

[1934]

LABOUR AND SPORT



WITH A
FOREWORD BY
THE RT. HON. ARTHUR
HENDERSON, M.P.

PRICE
TWO PENCE

NATIONAL WORKERS' SPORTS ASSOCIATION

0590

02803-028



FOREWORD

BY ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

FOUR years ago, when the National Workers' Sports Association came into existence, its possibilities as a new departure in Labour organisation were not fully appreciated. They are better understood now as a result of the really encouraging progress which has been made in developing the Association's work. The old saying that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" is an appropriate one even in the field of political organisation. The nature of the problems confronting the political organiser have changed very considerably since I was drawn into it more than forty years ago.

When the electorate was small the task of the political organiser was a comparatively simple one. But we are dealing to-day with an electorate of nearly thirty millions. Among the electors a large proportion are young people. They belong to a generation with different habits and ways of life, and ways of thinking, too, from those of the older generation to which I belong. Methods of propaganda and of political activity which sufficed for the older generation, are not appropriate to this younger, forward looking, athletically inclined generation. It is necessary to adapt our Party organisation to these requirements of youth. And the development of the sports movement amongst the younger workers is one of the most interesting and significant features of Labour's present-day activities.

In this pamphlet, describing the work of the Association, emphasis is very properly laid upon the change that has taken place in the organisation of sport. It is becoming much less a spectacle, and more of an individual activity. Young people especially are not content to be spectators of athletic activities, they want to be participators themselves. An important aspect of the Association's work is that it has stimulated athletics and has not merely provided spectacles and pastimes for young people to watch.

We stand, as everybody is now saying, on the threshold of an age of leisure. It is true that leisure is inequitably distributed, and only too tragically true, that for millions of workers it is not leisure, but enforced idleness. Yet we shall eventually, I believe, so organise economic affairs and distribute both work and leisure, that all the wage earners will have greater opportunities of recreation than they have at the present time. The objects of our National Workers' Sports Association will then become of high practical importance.

The international aspect of the Sports Movement is also much too important to be overlooked or ignored. The more opportunities there are to bring together sections of the people of different

countries, assisting thereby to foster confidence, goodwill and friendly relations, the less likelihood will there be of suspicion, alarm and conflict.

One of the most tragic aspects of the unemployment crisis to me has been the spectacle of strong, keen, young people unable to occupy themselves, either at work or play, for want of proper facilities in the way of sports equipment and playing fields. This is a crying social need which the National Workers' Sports Association is also helping to meet, and I am glad to find on record in this pamphlet the evidence that the work of the Association in this regard is supplementary to that of the National Playing Fields Association, and that local authorities, too, throughout the country, are providing playing grounds. This aspect of the matter will, I hope, receive an additional impetus as a result of the formation of the National Workers' Football and Sports Ground organisation, which has been brought into existence specifically to enable workers to secure permanent sports headquarters. Under energetic leadership I see no reason at all why the Workers' Sports Movement should not produce in due time a complete organisation covering the country with clubs and teams, playing grounds, and club houses, which will meet the need felt by the new generation for active, healthy, open-air recreation.

LABOUR AND SPORT

SPORT is in the blood of the average individual. Great Britain is known as the home of sport, and other nations have followed her example so faithfully that no longer are we unrivalled.

But Sport to-day is taking on a fresh significance. In addition to being a pastime it is more and more being recognised as an indispensable means to an important end. Especially is this so regarding the working classes of this country.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Medical Officers of Health in their devastating reports have exposed the viciousness of our present social system which results in under-fed children, and children stunted in growth through lack of sunshine and fresh air. The cult of the open air is taking on. It has worked wonders on the Continent and there is now strength and virility where there was weakness and frailty. As a nation we are gradually learning the lesson. By agencies like the National Playing Fields Association, in their efforts to provide playing fields,

and by the school curriculum, children are being taken from courts and alleys and dangerous thoroughfares. The playing field is one medium by which the health of the nation can be built up.

THE WORKING WEEK

The demand for a maximum forty-hour week is gaining in momentum. It cannot be stopped and is not likely to end at forty hours. Already thousands of workers have a working week of thirty-eight and thirty-nine hours, and as the 1919 ideal of a forty-eight hour week (embodied in Part XIII of the Versailles Treaty), is out of date so the forty-hour week will be in the course of a few years. The development of the machine age should mean increasing leisure for the people.

ORGANISATION OF LEISURE

How will this leisure be used? The answer is of immense importance to the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement. For years, through the Workers' Education Trade Union Committee, the Workers' Educational Association, the National Council of Labour Colleges, and other means, the Movement has sought to provide facilities for the development of the mind.

So much attention, and yet not enough, has been given to this form of human development, and so engrossed have been the trade unions, in particular, in securing the realisation of a higher standard of life for their members, that almost too late they have overlooked the problem of recreation. Re-creation comes through recreation of a healthy kind.

On the other hand, whilst our young people have learned of the value of sport, in the main they too have been so engrossed in this that they have overlooked that their recreation must be used as a training ground to fit them to engage in the struggle of life.

Because they have lost sight of the fact that sport is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, there has been the lamentable result that thousands of young men and women who ought to be in the Labour Movement, are not; not because of antagonism to it but through indifference.

Trade Unions have to learn that the task of organising leisure is in future to be one of their most important methods: not the task of regimenting sport, but of providing facilities for sports activities. If the Labour Movement is to fulfil its chief function it must more and more bring home to those they cater for that, in and through its various organisations they can find all that is essential to enable them to live a full and complete life.

Whilst environment is not the superlative factor in life it is undoubted that, through its subconscious influence, it plays an important part in developing character and outlook. This applies



"Daily Herald" picture

Girl Workers at Play.

to the realm of Sport as well as to other spheres of life. Those who observe have noticed the children of trade unionists being weaned by the silent influences of their companionships from the things for which their parents have suffered and sacrificed so much.

For trade unions, therefore, the provision of sports facilities is of paramount importance. The need of trade unionism to-day is to attract the young workers. They have come into working conditions which old-time pioneers have secured. They do not know the struggles for existence of countless others before them. They do not think of the source of their heritage. There must be a new attraction for them. If trade unions will cater for physical development as well as for the expression of the mind, they will go a long way towards securing the personal loyalty of young men and women. Just as to-day trade unions have travelled a long way from our fathers' conception of trade unionism (concerned simply with bread and butter questions) so must they develop until they cater for all human needs.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The disaster of Geneva, in connection with the Disarmament Conference, is pregnant with lessons for the Trade Union and Labour Movement. Politicians with a hazy mind have continued making a mess of things. The international chaos they have created by a nationalist outlook and mismanagement has become too much for them. The way to Peace is through the young of the world. War is a struggle. Peace, however, does not imply quiescence, but through effort—a struggle—to obtain world harmony. If Peace meant an elimination of competitive effort it would not be worth having. But there is a world of difference between a competition which means death, and a competition which means life. Upon the Field of Play there can be seen the development of prowess, of character, and esteem for one's opponents. War between nations produces hate and destruction.

Let the young people of all nations meet upon the playing field rather than upon the battlefield, and the Peace Mind will develop. Sport can become the link between the world's young by which International Peace can be secured.

Trade Unions by helping to organise sport on the international field will bring the boys and girls, and young men and women of all lands together, and friendship will be the slogan of all rather than that of the hymn of hate.

NATIONAL WORKERS' SPORTS ASSOCIATION

It is for these purposes that the National Workers' Sports Association has been formed. It is under the ægis of the Trades Union Congress and of the Labour Party. Its object is to organise facilities for all kinds of recreation.

With the backing of all trade unions, trades councils, local labour and co-operative bodies and leagues of youth, it will become a powerful force in this country, and a real national asset in assisting to secure the physically perfect human.

WHAT THE N.W.S.A. HAS DONE

The Association has only been in existence for four years, and the following will give some idea of what it has accomplished.

Its activities may be grouped under three distinct heads.

Local. There are nearly thirty affiliated bodies to the Association and the biggest of these constitute District Committees of the Association each with a varying number of affiliated clubs. Our affiliated bodies have a total strength of nearly 250 affiliated clubs or sections covering a membership of 8,000 individuals. These figures therefore represent the Association's present strength with the exception of additional bodies such as national trade unions who affiliate on behalf of all their members.

Local bodies select the sports which they organise according to local demands and popularity. For example, Reading (on the Thames) has a most successful Labour Rowing Club and the ever-increasing popularity of table tennis has caused our London Association to organise a league competition in that particular sport.

The ideal method of growth is through District Committees as by this means we have a local self-supporting centre catering for the specific needs of its particular district but participating nationally in the various activities organised by the parent body.

In one part of the country or another the following sports are organised under the auspices of the National Workers' Sports Association:—Athletics, bowls, chess, cycling, cricket, football, netball, rowing, skittles, swimming, table tennis and tennis.

National Clarion Cycling Club. Particular mention should be made of the cycling activities of our Association which are organised by the National Clarion Cycling Club, the pioneer British Socialist Sports organisation. Founded over forty years ago this Club, with a present membership of over 130 sections and 4,000 members, still uses the cycle as a means of propagating Socialism. On our inauguration in 1929 they immediately became affiliated and we leave the organisation of cycling activities entirely in their capable hands. A membership fee of 5s. per annum covers full insurance, legal assistance, free correspondence courses through the National Council of Labour Colleges, the right to participate in the general activities of the National Workers' Sports Association, organisation of Club runs and so on. No better value can be obtained from the investment of 5s. in any cycling organisation.

National. The activities nationally consist mainly in the organisation of championships in which affiliated bodies and individual

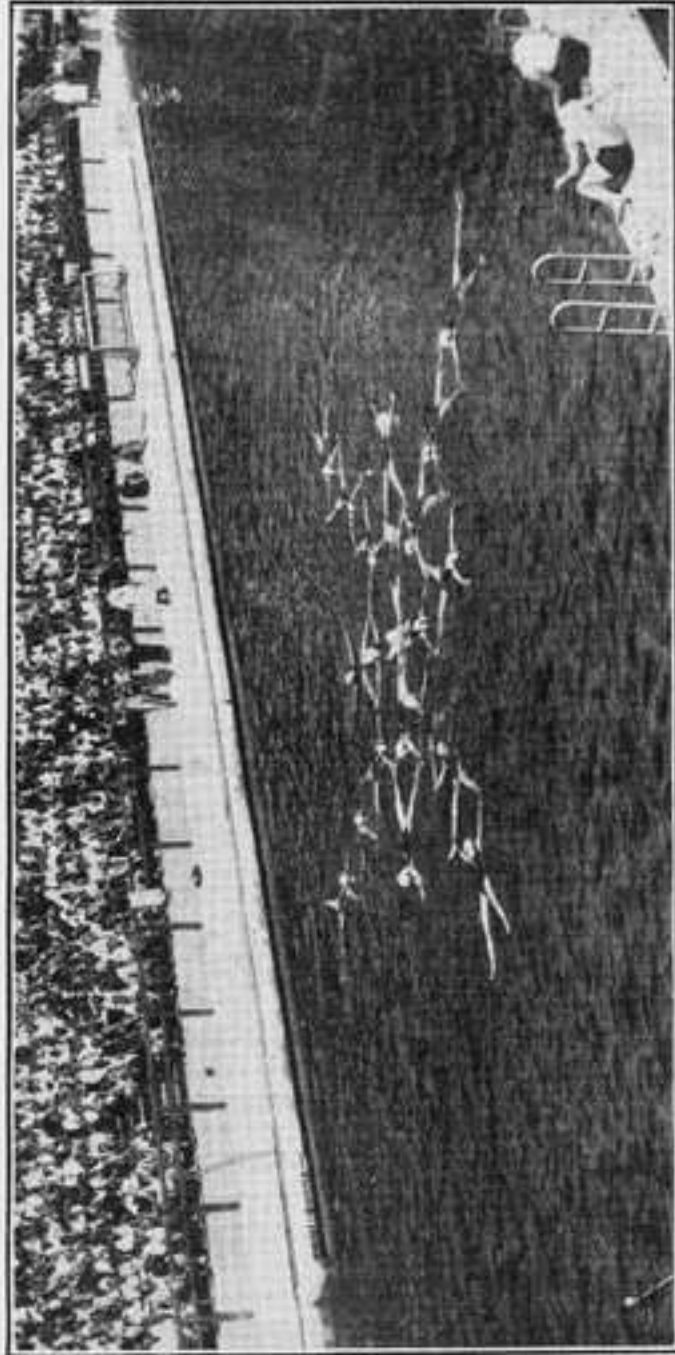


Figure Laying, Second Workers' Olympiad.

members compete. A Football Challenge Cup Competition has been held on three occasions, the winners being Swindon Labour F.C. the first two years and New Comrades F.C. (Plaistow) the third year. To minimise travelling expenses the draw is seeded in the earlier rounds so that until a club has made some considerable headway it is involved in as little travelling expense as possible.

National Tennis Championships, more familiarly known as the "Workers' Wimbledon," have also been held on three occasions and this annual event tends to become one of the most popular and successful of the Association's activities. The tournament is held over a summer week-end and so far the venue has been on the courts of the Reading Labour Lawn Tennis Club. Five handsome trophies have been generously provided by well-wishers and are put up annually for competition.

National Athletic and Swimming Championships are held and it is pleasing to note that, especially in the former, some of the best men and women athletes in the country are connected with the Association. The ever-popular game of chess is also organised by the Association and a small beginning has been made in the organisation of correspondence games while a Club meets weekly in London and can boast of a very fine match record.

The above sports have made an excellent beginning and as time goes on and demand arises it is hoped to organise other sports with equal success.

There are a number of sports clubs run in connection with Co-operative Societies, Trade Unions, local Labour Parties and Leagues of Youth. In course of time these will become affiliated to the National Workers' Sports Association—as soon as they realise what they are missing by "ploughing a lonely furrow."

International. The Association is affiliated to the Socialist Workers' Sports International, an organisation with twenty affiliated countries and a membership of nearly a million individuals. The International is the medium for organising workers' sports contests and every six years an International Workers' Olympiad is organised. At the second such Olympiad (Vienna, 1931) the N.W.S.A. with one of the smallest competing teams achieved remarkable successes and finished fourth out of the eighteen competing countries.

Two of our members, Ivy K. Walker and Cyril G. Cupid hold the International Workers' title for the 100 and 200 metres for men and women respectively.

A team of footballers and tennis players competed in the Dutch Whitsuntide Sports Festival at Arnheim in 1931 and on this occasion also the team was successful and both sections returned home with unbeaten records.

The Association was represented by table tennis players and cyclists at the Czechoslovakian Workers' Sports Olympiad at Prague in 1934, and will send a football team to play in France, Belgium and Switzerland in the near future.



The Chess Section competed in an International Match by correspondence and was having fair success until the Fascist Dictatorship in Germany brought the competition to an abrupt end.

Lastly, under the head of international activities, should be mentioned the International Sports Contests organised at Dorchester by the Association at the request of the Trades Union Congress in connection with the Dorsetshire Labourers' Centenary Competition. This is the first International Workers' Sports Meeting held in Great Britain and marks a definite landmark in the progress of the Association.

The Association has worked upon an affiliation income of less than £40 per annum, which, as can be imagined, has meant a good deal of labour and sacrifice of time on the part of its pioneers. Mention must be made, however, of those friends who have contributed to the special funds which has enabled the Association to send representative teams abroad, and the help given by Mr. J. S. Elias (the Chairman of the *Daily Herald*), the late Sir Louis Baron, Mr. F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, and others, who have presented some magnificent cups as perpetual trophies.

The General Council of the Trades Union Congress, too, has helped not only financially but, in connection with the Dorchester Commemorations, has provided the Association with a fine array of silver cups.

The Executive of the Labour Party has helped considerably by placing at the disposal of the Association its duplicating and distributing machinery.

NATIONAL WORKERS' FOOTBALL AND SPORTS GROUNDS LTD.

Splendid work has been, and is being done by the National Playing Fields Association and local authorities throughout the country in providing playgrounds of a general character for children and workpeople. But already the experience of the Association has proved the prime necessity for workers to have their own homes of sport. The National Workers' Football and Sports Grounds Ltd. has been formed specifically to enable workers to secure their permanent sports headquarters, and it is expected that this effort will be one of the main instruments of the development of the Association. Although it has only been in existence a few months it has secured a first-class football ground in London (in connection with which an attempt is being made to develop an amateur team at least equal to the best in the country), which may become the sports headquarters of the Movement; and assisted financially in laying down a tennis court for an important section of the Labour Youth Movement in this country.

Associated with this effort are the Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, Sir Stafford Cripps, A. Emil Davies, L.C.C., H. H. Elvin, Col. L'Estrange Malone, and others.



"Junior Fours" - Reading Labour Rowing Club.

Increased capital is necessary for development purposes. The denomination of the shares is only 2s. Multiples of this, up to £200, can be sent to the General Secretary of the N.W.S.A., who is also Secretary to the Company.

HOW THE N.W.S.A. CAN BE DEVELOPED

The Executive of the Association hope that the above recital of Principle and Development will stimulate labour organisations to become affiliated to the Association at special rates according to membership, or the standard affiliation fee, whichever may apply, and that the following hints will be adopted in all parts of the country.

HINTS ON BUILDING UP A WORKERS' SPORTS MOVEMENT.

1. Don't start anything unless you are keen enough to carry it through, even if it means much work.

2. Don't expect the local Labour organisation to finance your new sports club—make it self-supporting. On the other hand you will find the local Party or Branch quite willing to help in making your proposal known amongst members.

3. Don't try to "rope in" everybody, just because they are good at the sport—stick to members of the Movement (Labour Party, League of Youth, Trade Union, Co-op., etc.), but keep an eye open for any non-members who will "play the game," and probably join the Movement later on.

4. Don't insist upon "running the show" yourself; get a committee together.

5. Don't worry about polo or golf, go for football, cricket, swimming, table tennis, physical "jerks," or tennis—we will gladly give you the benefit of our experience if you will tell us how you are placed. Most places can start a football club with very little trouble and expense. Cricket doesn't cost much once you've got your "gear." Tennis requires the hire of a court but there is no reason why you should not start a rambling section next week.

6. Whatever you start, affiliate to the N.W.S.A. otherwise your club will be "out in the cold" and fade away.

7. There are two methods of approach—one is to form a local Workers' Sports Committee and allow the different Sports Clubs to follow later—the other is to form a definite Sports Club, then another (separately affiliated to us), and then form a local or district committee later. Both methods have been pursued with success. Local circumstances will decide this question. If in doubt, have a chat about it with the Secretary of the local Labour Party or Trades Council.

8. If you decide to form a Sports Club first, start work in February or March for tennis or cricket, or May for football, otherwise you will be too late to get a ground or enter a league.



Finalists in the Third Annual Workers' Lawn Tennis Championships, 1934.

9. Get in touch with all the people you can who are likely to be interested, get the support of the local movement, make out a draft scheme, call a meeting, elect your officers, affiliate to the N.W.S.A. then go ahead.

10. Fix up matches with other Labour clubs and get the results published by way of advertisement. Report to us at least monthly showing how you are getting on, and give results so that we can mention your progress in our news bulletins.

11. Should you be too late in the year to organise football and too early for tennis, get the local movement to co-operate and call a "Workers' Sports Conference" to form a local Sports Committee (we can lend you draft rules). We may be able to send you a speaker. Invite delegates from Wards Committees, T.U. Branches, League of Youth, Co-op. Guilds, etc. Form a committee out of this meeting to organise sports clubs. You can start a Rambling Club and tennis, cricket, football, swimming, and rowing will follow according to locality.

12. Better make a success of one or two clubs, than attempt too many activities at once. Keep in touch with us. That is what the Association is for—to co-ordinate and help.

WHAT THE ASSOCIATION OFFERS YOU

1. A share in the important task of building up a Workers' Sports Movement in this country.

2. As an individual member you will be eligible to enter any contest promoted by the N.W.S.A. or be eligible for selection to represent the Association in international contests, be entitled to participate in the election of our officers and attend all general meetings of the Association.

3. If your local Trade Union branch, Labour Party or League of Youth affiliates, all its members will be eligible to take part as contestants in any of the Association's sports events, be eligible for selection for international honours and it will be entitled to send delegates to any delegate meeting held including the Annual General Meeting.

4. If your Sports Club affiliates, all the above advantages are secured, and, in addition, your club will be eligible to compete in inter-club or league events, run by the Association, and also the annual championships and international matches.

5. A share in strengthening and increasing the power of the British and International Socialist Movement.

HOW TO JOIN THE NATIONAL WORKERS' SPORTS ASSOCIATION

1. *Individual Members.* Persons desiring to join who live in districts where there is at present no branch of the Association may

do so nationally as an individual member by payment of an annual subscription of 2s. 6d.

2. *Sports Clubs.* Sports Clubs and Groups connected with the Labour and Trade Union Movement may affiliate at the rate of 5s. for every fifty members or part thereof.

3. *Local Parties.* Local Labour Parties, Leagues of Youth and Trade Union branches may affiliate at the flat rate of 5s.

4. *Large Organisations.* Certain organisations, such as national Trade Unions and Divisional Federation of Labour Parties, may affiliate at special rates on behalf of all their members, full particulars of which may be obtained from the General Secretary of the Association.

(We are indebted to the Editors of "Labour" and the "Daily Herald" for permission to reproduce certain of the illustrations in this pamphlet.)

OFFICERS OF THE N.W.S.A.

President:

RT. HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

Vice-Presidents:

Chairman, Trades Union Congress General Council
Chairman, Labour Party Executive Committee

P. NOEL BAKER E. BEVIN

RT. HON. F. O. ROBERTS

Chairman: H. H. ELVIN

Vice-Chairman: G. L. DEACON

Treasurer: ERNEST A. DAVIES

General Secretary:

GEORGE H. ELVIN, 14 Skardu Road, London, N.W.2

Applications for affiliation to the Association and further information may be obtained from the General Secretary at the above address.

For regular news of N.W.S.A. activities, read—

LABOUR - Threepence monthly

NEW NATION Three-halfpence monthly



Copies of this pamphlet may be obtained

Price post free : 1 copy 2½d., 12 copies 1/6d.,
50 copies 5/6d.

From : **GEORGE H. ELVIN**, 14 Skardu Rd.,
London, N.W.2.

Watford Printers Limited, 58 Vicarage Road, Watford

A80-

YOU have read of the aims and work of the NATIONAL WORKERS' SPORTS ASSOCIATION.

YOU have read from time to time in *Labour*, *New Nation* and other periodicals of the sports functions which it organises.

This is good work—pioneering work. We believe YOU have the imagination to see the good this work can be for our Movement.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

There are several ways in which you can help:

- (1) Become an individual member for 2s. 6d. per annum.
- (2) Make donations of cash, trophies or prizes.
- (3) Get your Trade Union or Labour Party branch, etc., to affiliate either to the District Sports Association (if any), or to the National Association (if there is at present no District Committee), at the rate of 5s. per annum for every 50 members or part thereof. This is the rate for Sports Clubs or Groups. Local Labour Parties, Trade Union branches, etc., pay a flat rate of 5s.
- (4) Get a workers' tennis, football, cricket or other sports club started in your locality.

Please fill up one or more of the sections overleaf and send with remittance to GEORGE H. ELVIN, National Secretary, 14 Skardu Road, London, N.W.2.

Membership of the National Workers' Sports Association is open to all persons who are members of any organisation affiliated to the Trades Union Congress or the Labour Party. Where possible, individuals and clubs will be linked up with a District Committee of the Association.

NATIONAL WORKERS' SPORTS ASSOCIATION

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Date _____ 193__

I desire to become an individual member of the N.W.S.A. and enclose my initial subscription at the rate of 2s. 6d. per annum.

Name _____

Address _____

I am a member of the following Trade Union, Labour Party, League of Youth, or other body affiliated to the Trades Union Congress or the Labour Party:—

I am particularly interested in the following sports:—

AFFILIATION OF LABOUR BODY

Date _____ 193__

The following organisation desires to affiliate to the N.W.S.A. and encloses affiliation fee at the rate of 5s. for every 50 members or part thereof. Please state if there is a District Committee in our locality and advise us how to start a _____ Club.

Name or Organisation _____

Secretary _____

Address _____

We already run the following Sports Clubs:—

**NATIONAL WORKERS' FOOTBALL AND SPORTS
GROUNDS LTD.**

Date _____ 193__

I desire to take up _____ shares in the National Workers' Football and Sports Grounds Ltd. at 2s. per share and enclose cheque/postal order for _____.

Name _____

Address _____

This form when completed should be sent to:—

GEORGE H. ELVIN,

General Secretary, N.W.S.A.,

14 Skardu Road, London, N.W.2.