchange for his raw materials, whether it happened to be copper, tin, spelter, rubber, jute, rice, or what-not else—was as keen on seeing that we kept up our quality as we expected him to keep up his. Many of the raw materials that we were buying from him were now down to their pre-war price, or nearly so, and the quality was as good as ever it was before the war. If, then, we were to measure wages according to the commodities of exchange, the man at the other side of the world was entitled to

receive from us more and better work than before the war. One was afraid, however, that at the moment we were not giving him a fair exchange, although one would hesitate to say that the best way of giving him a fair exchange was necessarily to get back to lower wages. The most important thing was efficiency of production, and the getting back to the best standard of work. If we could only persuade our workmen to give us of their best we could afford to pay them high wages. The time had now arrived when everyone connected with industry in this country—workmen, designers, foremen, engineers, or whoever they might be—should realise that nothing but the very best efforts could be expected to restore that state of industrial prosperity of which we had been so proud in the days before the war.

“We here, at Sheffield University,” continued Sir Albert, “were drawn into making provision for practical training in connection with the glass industry partly by the enthusiasm of Dr. Turner—and it is extraordinary what the enthusiasm of one man will do for an industry—and partly by patriotic reasons also; for we felt that the glass industry needed more science to restore it to its old prosperity, which, even before the war, was somewhat less marked than one desired to see in connection with any of the old industries of the country. And since the war we have continued to take a keen interest at the University in the glass industry, in the hope that we should be able to promote efficiency in that industry. So far as you may be able to tell us that the work that has been done at Sheffield University has helped towards efficiency, you will be able to tell us the one thing that we would like to hear you say. I trust that we shall be able to go on helping towards greater efficiency in the glass industry, and I trust that everyone concerned in it will feel the necessity of giving the best value possible.

“Let me say one thing more. There is no more absolutely ruinous doctrine being preached in this country at the present time than the doctrine that restricted output helps to create additional work in industry. My experience is that this is totally untrue. It is a great fallacy; for if, by making three articles instead of two, these three articles could be sold a third cheaper, there would be a much greater call for them. If an article could be sold at half the price it would command four to five times the volume of trade. And there is no actual limit that could ever be put on the volume of trade that could be done if we could only produce goods cheap enough. There is an unlimited demand throughout the world for desirable things—good glass amongst them, for good glass is a very desirable thing. If you could only persuade everyone who is smitten by this extraordinary doctrine of restricted output that

wealth consists, not in a scarcity of commodities, but in an abundance of them, you will have done something to promote very greatly the prosperity of your industry.

“ I trust that as we get farther away from the state of artificial inflation which was created by the war, we shall be able gradually to induce all those connected, not merely with the glass industry in particular, but with all our other great industries, that wealth consists in the abundance of goods and the cheapness of their production consistent with good quality, for that is the surest way back to commercial prosperity. I hope that the glass industry will return speedily to a state of prosperity, along with the other industries of the country. And may I say here, in the presence of so many who are intimately associated with the glass trade, that the sooner it returns to a state of prosperity the better will it be for the community as a whole; for every industry that finds peace, prosperity, and contentment acts as a stimulus to every other industry, and is an encouragement to them to tread the same path? I have, therefore, the greatest pleasure in wishing ‘ Prosperity to the Glass Industry.’ ”

Col. S. C. HALSE, in responding for the “ Glass Industry,” said : Prof. Turner told us something this afternoon about old bones and new blood. I don’t know what he is, but I am the new blood. I feel that I have been in the industry such a short time that it is impossible for me to answer the question that was raised, inferentially at least, by Sir Albert Hobson as to whether the glass-worker is turning out goods of the same finish as he was before the war. Certainly from my own small experience I think it is most likely that he is not, because I am always having grumbles from my workers that I expect too much from them. I suppose I may have concluded that my workers have got into loose habits during the war, and that they are not anxious to get out of them, and I assume, therefore, that what Sir Albert Hobson has suggested is correct. Another of Sir Albert’s points was rather more cheerful in tone, and that was, that there is an unlimited demand for anything that is good. Now in my particular section of the glass trade we only make common bottles and jars, so that I assume what Sir Albert means is that if only the beer and the whisky are good there will assuredly be a demand for the bottles.

As to the help that the glass industry obtains from the Society of Glass Technology, again speaking from my own limited outlook, I think it is enormous. I have always found that the staff at Sheffield have been anxious to give us every assistance in their power. They even agreed to one of their staff coming to our works for some weeks to give us some help, and he was of most valuable assistance

in that particular phase of the work that he came down to help us with. I feel we are not honoured above other people in a matter of this sort, and there is no doubt at all that the help that the Sheffield staff have given to us they are also giving simultaneously to the trade as a whole, which is benefiting thereby all the time. May I express the sincere hope that by the time the next annual dinner of the Society comes round the prospects of the glass trade will be considerably improved?

III. "The Society of Glass Technology."

Dr. WM. FOXLEY NORRIS, in proposing "The Society of Glass Technology," said that he appreciated highly the great privilege of having been permitted to address the Society that afternoon and of being entrusted with that toast at the dinner. He gathered that the Society was of very recent formation and that it had grown from a membership in 1917 of 263 to a membership this year of more than 660; also that the Society had now members in nine foreign countries, besides the whole of the British Possessions. This was evidence that the Society was quickly and worthily taking its place. He assumed that it was the endeavour of the Society to give an accession of brain power to the whole of the glass industry, and after all, any industry must ultimately depend for its success on brains—on expert knowledge and research. He supposed that one thing that we had rather suffered from in this country in the past had been the absence of time and money for research. The Society of Glass Technology was one of many institutions which were now seeking to rectify that. He hoped that the movement would succeed in doing all that was expected of it.

Concluding, Dr. Norris said that if the Society, at any time in the future, by representation or otherwise, might care to honour York with a visit, he would like to hold out a very cordial invitation to them, and he could promise them that every facility would be accorded them of seeing the wonderful glass at York Minster of which he had had something to say to them that afternoon.

Prof. W. E. S. TURNER, responding for the Society of Glass Technology, said that he had great sympathy for the glass manufacturers in the bad times through which they were at present passing. He believed that many who were absent would, under normal conditions, have made a point of being present, in order to show how much they respected the Society. The serious part of his speech must be brief, but there were three things at any rate that he must say. In the first place, he must reply to the kind invitation of the Dean of York to pay a visit to York Minster. On behalf of the members he would like to say that they would be

delighted to accept at some favourable opportunity the invitation so kindly and charmingly given. Secondly, he would also like to say that this year they were looking forward with much eagerness to welcoming a body of men with like interests to theirs from America. Already they had had one meeting with their American friends, across the Atlantic in 1920. This year they were hoping to have a return visit, and he wanted to say to the Lord Mayor of Sheffield that they would expect a royal welcome from the civic authorities in the beginning of September, when that visit was expected to be made.

The third point he would like to mention was that the year through which the Society had just passed had been exceptionally successful. He did not propose to review it, except to say that despite the difficulties, Dr. Travers in his presidential capacity had had a most successful year. The attendances at the meetings had been good. Finally, he would like to say that he felt the Society had that day taken a step in the right direction. This was the first year in which the Society had become possessed of a real working balance—something over £100—and the Council of the Society had taken the opportunity of voting from that balance a grant of £50 with the object of stimulating research in the Department of Glass Technology at the University of Sheffield. Sir Albert Hobson, who had given them such an able speech that evening, was not only the late president of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, but also the Pro-Chancellor of this University, and he was sure that Sir Albert would take the announcement that had just been made as some indication that there was a recognition on the part of the Society of Glass Technology that the University was rendering valuable help to the glass industry. He looked forward to another prosperous and happy year for the Society, and he sincerely hoped that within a few months trade conditions might take on a much better appearance.

IV. "The Guests."

DR. M. W. TRAVERS, in proposing "Our Guests," said that the Society appreciated it as an honour to have with them that evening so many influential gentlemen, headed by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield. Many of these gentlemen were known to all present either personally or by fame. The opportunity of addressing the Society's guests provided one with an opportunity of speaking of the connection of the Society of Glass Technology with the outer public. That connection should be a very wide one. If one looked round the room one could not help seeing glass on all sides—glass beautiful and glass otherwise. Unfortunately, the general public

knew very little about glass. This was evident from the things which one often saw in the glass and china shop windows. Even the glass which one sometimes saw in our church and cathedral windows, which was supposed to be the most beautiful expression of the art of glass painting, did not always edify or please one. He thought it was high time that a serious effort was made to bring the science and technology of glass-making definitely before the notice of the general public. He thought something ought to be done to cause the public to realise, as they had not yet realised, that the highest expression of art in glass-making was being revealed in the modern productions of the British Isles. Now their guests were representatives of the great British public whom the glass manufacturers served, and who ought to be in a position to know what this great industry was doing. If they did not know it was the fault of the glass manufacturers. He thought this was a lesson which they ought to take to heart. If a larger number of people could be brought to understand more clearly what British glass is and what it yet might be, he felt certain that something tangible would be done to improve the present state of trade and to advance the British glass industry in general. They had much pleasure in seeing with them that evening as their guests representatives of the British public from so many different angles, and they all hoped that such points of contact would tend to improve the knowledge of the general public in regard to glass and its production.

The LORD MAYOR OF SHEFFIELD responded, remarking that the Society's guests were greatly indebted for the opportunity of being present and for the kind way in which their health had been drunk. They were all interested in the success of any of the home industries, and, as Sir Albert Hobson had said, if a period of prosperity could come to the glass industry it would have a marked influence on all the other industries of the country, because all industries were mutually interdependent and inter-related. With regard to the prospective visit of the American Ceramic Society, he could assure them that, if this visit should take place, it would be the endeavour of the civic authorities of Sheffield to give them a real Yorkshire welcome and a "right good time."

During the evening, musical selections were rendered, the artists being Miss G. Bagshaw and Mr. A. Renwick Sheen. Mr. W. F. Pearson was accompanist.

The following members and guests were present :—

Alderman, G.
Alexander, J. H.
Asquith, H. H.
Asquith, M.

Batley, W. (Press).
Boam, F. J.
Burdin, N.
Clark, F. Graves.

Clark, H. Noël.
 Clarke, J. R.
 Clarke, Mrs. J. R.
 Connolly, Joseph.
 Connolly, Miss E.
 Connolly, Miss G.
 Davidson, J. H.
 Dimbleby, Miss V.
 Duncan, G. S.
 Firth, Miss E. M.
 Fitzgerald, E.
 Gibbons, W. M.
 Hadow, Sir W. H.
 Halse, Col. S. C.
 Hetherington, A. L.
 Hobson, Sir Albert J.
 Inglis, C. G.
 Jackson, A. H.
 Lamplough, F. E.
 Mitchell-Withers, J. A.

Norris, Dr. W. Foxley (Dean of
 York).
 Norton, L. E.
 Parkinson, C.
 Parton, W. H. (Press).
 Pearson, W. F.
 Ripper, Prof. W.
 Robertson, E. D. J.
 Sheen, A. R.
 Simpson, C. (Lord Mayor of Sheffield).
 Smart, G. W.
 Snowdon, W. C.
 Sutcliffe, T. C.
 Teisen, Th.
 Tinkler, W.
 Townsend, H. (Press).
 Travers, Dr. M. W.
 Turner, Prof. W. E. S.
 Turner, Mrs. W. E. S.

Total 46.