

Britain's Survival Depends on her People

GREATER EFFORT, OUTPUT AND EFFICIENCY Local Patriotism a Great Virtue

Following the election of Mayor in the morning, the usual banquet was held in the Town Hall last Friday evening, when the Mayor and Mayoress entertained a large number of guests representing the civic and business life of the borough. Among those present were Sir Charles Robertshaw, J.P.; Mr. Douglas Houghton, M.P. for the Sowerby Division, and Mrs. Houghton; Coun. J. H. Walton, Chairman of Hebden Royd U.D. Council; Mr. Moys, the new Town Clerk; and several members of Coun. Boothman's family, including his father and his daughter and son-in-law, and his youngest son John.

The platform had been decorated by the staff of the Centre Vale Park in their usual excellent way, which included a centre piece surrounded by flowers with the words "Coun. Boothman, Mayor" picked out in white flowers, which made a really fine display.

The main toast of the evening, "The Citizens and Trade of Todmorden," was proposed by Mr. Douglas Houghton, M.P., who emphasised the importance of the cotton trade in our recovery programme. They were living in difficult times, but were now coming to realise that Britain would survive only by the efforts of her own people. That meant greater effort, more output, and higher efficiency if they were going to maintain their standard of life. They were moving towards a critical period in their history, and what happened in 1952 might depend upon some of the critical decisions they would have to take in the meantime.

UNOFFICIAL MAYOR OF CORNHOLME

Ald. P. Sutcliffe, proposing the toast of His Worship the Mayor, said he wished to convey on behalf of everyone present, their sincere congratulations to the Mayor and Mayoress on their appointment to those important offices. He first made the acquaintance of Coun. Boothman some 30 years ago, when the latter was looking for a wife in Cornholme. He succeeded where others had failed. — (Laughter.) Since he had been appointed manager of an important shop in the centre of Cornholme he had come in close personal touch with the people. In his own way he had devoted a considerable amount of time to the religious and social life of the district, and thereby rendered great service. Having regard to the excellent report in the "News and Advertiser" there was no need for him to enlarge on the Mayor's personal achievements. There was another service which the Mayor had carried out in the Cornholme district. They had all heard that in some villages they had what was known as a squire. The up-to-date equivalent of that in Cornholme was held by the alderman for the ward, who was sometimes referred to as the unofficial Mayor. Some years ago Coun. Boothman became his right-hand man, thereby training him for the important position he found himself in that night. The question was now being asked "Who is going to be Mayor in Cornholme next year?" — (Laughter.) Anyhow, he felt quite sure that the training the alderman had given him would have made him well-equipped for the time when he was appointed Mayor of the borough. The position of Mayor was a very important one, and was the centre of the civic life of the town, and took precedence at social functions, with the exception of Royalty and lord lieutenants. He felt sure that with such training and experience Coun. Boothman would fully maintain and probably enhance the dignity of the position.

MAGISTERIAL CHANGES REGRETTED

During the next year a change would take place in the position of the Mayor as chief magistrate, said Ald. Sutcliffe. The position at present is that in the case of county boroughs it was the Mayor's right to take the chair at the Magistrates'

capabilities of the Mayor and Mayoress, and he could assure them that they had the full support of all members of the Council, the officials and, he was quite sure, the citizens of this town. They wished them health and strength during their year of office and hoped they would be happy in the work. — (Applause.)

PRIDE IN THE TOWN

The Mayor, in responding, said he thanked them for the warmth and cordiality with which they had responded to the toast. He would regard himself as a hard-boiled kind of fellow if he could stand there that evening and truthfully say that he was not worried.

Over all, however, and quite apart from nervousness, there was within him a feeling of great humility, accompanied with the thought of why he was there in the chief seat of office in his native town. He could put forward no claim to be chief citizen because of heredity, wealth or position, or even that he possessed any outstanding capabilities. The reason why he was there was the result of their democratic way of life, and because on Todmorden Town Council there were men and women who honoured agreements. Year by year a member of the Council was invited to be Mayor, first because the electors in the district elected him to be their representative on the Council, usually on more than one occasion, and secondly because the councillor is deemed to have served his apprenticeship in municipal affairs.

During his pupilage on the Council there were two things which had particularly been borne upon him. As a result of and arising from Council work there came a true desire to be of service to the public. One also obtained a great pride in one's town. Pride in their town, local patriotism, could be in the future, as it had been in the past, a great virtue. Todmorden was a compact little area, small enough for them to be intimate with it, and so they had more affection for it.

They had shown in the past that they had been able to do things in their town comparable with any town of a similar size, and they could do things as well to-day in Todmorden as anywhere else, in commerce, in industry, or in municipal affairs. Their people could be proud that both employers and employees were facing up to their

men who were never mentioned by the daily press, but who performed with grace and dignity the everyday duties of life. They thought also of the pride of the housewives in the home, ever cleaning, scrubbing, dusting, polishing and planning how to make their homes brighter and comfortable. He believed this house pride and town pride was a good thing. It helped to keep citizens straight as well as keeping their streets clean.

ADD LUSTRE TO TOWN'S REPUTATION

Their Council was beginning another civic year, and he felt sure that all efforts would be made by the various committees to give them greater pride in their town. This was most appropriate when they considered that 1951 was the year of the Festival of Britain. He felt confident that in the future their children and their young people would add more lustre to their town's reputation, and he asked that all of them by their conduct and habits would maintain and indeed, develop that pride in their town, looking up to all and saying with every justification "I am a citizen of no mean city."

The Mayor said he would like to acknowledge the public-spirited action of his employers who had so generously offered to him many privileges that would enable him to carry out the essential duties devolving upon the Mayoral position. To those who knew the history of the Duckworth family, their action would be no great surprise, for their services to Rochdale, municipally and Parliamentarily, and also their gifts to the National Trust were widely known.

Most of them were aware that during the next month they were to lose the services of Mr. Chorlton, the Town Clerk. He felt sure he could speak for all the Mayors and for every member of the Council when he said the loss of such a valuable officer was bound to be a great one. Their loss was the gain of Goole, and all their good wishes were extended to Mr. Chorlton. Mr. Moys, their next Town Clerk, was now Deputy Town Clerk of Maidstone, but although now in the south, he was a northerner, and was happy to be coming north. They extended to him a warm welcome and hoped he would be happy in his work in Todmorden.

GREAT PROBLEMS FACING THE COUNTRY

Proposing the toast "The citizens and trade of Todmorden," Mr. Douglas Houghton, M.P. for Sowerby Division, remarked that he always knew what time of the year Mayor's Day was in Todmorden, as it was nearly always followed by a Parliamentary election. According to the majority of prophets in the division there would be a Parliamentary election during the Mayor's year of office. They were living in difficult times but were now coming to realise that Britain would survive only by the efforts of her own people. That meant greater effort, more output, and higher efficiency if they were going to maintain their standard of life. They had inherited a legacy from their forebears of a 50 million population in a crowded island who, without means of life from their own soil, would henceforth have to rely on trade for all the things they could now enjoy. As great as their agricultural production now was, and it was probably the highest ever in peacetime, if not so high as in wartime, it was nothing like enough to give them all full and ample larders. Britain, in fact, could not maintain her own ration, or anything like it, from the wheat and flour produced in this country. They were cultivating habits of mind and tasting of the living which probably belonged to the period of the 19th century industrial expansion.

COUNTRY'S DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS

Millions of cups of tea were consumed daily in Britain, yet the nearest tea plantation to this country was about 5,000 miles away; an invaluable raw material, cotton, was not grown in this country, yet the cotton industry which came

battle of the dollar gap. They all wanted Todmorden to prosper because they knew that if it did so, Britain prospered. If those present reflected on that they would realise how true it was, declared Mr. Houghton. He wished the citizens of Todmorden all prosperity and hoped the trade of the town and country would make that great contribution to solving their economic problem.

"TODMORDEN MUST BE RE-BUILT"

Turning to the question of local government in Todmorden, Mr. Houghton said the town bore obvious signs of the time when much of it was built. It was the time of that ruthless drive of British expansion in industrial development, and the aim was for great riches to be gained as soon as possible. Much of it was built in a shorter time than it would take to do it at the present day. The housing problem, he said, would not be solved when everybody had separate homes, because much of Todmorden must be rebuilt in order to conform to the standards of municipal planning and construction which would, as the years went by, arise all over the countryside in their lost cities. Unfortunately, they were trying to do so many of those things in times of great difficulty. There was no magic wand which could alter the framework of Britain's economic position, and although the Government might be attacked from different angles, in the end they were seeking to give everybody the higher standard of life they desired. It had, however, got to be sustained and won by the efforts of the people as a whole.

Replying to comments on the magisterial question by Ald. P. Sutcliffe, Mr. Houghton reminded those present that the Justices of the Peace Act passed by the Labour Government last year was the result of recommendations made by a committee which compiled a report in 1945 and which was appointed by Mr. Churchill's Government and was presided over by Lord Justice Ross. The Act introduced recommendations made by that committee arising from criticisms made by a higher legal opinion in the committee of the working of their system of jurisprudence. The position of Mayors being deprived of automatic chairmanship of the Bench was done so largely because of the increasing political nature of local government. It was thought that a person with strong political opinions locally might not be satisfactory as chairman of a Bench.

Mr. Houghton expressed the hope that nothing would happen during the next year to mar the pleasures and satisfactions of the Mayor and Mayoress in the discharge of their duties.

RICHLIY ENDOWED WITH NATURAL BEAUTY

Replying to the toast, Ald. J. H. Whitaker thanked Mr. Houghton for his interesting speech and said it was a pleasure to have their Member with them on that occasion. He said he would divide his own speech into three sections: (1) The natural beauty of their small town, (2) Municipal activities; and (3) Trading and industry.

Ald. Whitaker said Todmorden was richly endowed with natural beauty and it was possible that many of the residents were so acquainted with it that they did not appreciate it. One could stand anywhere in the valleys of Todmorden and see magnificent hillsides, some wooded, others just grassland, but it was a wonderful sight. He advocated the view of Langfield with Stoodley Pike as the prettiest one could wish to see. One did not realise the beauties of Todmorden until one had been away for a lengthy period. There were scars on the town such as the railway embankments, tipping sites, the gasworks and many derelict buildings. They were fortunate that they lived in three narrow valleys and no further damage in that direction could be done. It would all be cleaned up but it would have to be done over a long period. As the old saying claimed, "it would take a mint of money to clear up Todmorden." The job would have to be done gradually and as they could afford it. In thirty years on the Council he had seen many people come on the Council intending to reform it and polish it up, but not one of them finished up as enthused