



London, Guild of Builders
Prospectus of the Guild
of Builders

HD
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B9L6
1920

*"We are convinced that what
we can see others can see
& nothing will persuade us*



*that the world is not
ready for an ideal
for which we are ready.*

PROSPECTUS
of the
GUILD OF BUILDERS
(LONDON) LIMITED

*A self governing democracy of
organised public service based upon
the National Federation of Building
Trade Operatives (London Section).*

Price Twopence. net.

Registered Office
52, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1.



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From the PRESIDENT of the
ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.

3rd May, 1920.

DEAR MR. MURREY,

I have your letter of 29th ult., with the Draft Prospectus of the "Guild of Builders," which I have read with delight. It is a very great conception. In achieving the objects for which it is founded, the Guild may be proud of having taken the first step towards placing the Trade Unions in an entirely different aspect in relation to the general community from that they now occupy, to the enormous benefit of both.

The Royal Institute of British Architects will, I am sure, watch the development with sympathetic interest, and any service I can render in the organisation of the Guild is, I need hardly say, at your entire disposal.

With many congratulations, believe me,

Sincerely Yours,

Mr. J. MURREY,
9, Rugby Chambers,
Chapel Street, W.C. 1.

JOHN W. SIMPSON.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

The London Guild of Builders was set up by the unanimous vote of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives (London District Council) on April 28th, 1920. The Federation and the Guild are really the same people organised for different purposes: the Federation regulates industrial conditions, the Guild does the work: the control in each case being in the hands of the rank and file of the organisations concerned.

Although launched independently of the Building Guild, Limited, which has its headquarters in Manchester, the Guild of Builders (London) Limited has declared that its objects are the same, and that it intends to join hands in a National Guild, a great industrial combine for the public service, with full democratic control by all the workers by hand or brain engaged in that service. Relations with the Manchester Committee have been most intimate and cordial throughout, and the negotiations with the Ministry of Health, which resulted in the agreed conditions of contract, were carried through jointly by the two bodies.

The London Guild of Builders believes that Guild organisation will develop smoothly and naturally by means of three distinct types of Committees, each with a clearly defined function to discharge.

1. *The Area Guild Committees* (e.g., Walthamstow and District), representing the Trade Union branches and approved groups in each area and concerned mainly with the organisation of the labour for each local contract, and with the social development of the Guild movement. (See page 3 of cover.)
2. *The Regional Guild Committees* (e.g., London), representing the Trade Unions, the groups and the Area Committees in each Region; registered as legal entities on a standard code of rules and acting as contractors, with all the necessary technical and administrative services for estimating contracts and carrying them through.
3. *The National Guild Committee* (also registered), representing the National Trade Unions, the approved Functional Organisations and the Regional Guild Committees, and concerned mainly with the purchase, manufacture and supply of materials, the co-ordinated use of plant and equipment, the arrangement of credit, and the central reserve funds for continuous Guild pay, Technical Research and Insurance.

The first edition of the London Guild Prospectus was issued in May, 1920, and had a remarkable reception. It was quoted at length in all the London newspapers and in a great number of provincial journals. No less than twenty thousand copies were sold in four months, not only to the London Trade Union branches, but also to the Building Trade Unions of South Africa (1,000 copies), and to interested enquirers in Australia, Canada, Holland, Germany and the United States. In this way the initial cost was completely recovered.

With the signature of the first Guild contract now secured, the curtain rings up upon one of the greatest adventures of our time. It is a deliberate attempt—by men who believe that it is more important to build than to destroy—to set up a new industrial system based upon service instead of gain, and enlisting for its high purpose all the best that science and skill can provide.

52, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C. 1. Nov. 6, 1920.

THE MEANING OF THE GUILD.

"In industry those who work with their heads and those who work with their hands co-operate to produce the things which all of us need. If conflict and disunion take the place of co-operation, wealth production is hindered and everything the community requires is rendered less abundant and more costly. To secure this harmony of interest is the master problem of the modern industrial state."

WE stand to-day at the beginning of a new period of economic history. The great Trade Unions—no longer mainly defensive and resistive—are awakening to a new conception of their functions; a new vision of creative service, which the Building Industry of Great Britain has now put into practical shape in the form of the Guild of Builders.

A Guild is a self-governing democracy of organised public service. It is the very embodiment of the "team spirit." In its full development it means a whole industry cleared for action, with all sections united for a common purpose—inspired by a new incentive—the organised service of the community, instead of the attainment of profits.

It boldly challenges the industrial traditions of a century, and makes its appeal solely to the best instincts and creative impulses of men. For it is the first industrial organisation in history that is set up to *give* service rather than to *get* it. Every word that Ruskin or Mazzini uttered on the claims of Duty and the joy of self-expression in free service, finds its echo here. This is the soul of the movement. It stands on a different plane from all other industrial systems, whether controlled by the State, by Municipalities, or by consumers. They are the organisation of *Rights*. Guilds are the organisation of *Duties*.

THE CALL OF THE GUILD.

"It is always possible to enrol the best men on the side of the best idea."

Rightly planned, a Guild is the finest piece of industrial organisation that we have yet seen. It summons to its aid the very best ability and talent that our industry can offer. Administrators—Technicians—Mechanics—Workers of every type are volunteering for its service, impelled by desire to help; conscious that they are entering upon one of the greatest tasks in history; conscious that it needs them and cannot do without them.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE GUILD OF BUILDERS (LONDON) LIMITED.

The final voice in the control of the Guild rests with the people who do the work.

The Guild Committee, therefore, consists of representatives elected by the following Trade Unions or approved groups within the District:—

- (a) The Trade Unions affiliated to the District Section of the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives.
- (b) Any other Trade Unions or groups of Building Trade Workers within the District, whether Administrative, Technical, Clerical or Operative, that may be approved by the Committee.

Each Trade Union or approved group elects One Member.

Approved groups, under this clause, have already been formed by the Architects and Surveyors, and groups of Civil Engineers, and of Sculptors and Decorative Artists, are under consideration.

Approved Area Guild Committees are also represented on the Guild Committee. In this way we secure an elected Executive responsible both to the Trade Unions and to the Area Committees, and the Trade Union Ticket becomes the Certificate of Guild Membership.

THE LEGAL ENTITY.

Each member of the Guild Committee holds One Shilling Share in a Society registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, 1893-1913, and entitled THE GUILD OF BUILDERS (LONDON) LTD. He also deposits with his electors a signed open transfer, thus giving them power to replace him at any time. The Guild Committee thus becomes a legal entity with power to enter into contracts, and yet the whole of its members are under the control of the industrial democracy they represent. The shares are for registration purposes only and carry no dividend. The whole Committee forms the Board of Directors.

OBJECTS OF THE GUILD.

The first and immediate duty of the Guild is to mobilise the necessary labour to build the houses so urgently needed by the nation, and to build them in the best possible manner at the lowest possible cost.

The objects, as stated in the Rules, are:—

1. To carry on the industry of Builders, Decorators and General Contractors.
2. To undertake all branches of supply, whether as Merchant, Manufacturer or Transporter.
3. To carry on any other work which the Society may think necessary or desirable in connection with the above objects.

From this it will be seen that the Guild is designed ultimately to undertake every branch of the Building Industry, and to provide its customers with the services of skilled architects and engineers, to purchase and manufacture the materials, to transport them to the site, erect the buildings, and furnish them.

DEMOCRATIC CONTROL IN PRACTICE.

The Guild Committee is responsible for the appointment and removal of Managers and General Foremen, and for the fixing of their salaries. General Foremen are nominated by the Area Committees and ratified by the Guild Committee. Departmental Foremen are elected by the Guildsmen of the Trade concerned.

It is important to notice here the difference between the Guild practice and that of the self-governing workshops which have so often been set up without conspicuous success. The manager of a self-governing workshop is responsible to his own staff. The Guild Manager, however, is responsible—through the Guild Committee—not only to his own staff, but to the whole of the organised Building Trade Operatives in the District. This gives him security without weakening the full democratic control by the workers.

REMUNERATION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

All Members of the Board (*i.e.*, the whole Committee) are entitled to subsistence allowances, and compensation for lost time and expenses.

POWERS OF APPOINTED MANAGERS.

The duty of Managers is to carry on the work of the Guild in accordance with the policy laid down in the Prospectus and Rules, and in the Minutes of the Board, and to keep the Board properly informed on all points.

The Board having all power, and being responsible to the rank and file, can afford to trust its Managers and give them that freedom of initiative which is so essential to rapid development.

THE NEW STATUS OF THE GUILD WORKER.

The labour of Guildsmen will no longer be regarded as a commodity like bricks or timber, to be purchased, or not, as required. *As soon as the necessary financial reserve can be created*, the Guildsman will be "on the strength," and will draw Guild pay in sickness or accident, in bad weather or in good, at work, on holiday, or in reserve.

The minimum Guild pay will never be less than the full standard rate as fixed for the industry in the district, but there is no doubt that the Guild will be able to increase the purchasing power of its members' pay by the scientific organisation of production.

THE GUILD CONTRACT.

The Guild will undertake work for every type of building owner, whether public or private.

The Guild form of Contract as approved by the Ministry of Health for Municipal Housing Schemes creates a great triple alliance under which the Guild carries out the whole of the work, the Co-operative Wholesale Society undertakes to supply the materials, and the Co-operative Insurance Society guarantees the due performance of the contract, the liability under this head being, however, limited to twenty per cent. of the estimated cost. The price paid by the Local Authority is the prime cost of material and labour at standard rates, with the addition of the sum of £40 per house to enable the Guild to guarantee continuous pay to its workers in all contingencies, and six per cent. calculated upon the estimated cost, to provide for plant, for Head Office administration, and, if necessary, for interest upon hired capital. The estimate of cost is given by the Guild and approved by the Ministry for each contract. The initial cost of plant and equipment is covered by an advance from the Co-operative Wholesale Society's Bank, secured against payments due under the contract. All other problems of finance are reduced to manageable proportions by the provision of payments weekly by the Local Authority, both for labour and materials delivered, and for the authorised Guild charges.

ORGANISED PUBLIC SERVICE.

This is the watchword of the Guild. It means that its surplus earnings will under no circumstances be distributed as dividends. This is a fundamental rule. Surplus earnings will always be used for the improvement of the service, by providing for increased equipment, for reserve, for technical training and research, and for the elimination of hired capital.

OWNERSHIP OF PLANT AND MATERIAL.

It is intended that all plant and material shall be transferred to the properly constituted authority to be set up in connection with the National Guild of Builders.

CRAFTSMANSHIP.

"We shall do work worthy of the Middle Ages" said one of the Manchester Operatives to whom the Guild Movement owes so much, and he was right. The Guild stands for the revival of the Building Art. It will offer scope to the craftsman such as he has never dared to hope for. It opens out possibilities of service to the skilled administrators and technicians that the old system could not possibly provide. And it gives them all a new status as free men, working in a democratic comradeship of service.

THE CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

The Guild's productive capacity is measured by the number of its volunteers. A form of enrolment will be found at the end of this prospectus, and all Building Trade Workers of every grade are invited to sign it, and at the same time to subscribe to the JOURNAL of the Guild, and to the loan for preliminary expenses.

THE JOURNAL.

The GUILD JOURNAL will be published as soon as the necessary number of Annual Subscriptions has been received. It is an essential feature of the scheme, and will keep all the Guildsmen informed as to the progress of the movement. It will follow closely the proceedings of the Building Trades' Parliament before which the Guild proposals will be frequently debated. It will illustrate the buildings erected by the Guild, describe new methods and new processes, circulate statistics, publish correspondence, and, above all, it will be recognised and read by the public as the official organ of the New Industrial Democracy.

WILL THE GUILD WORK?

"No one who has ever risen to any great height in this world has refused to move until he knows where he is going. Here is the great spiritual weakness of our time: we have lost sight of the venturesomeness of Faith. But somebody has got to break away—somebody has got to break the spell of things as they now are, if we are not to go on in a cycle of increasing tragedies. How can we go without knowing whither? How can we lose without seeing any acquisition?"

"If Columbus had reflected thus, he would never have weighed anchor. It is madness to sail the sea without knowing the way; to sail the sea no one has ever traversed before; to make for a country the existence of which is a question.

"But, with this madness, he discovered a New World."

HOW TO SPREAD THE GUILD IDEA.

One of the most effective methods of propaganda is to introduce this Prospectus to Trade Union Branches, and get them to purchase copies for sale to their Members. They are obtainable from Head Office for 1s. 6d. per dozen, post-free.

Volunteers should sign on at their Branches and send the forms to the Secretary of the appropriate Area Committee. (See p. 3 of cover.)

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THE GUILD JOURNAL.

ONE SHILLING MONTHLY.

(It is essential that every Volunteer should take the Journal.)

I enclose Shillings as a Subscription to THE GUILD JOURNAL for Post-free.

The Subscription Rates are Twelve Months, 12s. ; Six Months, 7s. ; Three Months, 3s. 6d.

NAME

ADDRESS.....
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£5,000 LOAN FOR PRELIMINARY EXPENSES.

Repayable, without interest, as soon as possible out of the surplus earnings of the Guild.

I enclose £ : : as a LOAN for the Preliminary Expenses of the Guild.

NAME

ADDRESS.....
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N.B.—Cheques should be made payable to “The Guild of Builders (London) Limited,” 52, Russell Square, W.C. 1, and Crossed “C.W.S. Bank ”

Date

THE GUILD OF BUILDERS (London) Ltd.
Area Roll of Volunteers.

To be filled in and handed ENTIRE to the Secretary of the Area Committee.
DO NOT DETACH THE LOWER HALF.

Having read the Prospectus, I hereby VOLUNTEER FOR GUILD SERVICE,
and undertake to do my part in the execution of the contracts undertaken by the Guild.

LONDON'S FIRST GUILD CONTRACT

Reprinted from "The
Challenge," 7. 1. 21

The
GUILD OF BUILDERS (LONDON) LTD.
72, OXFORD ST., W.1.

COMMITTEE

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LONDON'S FIRST GUILD CONTRACT

"In witness whereof the said Walthamstow Urban District Council and the said Guild of Builders (London) Limited and the said Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited have respectively caused their Common Seals to be hereunto affixed the day and year first above written."

IT has come at last, and it is one of the most significant and dramatic things in the history of industry. At a time when charges of selfishness—of lack of imagination—of output, restriction and what not, were being heaped upon the building trade unions; these very unions were quietly working out a great new system of industrial organisation, based upon service instead of gain, and designed to enrol for the rapid building of the nation's houses all the science and skill that the building industry can muster. The story is a veritable romance. Launched almost simultaneously both in Manchester and London, the Guild idea has fired the imagination of the building trade operatives throughout the country. The whole thing is really surprisingly simple. The Guild is a democratic self-governing public service, in which the control rests with the people who do the work and not with the people who put up the money—which guarantees continuous pay to its workers in every contingency—devotes the whole of its surplus earnings not to dividends but to the improvement of its service—regards capital as the hired equipment of industry to be

Date

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and undertake to do my part in the execution of the contracts undertaken by the Guild.

paid for, if required, at limited rates without powers of control, and maintains complete publicity as to costs, charges and prices.

Guild Structure.

The London Guild Committee, which is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies' Acts, is composed of one elected representative of every essential function in the building industry. The technical and administrative services have their representatives, the bricklayers and other craft unions have theirs, the labourers theirs. Besides these there are the representatives of each of the local Guild Committees formed to organise the labour supply in their own areas.

The Contract.

By the terms of the contract the Guild undertakes the whole of the work comprised in the building of 400 houses, the Co-operative Wholesale Society supplies the materials and the Co-operative Insurance Society issues a policy to guarantee the due performance of the contract—the liability being, however, limited to one-fifth of the estimated cost. The price paid by the Walthamstow Urban District Council is the net cost of labour and materials, plus £40 per house to form a fund for continuous Guild pay, plus six per cent. calculated on the estimated cost, to cover the use and waste of plant and head office expenses. One of the attractive features is the complete publicity of the whole transaction. There are no invisible margins and the whole network of secrecy that has so often surrounded commercial transactions in the past is completely swept away. The Guild does its work as an organised public service with all the cards on the table.

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The Call to Technicians.

Perhaps the boldest and most interesting development in the whole scheme is the Guild's call for volunteers. Having caught a glimpse of the stupendous possibilities of *Industrial Revolution by consent*, these big trade unions of the building industry, undismayed by all the staggering chaos of the moment, have actually set up the framework of a new and better industrial order, have flung aside all class distinctions, and have issued a prospectus* which calls, not for money, but for men from every grade of the industry—whether administrative, technical or operative.

They believe that their conception of an industry as a great self-governing democracy of organised public service is inspiring and creative and will win by its own greatness—that it needs no threats to help it through, and may even be retarded by such methods. They recognise that much will depend upon the response of the best administrators and technicians to the call of the Guild. Without them it may struggle through; with them it will ride swiftly forward to complete success.

Will they volunteer? Will they boldly place their skilled experience at the service of the new industrial democracy and take their full share in the greatest task that has ever been attempted? One of the opportunities of history lies before them now and already there are signs of their answer.

MALCOLM SPARKES.

*Obtainable from the Guild of Builders (London), Ltd., 72 Oxford Street, W.1. Price 2½d. post free.

Date | THE GUILD OF BUILDERS (London) Ltd. |
Area Roll of Volunteers.

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Name

Address

Trade Union Branch

Professional Organisation*

Special Qualifications

*The Guild calls for offers of service from every grade of Building Trade Worker,
whether Administrative, Technical or Operative.

Date | THE GUILD OF BUILDERS (London) Ltd. |
Head Office Roll of Volunteers.

To be detached by the Area Secretary and sent to Head Office.

Having read the Prospectus, I hereby VOLUNTEER FOR GUILD SERVICE,
and undertake to do my part in the execution of the contracts undertaken by the Guild.

Name

Address

Trade Union Branch

Professional Organisation*

Special Qualifications

*The Guild calls for offers of service from every grade of Building Trade Worker,
whether Administrative, Technical or Operative.

Hendon, Highgate, Hornsey, Mill Hill, Tottenham, Waltham Cross.
A. W. JONES, 44, Warwick Road, N. 18.

10. Chingford, Leyton, Walthamstow, Woodford.
H. E. WOODRUFF, 397, Forest Road, E. 17.

11. Barking, Dagenham, East Ham, Ilford, Poplar, Rainham, Romfild,
Stratford, West Ham.
W. MARSHALL, 60, Kitchener Road, Forest Gate, E. 7.

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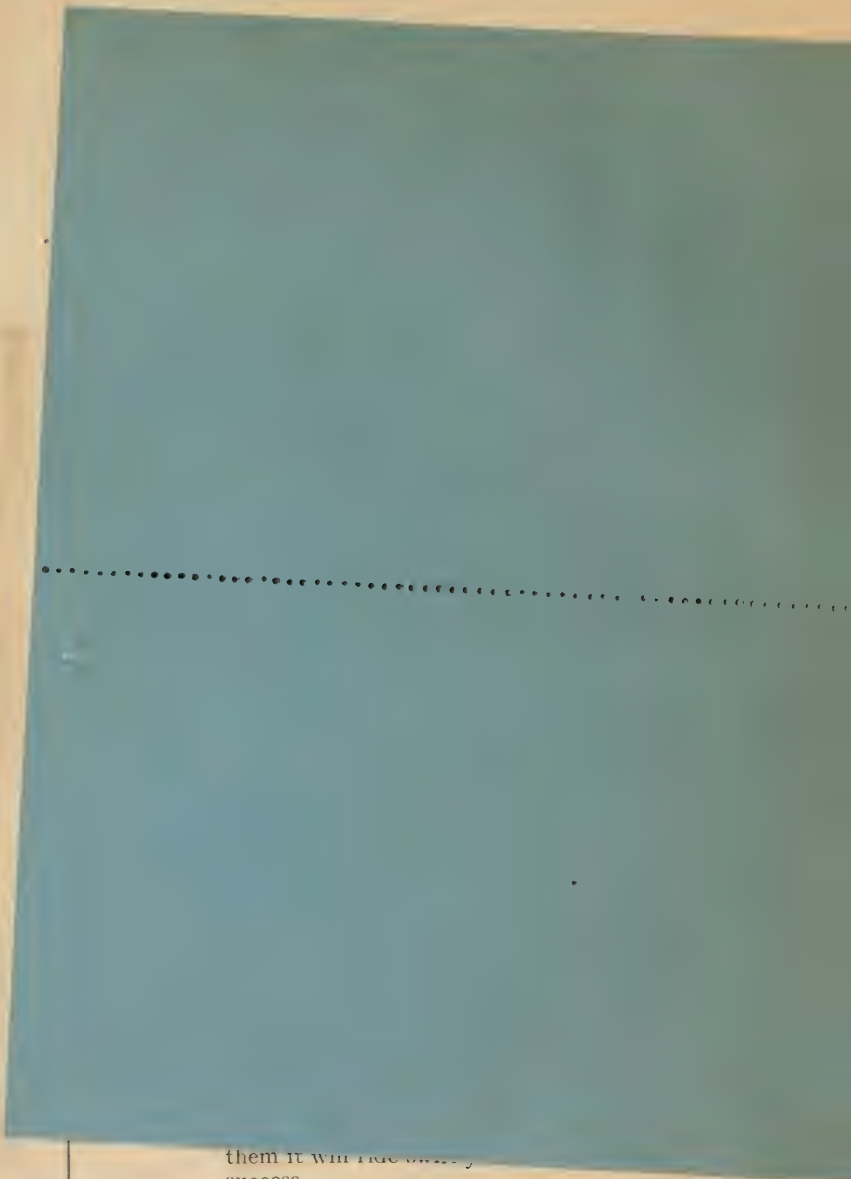
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MALCOLM SPARKES.

*Obtainable from the Guild of Builders (London), Ltd., 72 Oxford Street, W.1. Price 2½d. post free.

PROVISIONAL SCHEME FOR AREA GUILD COMMITTEES
IN THE LONDON REGION.

1. Battersea, Brixton, Chelsea, Clapham, Fulham, Lambeth, Wandsworth.
G. S. GREENMAN, 81, Mallinson Road, S.W. 11.
2. Belvedere, Bermondsey, Bexley Heath, Bromley, Camberwell, Chelsfield Stn., Chislehurst, Crayford, Crays, Deptford, Erith, Greenwich, Lewisham, Orpington, Sidcup, Southwark, Woolwich.
H. C. GOULTY, 18, Annandale Road, S.E. 10.
3. Hammersmith, Hampstead, Kensington, Marylebone, Paddington, St. Pancras, Westminster.
A. HORSLEY, 26, Ainger Road, N.W. 3.
4. Bethnal Green, City, Finsbury, Hackney, Holborn, Islington, Stepney, Stoke Newington.
5. Beckenham, Chipstead, Coulsdon, Croydon, Penge, Thornton Heath, Waddon, Wallington, Warlingham, Wickham.
W. F. PARSONS, 128, Langdale Road, Thornton Heath.
6. Cheam, Epsom, Ewell, Kingston, Merton, Mitcham, Norbiton, Raynes Park, Stoke Heath, Surbiton, Sutton, Wimbledon.
7. Brentford, Feltham, Hampton, Hounslow, Kew, Mortlake, Richmond, Teddington, Thames Ditton, Twickenham, Walton-on-Thames.
8. Acton, Brondesbury, Chiswick, Ealing, Harrow, Hayes, Southall, Sudbury and Wembley, Watford, Willesden.
9. Barnet, Cheshunt, Edgware, Edmonton, Enfield, Finchley, Golders Green, Hendon, Highgate, Hornsey, Mill Hill, Tottenham, Waltham Cross.
A. W. JONES, 44, Warwick Road, N. 18.
10. Chingford, Leyton, Walthamstow, Woodford.
H. E. WOODRUFF, 397, Forest Road, E. 17.
11. Barking, Dagenham, East Ham, Ilford, Poplar, Rainham, Romford, Stratford, West Ham.
W. MARSHALL, 60, Kitchener Road, Forest Gate, E. 7.



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