

The SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR

No. 19.

MARCH, 1924.

GUARANTEED CIRCULATION, 30,000.

The Sheffield Co-operator.
MARCH, 1924.

GOVERNMENT AND CO-OPERATION

The London Co-operative Society's ballys at no. 20, Downing-street, one of those simple incidents indicative of a great change.

Hitherto the co-operative movement has been a veritable Cinderella so far as Government recognition is concerned. It is true that Parliamentary representation resulted in far more recognition to our movement than had hitherto been the case, but for the first time we have not only a Premier, but a Cabinet composed of active co-operators.

The Prime Minister is a member of the London Co-operative Society. Mr. Philip Snowden, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Snowden have always been keenly interested in our movement, appearing frequently on co-operative platforms. Mr. J. R. Clynes, Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons, was formerly a member of the Oldham Co-operative Society, and now a member of the London Society, and he owes much to the use made of the Oldham Society's splendid library.

Lord Haldane, the Lord Chancellor, has always been keenly interested in the co-operative cause. He has addressed the educational session of the Co-operative Congress, and always stood for co-operative ideals and education.

Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Home Secretary, is a member of the London Co-operative Society. Mr. J. H. Thomas, the Colonial Secretary, is the chairman of the Co-operative Permanent Building Society, and a director of the Co-operative Printing Society. Mr. Stephen Wals, the Secretary for War, has also spoken frequently on co-operative platforms. Mr. Sidney Webb, President of the Board of Trade, is a practical advocate of co-operation, as his many writings show. Mr. W. Adamson has been a member of the Dunfermline Co-operative Society since his marriage many years ago, and has lectured for it often. Mr. Wheatley, the Minister of Health, who is an expert on housing schemes, is a member of the Sheffield Co-operative Society. Mr. Noel Baxton, the Minister of Agriculture, has taken an active interest in agricultural co-operation, and is on the committee of the Agricultural Organisation Society.

Mr. W. Graham, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, has been for many years a member of St. Catherine's Co-operative Society. Mr. F. O. Roberts, Minister of Pensions, has represented Northampton Co-operative Society at many conferences, and at Liverpool Congress. Mr. W. Leach, Parliamentary Secretary for Air Service, has been a member of the Bradford Society. Mr. R. J. Davies, the Under Secretary for the Home Office, is well known as an old director of Manchester and Salford Society, and N.U.D.A.W. Approved Society. Miss Margaret Bonfield, Parliamentary Secretary for Air Service, is a warm supporter of co-operation for many years. And so one could go on.

The facts are not so important as the portraits. What is implied is a country as a whole will be brought to bear upon the affairs of this great nation, a out by active co-operators all over the

[Continued in next column.]

CITY COUNCIL NOTES.

By "VULCANITE."

ALTHOUGH the two hours' debate on the new superannuation scheme for municipal employees did not result in a definite decision, it did at least throw a light upon the attitude of many of our councillors towards the officials, in striking contrast to their attitude to the workmen employed by the municipality.

One could not help but feel that although the Council did postpone the scheme until March 5th, the officials are going to get infinitely better treatment and more consideration than they generally give to the working man.

Again, the Council had to lament the fact that they shall we say their predecessors, had not put such a scheme into operation years ago. This belated benevolence is too characteristic of both sections of the Citizens' Party. Housing, education, superannuation, town planning—in short, all the things that tend to the betterment of our municipality, "ought" to have been put into operation years ago.

Exactly! But what a confession for some of our councillors and councillors to make, in view of their lifelong service to the city. The fact is, of course, that these belated cries are confessions of failure on the part of the councillors, who had not sufficient foresight to see the growing needs of the city on the one hand, and the ever widening scope for municipal enterprise on the other.

Councillor Graves was exceedingly amusing in his references to the employees. "I am quite satisfied," said he, with the exemplary punctuality with which our employees leave work, I don't know whether it works at the other end!"

"I have altered my views about 65 in the last few years." "A man is not as old at 65 as he was twenty years ago."

Councillor Bancroft's fine appeal for permission to run a Flag Day on behalf of the railwaymen's widows and orphans failed to secure a majority of votes. Bancroft's case was that there was an organisation which was relieving the needs of this city by providing for the widows and orphans of railwaymen, an organisation the administrative expenses of which were lower than any one of the institutions which were on the Watch Committee's permissive list.

I was interested to watch the way the vote went after hearing the professions of sympathy from some of the city councillors and aldermen. Needless to say, the Labour Group voted solidly for Bancroft's amendment.

Councillor Rowlinson moved an amendment having for its purpose the introduction of direct labour in the

viewpoint advanced year in and year country. Mere recognition of our movement is nothing compared with the fact that we have a Government inspired by its ideals, largely trained in service, and out for a system based upon its principles.

[Continued from previous column.]

city's housing schemes, pointing out that the similar authorities at Swansea, Bradford, Richmond, and Newmarket had used direct labour in their schemes, with the result that they had better houses and cheaper ones, than private enterprise had provided for us in this city. He gave figures proving these facts conclusively. The majority of the Council, however, disregarded both the facts and the figures.

It always seems remarkable to me that the very people who brag about the results of the tram and electric light departments, and so forth, should be so hesitant about municipalisation in other directions. It is no use saying that these people have eyes to grind. The fact of the matter is that they are soaked and saturated in the ideas of the present competitive system, and anything in the nature of communal enterprise, or co-operative effort, is anathema to them.

Councillor Watkins seconded Rowlinson's motion on this question, but he closed with the points he made at the Council in an article in another part of this journal.

A long and somewhat weary discussion took place on the Minutes of the Watch Committee. The proposal to appoint an official at £500 per annum to supervise the lighting of the city was discussed at length. Eventually, however, the proposal was carried.

The question raised in the "Sheffield Independent" was brought before the City Council by Mr. O. C. Wilson, namely, the fencing in of a part of the Slanage Moor. The Highways Committee informed the Council that they were watching events and getting information re the legal position.

Our readers will not watch what is done in this connection. Those of us who belong to the various rambling clubs in the city will know that there is too much of this private encroachment around Sheffield at the present time, the "Sheffield Independent" is to be congratulated on the attitude taken on this question.

Councillors Watkins and Graves criticised the administration of the Electric Light Department. Still the Minutes were passed, and the scheme for extension will go forward.

"Citizen" in the "Sheffield Telegraph," says something of a tribute to Rowlinson and Watkins. True, this is done in an attempt to belittle their colleagues. But what else can one expect from a regular contributor to the local Tory journal?

Says "Citizen" "Councillor Rowlinson now and again makes a useful contribution to a discussion, and Councillor Watkins can be both interesting and illuminative when he is dealing with figures. The regular further councillor Watkins' arithmetical proficiency so remarkable."

In replying to advertisements mention the "Sheffield Co-operator."

THE FUTURE.

By EDNA M. PENNY.

THE great staid election is over, and events have turned out just as we expected. Mr. Baldwin lost his large majority; the official Liberal Party and Mr. Lloyd George have kissed and made it up.

Those who engineered the election were just a little bit out in their calculations—they did not realise the strength of the Labour movement in the country. Many even in the Labour movement did not realise it.

How many in our own ranks thought that Parliamentary power would be in the hands of Labour so soon?

Possibly there are some co-operators who as yet have failed to see the importance of co-operative politics and who, clinging to one of the older political parties, may present being classed as one with the Labour Party, but it is obvious to all who read the programmes of these sections, which are cast in the name of the general well-being of the people before private interests, and the Labour Party is the political expression of these sections, which are cast in working in their own particular way.

This coming into power of the Labour Party must cheer many in the country, for it changes to one of the older political parties, and the Labour Party is the only growing political party in this country.

The results of propaganda of the past twenty years is being reaped to-day.

If only some of those who dreamed of this day could but see it.

One's thoughts fly out to many who have done their bit and passed on; not only those whose names are well-known, but those who have done some of the spade work in the byways. Every successful movement has its unsung workers and watch their work that is the triumph of their faith.

Women have played a large part in bringing about the success of Labour. In endless ways they have done their share through the past years, and they can truly rejoice at its success to-day.

If only Mrs. Macdonald could be at her husband's side and share his honours she would feel that those long years of calumny and abuse which he has borne have been well repaid.

I knew both his mother and wife, and although they have passed into the great beyond, at least their children are by their father's side.

For us who have the honour to be of the rank and file much remains to do. Great responsibility on our leaders means continued effort on our part to strengthen local organisation.

More meetings are needed to educate the public. There is more good than evil in the world, and we only need knowledge and experience to banish wrong-doing.

It is good to live and see the result of the work of the pioneers. If some of those who inspired us to try to help in the days gone by are with us no more, the memory still inspires us as H. M. Brailsford says of Mr. Hardie as he said:

"Hardie's teaching came as an inspiration which no harsh realism could have quenched to us. The life of this man is to our most precious inheritance."

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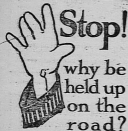
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HOUSING.

DIRECT LABOUR AND PRIVATE CONTRACT.

By COUNCILLOR T. H. WATKINS.

CITY SURVEYOR'S REPORT.

The City Surveyor of the Corporation was requested by the Estates Committee to report whether he could undertake the building of houses in lots of fifty. His report was that he could, under conditions that offered the fairest test of price, quality of materials, and good work.

He pointed out, incidentally, that circumstances were more favourable a few years ago in these respects, when the tenders of private contractors were even more excessive than now. Also that difficulty was being experienced in obtaining bricklayers at the time he was writing his report (i.e., in December, 1923).

It is of interest to learn that at the present time there are bricklayers reported unemployed at the "Unemployment Exchange"; also many bricklayers resident in Sheffield are working on contracts for other corporations outside the city, and would prefer to work in the city.

DIRECT LABOUR.

When the question came before the City Council on February 1924, the majority decided not to proceed with increasing the building of houses, or to exploring the best methods of doing so under the City Surveyor.

It was pointed out by members of the Labour Group that fewer builders were contracting for the building of houses under the Corporation.

IS IT A RING?

It was proved from the Corporation's official records that the number of contracts tendered in 1922 averaged twenty, but the number tendered during the last six months averaged three. Further, the average price of the tenders had increased up to £100 per house, also during the last six months.

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

Despite these facts and the necessity to expedite the building of houses, the Council rejected the test proposed of direct building, on the plea of shortage of builders. The true reason is that to majority of the members of the Council the order that house building should proceed by private contractors, despite the evidence of failure on their part to assist the Corporation except upon their own terms.

BUILDERS' FEDERATION.

These terms were clearly set forth by

the president of the Builders' Federation at a meeting held on February 13th, the evening prior to the last Council meeting. It was then stated that if the Council increased the subsidy to £150 per house the houses required in Sheffield would be built!

No question of shortage of bricklayers. The insincerity of the opposition to a test inaugurating the building of houses by a Corporation department is apparent.

PRIVATE BUILDING BY SUBSIDY.

The Corporation have granted a subsidy of £100 to private house building under the Housing Act of the late Government.

Up to the present provision has been made to sanction the plans of 750 houses, to be entitled to the subsidy of £100. The total amount of subsidy upon 750 houses will amount to £75,000, of which £18,750 will be borne by the local rates and £56,250 by the Government.

AND ITS AMOUNT OF RATES.

The suggestion of the Builders' Federation to increase the subsidy of each house to £150 would mean that the local rates would have to bear an equal amount to that borne by the Government, and the charge upon the local rates increased from £18,750 to £56,250, at the equivalent of 5½d. upon the rates for 750 privately-owned houses, which would swell the coffers of private builders.

THE FUTURE.

The policy of the late Government admittedly was to promote the interest of private builders under the specious terms of encouraging private enterprise. Moreover, the present subsidy is based upon that policy, and was arranged and agreed upon between many municipalities collectively and the late Government. It is not interesting to watch the attitude of municipalities to the present Government, and whether equal consideration, assistance, and support will be forthcoming on the part of such municipalities towards the policy and proposals of the present Government to build houses to supply the needs in the interests of the people requiring them, and not for houses to be built to provide profits for private builders.

It is to be hoped that the Government Credit Scheme will grant money to municipalities for house building at a very low rate of interest, in order to enable local authorities to get on with the business forthwith.

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ASQUITHIAN APATHY.

On February 13th, Mr. Asquith made the speech wherein he criticised the Government's action with regard to what is known as the "Poplar order." We need not concern ourselves with his objection, which the Government will deal with—no doubt by the time this is in print.

But we do wish to draw attention to his solution of the difficulty, and the part he carefully refrained from taking when he was in power. The amendment handed in for the Liberal Party is as follows:—

That this House regards the action of the Minister of Health as calculated to encourage illegality and extravagance, and urges that the real remedy for the difficulties of necessitous areas is to be found in the reform of the London Government and of the Poor-Law system.

It needs very little political knowledge to expose the shour of Liberalism as exemplified in the above resolution, which summarises Mr. Asquith's remarks on the subject.

The Poor-Law of to-day was brought into being by the Poor-Law Amendment Act of 1834, with modifications from time to time by the Orders of the Local Government Board, and latterly, the Ministry of Health. "To all intents and purposes the Poor-Law system in principle and mode of administration has remained stereotyped from 1834 to the present day." In 1902, Mr. A. J. Balfour (now Earl Balfour) appointed a Royal Commission to consider the whole question of the Poor-Law, and its recommendations were in due course issued in two reports—the Majority, and the Minority Reports. Both reports alike advocated the abolition of the Poor-Law itself, together with a scheme for the abolition of the Poor Law, together with constructive recommendations which are summarised below. The suggestions to the Minority report were originally drafted out a scheme for the abolition of the Poor Law, together with constructive recommendations which are summarised below. The suggestions to the Minority report were originally drafted out a scheme for the abolition of the Poor Law, together with constructive recommendations which are summarised below.

The Poor-Law Commission cost the country £50,000. It collected a mass of invaluable evidence, and the Labour Party for years put the Minority proposals in its programme—and is still their only sincere supporter. It issued pamphlets, and took up all kinds of active propaganda for the reform of methods as to the giving of aid to the

necessitous, but the Government paid no heed. And from 1903 (just prior to the outbreak of war, which things might be done) and Asquith was Prime Minister. What can we think of the sincerity of a man who dilly-dallies six years the way, with his reports starting him in the office, and then pretends to the office about the very subject he is so strongly urged? And the present Government, moreover, has more than his hands full in clearing up the mangled mess for which Asquith and Lloyd George are primarily responsible. Fie! The "Shielded Independent" ought to know better than to merely follow Asquith's lead in this matter.

And what were the proposals of the Minority? They cannot be fully explained in the brief space at our disposal, but what they did do was to accept, definitely, the principle of the right to work or maintenance. This, he it remembered, is why the Poor Law Guardians are in hot water. There is no objection to the scale of their payments to the destitute—which approximate to the Mend scale, but to the fact that they recognise these people as being in need of relief from the Mend scale does. For example, the whole earnings coming into a family must be deducted (under the Mend scale) from the sum granted in relief, with the exception of 20s. allowed to each earner for expenses. Thus, a man with a wife and four children is entitled to 48s. per week relief, but if he has a fifth child at home, say his eldest son, who is earning 50s. a week, the case is different. Instead of having 48s. per week relief, he will then have 5s. only; 40s. of his son's income will be deducted; that is to say, from the amount due as relief—85s.—leaving 45s. In such a case, Poplar knocks off 12s., and not 40s. This is neither a justification nor endorsement of the Poplar Board of Guardians—it is an exposure of the humbugging hypocrisy of Asquith.

All this might have been avoided by sane and wise legislation, for which Asquith well knew the need, had ample power, and had six years in which to do it before the war broke out.

Having accepted the principle of work or maintenance, the Ministry provided suggestions as to adequate machinery for the purpose, under the charge of the Minister of Labour. The non-able-bodied poor were to be placed in the

charge of existing committees of borough and county councils. Thus, all "Poor-Law" children of school age should be in the complete care of the Education Committee; younger children and the sick and infirm of all ages looked after by the Health Committee; and the mentally defective by the Asylums Committee. We have the machinery in existence, and could have had it working smoothly years ago—had it for the saving of Mr. Asquith.

As to the further suggestion embodied in their resolution, that implies the equalisation of rates, for which members of the Labour Party and the co-operators have been pressing for years. There are twenty-nine separate towns included in London proper for Local Government purposes, each rated separately. It is just as though Ramsmoor, Hillsborough, Abbydale, Attlecliffe, and so on, were each separately rated. In a very bad time like the present, the ratepayers of Attlecliffe would have their backs broken by the cost of keeping their own unemployed; Ramsmoor, by the cost of "unemployed" (except those with private incomes) would have no extra cost of Poor-Rate whatever. Last year, for example, the rate in Westminster were 17s. 4d. in the pound; in Battersea, 15s. 4d.; in Brompton, 18s. 0d.; and in Poplar, 22s. 8d. But the rich live in Westminster, and they do not seem to come on the Poor-Rate. They have a surer, quieter, but much more effective method of getting a very handsome time indeed out of the public.

And who, pray, since 1920 has pressed for a national solution of the cost of our unemployed. Why, when Chamberlain of Commerce were lawfully themselves hoarse with the cry "Down with rates," we pressed home time and time again the fact that unemployment in war-work areas, consequent upon the ending of war, was properly a national charge. That is such a reform for the whole country as Asquith and the Liberal Party now profess to want for London as a whole. Both Asquith and Lloyd George knew all about the inequitable taxation of London Boroughs, it was rubbed into them time after time. And, if you still remain unimpressed with this argument, think of the speeches and the promises of this precious pair as to the future of those who went to the war—the country must look after them! It has done so to a fine time. Ever since Alexander went in with a big majority for the first time, his hands have been full of pension cases, the homes for heroes are not built, and reconstruction wasn't even commenced till the end of 1922. Meantime, Asquith and Lloyd George, both uncomfortable while the other is in the Liberal Party, are trying to "steal a march" on each other.

So much for Asquith's first try.

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HOME
NOTES.

By "PATRICIA."

The time
New hopes should instate the world, see light
Should dawn from our own revelations to a race
Weighed down so long.

—Brevoort.

To all my fair readers, and also the
dark ones, the very best of good wishes
for the New Year: may your joy in life
increase, may the days be ever too short,
may the nights bring peaceful repose
to sustain you for the work you delight
in: may you bring to all health,
energy, and peace of mind.

How easily we utter good wishes, and
if wishes were able to bring all the
wisher's desire, what a happy world this
would be. Wishes have to be translated
into action, and that is why in the midst
of all our good wishes we have to face
facts.

We know that there are many suffering
from diseases which are brought on
or aggravated by bad housing, poor
food, cold, worry, &c. Still, on the
threshold of this New Year I refuse to
be pessimistic.

More men and women are thinking
about health and housing, and just as
good wishes cheer us at Christmas, good
thinking must improve things, for
action is bound to follow.

If we could only focus life aright;
realise what a joyous thing life might
be; plan all our work—national, local,
and in our homes with best care, desire,
to bring health and happiness, we
should find it could only be done by
making everyone have the same chance
as ourselves. We should not all be
allies, but healthy conditions for all
would lead to a great awakening of
moral effort, which is now dulled and
warped by poverty.

So I bid you all be of good cheer, for
it is a glorious old world we are in.

A correspondent writes: "When do
you reckon to start spring cleaning?"

Now that is the kind of question I
like, because I believe every woman
should learn to really understand
household management. I want to see
women on every kind of committee with
some real workmanlike knowledge.
The women on the Housing Committee
should know the delights of cleaning a
house with good woodwork and well-
laid floors; should know the waste of
time caused by brownish chimneys
dropping soot on the washing and soiling
windows and curtains, &c. The women
who have coal polish on their
furniture know the delights of cleaning
a really well-made article.

Such improvements could be made
and real economy arise if people
would connect all these simple little
tasks with life.

What is life? Mostly working, eating,
drinking, and sleeping, and the
first is the greatest—not the part you
are paid to do, but all you do with hand
and brain is working.

Then let it be intelligent, and when
you learn how to do something well and
easily, tell someone else, and so help
to lighten their burden, and keep your
eyes and ears open and learn from
others.

I'll pass on one hint. Start spring
cleaning as soon as you have time, and
don't attempt to do all of it in a few
days, and don't wait until the fine
weather is here to make a start; get
basted. It will clear away the dull weather
where the flies rest in winter-time, your
wall will be able to go out when the
nice weather comes along.

When cleaning paint and linoleum,
try a small quantity of paraffin in the
water. It may irritate the latter, but it
preserves paint and linoleum, besides
being a disinfectant and easy cleaner.

"OUR CIRCLE"

Monthly, 1d.

A Clean and Popular Magazine for Young Folk,
Full of Stories, Pictures, and CompositionsPublished by the National Co-operative Publishers' Society Limited,
Leeds, 10, Market Street.

JACK'S ADVENTURE.

By MARGARET CARLTON.

Jack and Sammie went fishing in a
nice quiet stream in a wood. Jack
went to sleep and dreamed the stream
turned into a gigantic river with a boat-
load of Indians coming straight towards
him. A frontiersman told him to lay
flat in the long grass.

The boat came nearer, slowing as it
did so, and as the keel touched the side,
the foremost Indians sprang out.
Silently they got out, and after
covering the canoe with broken
branches, they disappeared into the
thick woods. Evidently they had no
idea of the nervousness of Jack and his
companions.

After a while the main row, motioning
Jack to get up also.

"I think they're a party going to
join the big war party that's camping
back in the woods. Come on, and
p'raps we'll make the fat safely."

As silently as the Indians—at least
Jack hoped so—followed, walking in the
mass of ferns. Sammie, who did
not seem very interested, followed on,
Presently they reached the fort, a
large enclosure with rough wooden
houses inside it. They stood seeing
another party of Indians.

It seemed to Jack as if he had been
there all his life after the first few
minutes had passed. He seemed to
know all the people there. His mother
and father, his cousins, and Sammie,
and even so many friends. They dis-
covered the Indians coming, for they
knew they were, as it was just the
most natural thing in the world, though
of course, they were all very concerned.
Some of them arriving at the fort with
news of still larger parties of Indians in
the neighbourhood, and of many camp
fires not many miles away.

At first it was dark had fallen the
attack began. As it grew so fast, first
loading the guns and helping the men;
but slowly the rest of the powder and
the arrows of the Indians made it awful.
There were wounded men and
frightened women.

Jack got very excited and yelled until
he was hoarse. As it grew darker just
before it was dawn, the Indians
began to send fire arrows, and before
long several of the wooden houses were
blazing fiercely, affording a terribly
bright light, of which the invaders took
full advantage.

Part of the palisading had been burnt
away, and many times the Indians
rushed in that way, and were great
out again. But as still large numbers
of them were in—to stay in Jack's
township when he saw their
tomahawks.

One big savage, glittering with war
paint, caught him and whirled his
tomahawk above his head.

"I'm done," thought Jack, shaking
himself to and fro to get out of the red
man's grasp.

"Anyone 'ed think I was going to
sculp you," cried Sammie indignantly,
"the way you tried to get out of the red
man's grasp."

"Your float's been down ever so
long. I bet there's a party or a trout
began to haul in his line, though his
head was full of dreams. 'You don't
sculp,' grumbled Sammie. 'I've eaten
my ink.'"

"Have you?" grunted Jack, then un-
able to keep quiet any longer, he began
to describe his adventures. "Indians
—Sammie—real in—I dreamt of
thousands of 'em—I saw."

"It's lucky you didn't dream that at
home or you'd have yelled," remarked
Sammie.

Jack told no more of this, and went
on making Sammie a little nervous, for
you see Sammie hadn't been dreaming
the same dream. At last Jack broke
off suddenly.

[Continued at foot of fourth column.]

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married on one condition.

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which pleased her taste and ful-
filled her ambition.

SO SHE MADE UP
HER MIND.

"If he wants to marry me, I
WANT THEM."

NOW, WHAT COULD
HE DO?

The course was quite hard. There
was no dilemma. He wanted no
other woman to be his wife, and
the conditions laid down were
reasonable, so he's a sensible man,
he said, "My dear, we'll go to-day
and see our selection as you
suggested." And they went, and
and everything they wanted to
note their happy home complete,
and you've had a jollier couple
anywhere.

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— AND —

SHOES



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Northampton.

[Continued from previous column.]

"Hey, what's the matter? It won't
come up—give's a pull, Sam."

The fish was a heavy one evidently,
pulled gently but firmly, because the
line was not very strong. It moved—
it came up—finally, sending both boys
over backwards. When they sat up
right again they saw what it was.
The old boat was lying in a puddle of
water on their two coats!

"Hey, no tea," they both exclaimed,
rushing to the rescue of their pockets,
The ink—the water had gone
through and spoiled it.

"Come, dressing Indians,"
soliloquised Sammie cheerfully.

Book Reviews.

"The Story of Utopias," by Lewis Mumford. Published by G. G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

Do you ever read prefaces? If not, you miss some of the best part of the contents of books. Not that they are all like Bernard Shaw's, which are consistently as important and even as long as the books themselves!

This particular book contains a preface that will illustrate our point. It was written by Hendrik Van Loon, who wrote and published a very fine work entitled "The Story of Mankind." Moreover, he writes from Lapland, which, according to current notions, is about the last place on earth from which to write a reasonable preface to a work on Utopias.

Nevertheless, he has done his work exceedingly well. We hope the author of the book—of ever he sees this review—a new feel he have neglected him in considering the preface at such length, for after all, the preface is a fitting prelude to what H. L. is to say, and says so well.

Here is an extract from the preface: part of a fairy story, wherein Utopias are deftly woven—

"We have our castles and our railroads, we have our factories, and we cannot get rid of these iron servants without destroying the very basis of our civilisation. We may hate these ungainly companions, but we need them. In time to come we shall know how to be their masters. Then Plato shall give us a recipe: 'Republic,' where all the houses are heated by steam, and all the dishes are washed by electricity."

"We are not suffering from too much machinery, but from too little. For let there be enough iron servants and more of us shall be able to sit on the tops of mountains and stare into the blue sky, or stare, vainly, at the hours, imagining the things that ought to be."

"That is surely a help to the attitude of mind necessary for the true appreciation of the Utopian literature. The book itself is (as it sets out to be) a story of Utopias, but it is also a criticism of Utopias, true and false. The writer is evidently an American with considerable knowledge of English life, for his criticisms of existing ambitions are both penetrating and true."

It has escaped the notice of many of us that we all have our Utopias. The man who steers a noble vision as being "too ideal" is a cottage in the country, or perhaps three acres and a cow; or he may have larger aims. Omar Khayyam defines his Utopia of Escape: "A glass of wine, a book, and I; that were paradise now." It was a purely personal Utopia he sought, an escape from the world, and not a changing of the world itself. Bill Smith of Mill Row (in like manner) wants nothing to do and beer on the sisk—

It is his takes us through all the well-known Utopias from Plato's "Republic" right down to H. G. Wells and his "New Utopia." Being a reasonable man, he appreciates them all—but he finds fault with them all! For a reasonable man must inevitably find fault with everything that he himself regards as short of perfection.

Bellamy's "Looking Backward" depicts a civilisation of "cegs and nuts"; our nineteenth century Utopias become "vast recollections of steel and red-tape," until we feel that we are caught in the nightmare of the age of machinery and shall never escape. "That is his generalisation; there may be some truth in it, but there is also some truth in the quotation from "Preface," as given above.

It is both interesting and valuable to have these literary products of some of the world's most imaginative men outlined for us with the skill with which it is here done. He notes a number of them to most of them—the idea that the

city is the unit of political life. Utopia is not a new Canaan, but a new Jerusalem. Neither was it until the day of that Utopia could ever be a purely local affair—nor ever be a purely ideal one or a fixed affair.

The subtitle of this book is: "Ideal Communism and Social Mythology." Whatever can be meant by "social myth"?

We remember reading a notice of the same book by the ex-Minister of Education, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, in which he was introducing upon the author for producing these "social mythologies" into what were otherwise a consistent work. But for ourselves, we consider that Mr. Mumford is quite relevant to his subject, he takes three myths. Of the Country House, Cotswold, and the Megalopolis. Now the dictionary definition of a myth is "a tradition, fable, or legend, embodying the notions and beliefs as to their gods," &c., and these in authority to-day—of all people!

By those in authority we mean those who are wielding and have wielded a social influence which has shaped our national ideas. The Country House, says he, is a place where art and culture are stored, and to some measure enjoyed, but not created; and the Utopia of the wealthy is like the country house where they and their friends may (also in some measure) enjoy the stored art and culture. It is a Utopia of Escape which tends to hamper the growth of a true Utopia—the creation of art and culture about and within us.

Cotswold, the great, smoky industrial city, is the Utopia, and the social myth, of those who conceive that such places are the marks of England's wealth, and the Megalopolis is of this nature also. For by this latter ferocious word he refers to the biggest city of nations to-day. The Crown Jewels, all that is best can be found in London, and ought to be found there, is an example, and this notion has become so fixed in our minds as to become a social myth.

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" asked an ancient doleful, and in the minds of those who dwell in London it is riveted into "can any good thing come out of the provinces?"

The idea that in some particular spot in a country there should be an influence drawing the best of art and culture towards it is not helpful for the founding of Utopia. The book pours scorn over H. L. on these three myths, and it does so with an excellent humour.

In fact, the whole book has a tinge of a most original kind of humour in it which is not in the serious tone of the reading of it. The writer has found out that life is whole, and any real improvement is not possible except by improvement of the whole. He does not stint praise for the enthusiastic but one-sided efforts of all kinds of reformers, but he does not want us to mistake the part for the whole. His large sympathy, which can take in at once Marx, and at least some of the theologians, permeates the book throughout.

"And he has even a kindly word to say about the movement to which so many of the readers of this paper belong: 'Consumers' co-operation alone has in England measurably lightened the physical burden of existence for a great many people.'" He tells them even more—but you may read the book for that.

We have also received "EDWARD OWEN BERNING," a biography, by Isaac Crispien. Published by the Co-operative Union Ltd., price 2s. 6d.

This is one of a series of biographies of great co-operators, and is a well-written work of 103 pages, in paper backs. For those interested in co-operation, in social activities and conditions, and those who wish to do any very worthwhile thing, this small biography is very valuable.

Greening was born in 1836, and died in 1922, so that he has seen about as much of co-operation as it has been possible for one man to see. One very fine passage is quoted from his last public speech in 1922 (and 1923), which I think sink deep into the minds of all co-operators: "Your co-operative stores alone will not achieve co-operation. Co-operation, for that, like operative Communism, is within you."

BOOKS

- Sheffield Co-operators should Read.
- ALLEN, A. H. D. AND JESSIE H. Working Man's Guide. 1s. 6d. Published by the Authors' Co-operative. Illustrated by Great Britain. (London: Charles P. Medley.)
- BEVINGTON, J. W.—The Co-operative Movement in Britain. 10s. 6d. Published by the Authors' Co-operative. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6.
- BURTON, J. M.—The Co-operative Movement in Britain. 10s. 6d. Published by the Authors' Co-operative. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6.
- CHAMBERS, E. W.—The Co-operative Movement in Britain. 10s. 6d. Published by the Authors' Co-operative. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6. (London) 2/6.
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MR. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT: PRESS COMMENTS:
CONGRATULATIONS: PUBLIC MEETINGS.

The confidence placed in Mr. Alexander by the people of Hillsborough in the stupendous majority which he won last December, and the confidence given to the co-operative movement in appointing him Parliamentary Secretary, have been surpassed by the request of the Prime Minister of this country in asking Mr. Alexander to accept the important position of Under-Secretary to the Board of Trade.

It is somewhat of a revelation to find a man of Mr. Alexander's political views, succeeding in a position so recently held by Lord Wolmer. As stated in the "Co-operative News," however, Mr. Alexander has shown his undoubted fitness for office.

CO-OPERATIVE COMMENTS.

"In his short tenure of Parliamentary service he has rapidly made a name by his sterling qualities as a skilled debater and capable administrator. He won golden opinions for his able handling of the consumer's campaign last session, and those who observed his success predicted that he would attain a high position in public life."

"Mr. Alexander's coming to the Government is a complement to the co-operative movement, and every good wish will be extended to him in his enlarged sphere of public work. This cordial feeling has already been expressed in the many messages of goodwill which have come to hand. Everyone acquainted with Mr. Alexander's efficient work . . . will have every confidence that in his new office he will acquit himself with credit to himself and advantage to the department which he represents."

SHEFFIELD PRESS COMMENTS.

The comments of the Sheffield Press are also interesting. The "Sheffield Telegraph" says "Mr. Alexander's appointment was not so generally anticipated, but he made a good impression as a Parliamentary speaker last year."

"The Independent" is more to the point, as follows:—"Mr. Alexander's appointment will be a popular one. Economics are his forte, and his work for the co-operative movement—he was well-known in the lobby long before he became an M.P.—has given him an intimate insight into trade and commerce. His friends will be disappointed if he does not make a success of his post."

"Incidentally, he is an authority on 'tips and trusts'—he has for some time served on a Parliamentary Committee on Prices—and if Mr. Macdonald ceases to close grips with the trusts, as he threatened to do, I expect to find Hillsborough's Member in the forefront of the battle."

Whilst the "Sheffield Mail" speaks in a similar strain, by saying—"Mr. A. V. Alexander's appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade comes as a welcome surprise. . . . Of his standing there can be no question. His work on behalf of the co-operative movement has fitted him for the task he had undertaken. He is something of an expert on trusts and companies, and has served on a Parliamentary Committee appointed to examine the vexed problems of prices."

Next Congress.

The management committees of the two Sheffield co-operative societies have both sent congratulatory messages to Mr. Alexander in appreciation of his work for the movement. This is rather a significant move, in view of the fact that a number of directors in both societies are presumed to be "non-political," yet we understand that both resolutions were unanimous.

Can it be that of all these people who see the tremendous advantage and necessity of direct political representation? Let us hope so!

In Touch With His People.

In spite of the tremendous amount of work Mr. Alexander's new position entails, he is not neglecting the co-operatives. In fact, since his appointment he has addressed quite a number of meetings in other parts of the city as well as Hillsborough.

As promised in his election campaign, he is keeping in the closest possible touch with the electors, not only through public meetings, but through personal interviews and correspondence with individual constituents. The arrangement whereby constituents can interview Mr. Alexander personally, each month, at the Party Office at Bank-street, is still being continued, and at both the January and February visits Mr. Alexander was kept busy for some hours, dealing with these cases.

In this connection it should be remembered that the cases are by no means finished at the interviews, but involve considerable interviews with various Government Departments, and so on, sometimes taking months before final settlements are arrived at.

At a recent meeting held at the Weyfield Hall, Mr. Alexander made a very powerful appeal to his constituents to stand loyal by the new Labour Government, admitting that it was a big risk and responsibility for a body of men to take over the government of this country during the present lull in trade and the very serious international situation. He said: "Whilst we have been accused of being unfit to govern, we have never yet been accused of cowardice in the face of the enemy. We are far more prepared to take risks than we are to go cap in hand to any other party for a pact or a coalition."

At the Hillsborough Institute and the new Hillsborough Labour Party Club in Sherwood-road, Mr. Alexander spoke to crowded houses. The burden of his plea on these occasions was for individual service and loyalty on the part of the workers. The ultimate success of the movement depends upon the ability, determination, and idealism of the rank and file. Outlining the policy the Labour Government would adopt, and showing that this country always progressed on evolutionary lines, he asked for patience and confidence, assuring his hearers that he would accomplish great things in the very near future.

CHRISTIANITY AND CITIZENSHIP. Mr. Alexander addressed a crowded Sunday meeting at the Oak-street D.P.S.A. on the "Relation of Christianity to Citizenship." "We must live at Westminster and the Town Hall what we learn in this Book," he said, pointing to the Bible, showing that the Churches were not influencing public opinion as they ought, he asserted that anyone who attempted to govern the country without idealism was proceeding on wrong lines. The principles of Jesus of Nazareth, he said, could not cease to fructify whilst there were so many obstacles in our national life stopping the chances of the man and woman at the bottom of society.

Outlining the problems of Unemployment, Housing, and Education, he showed the close connection of these important social and political matters with the work of the Church.

He was not pleading, he said, for a class war; in fact, he ought to have done with class war, and get together all the people of goodwill, with a view to applying the principles of our religion to the everyday dealings with our fellows. Nationally, racially, and internationally, we should stand for the

abolition of everything which cramped human existence, or which limited the development of the human spirit.

Victory Celebrations. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander were both present at the victory celebrations held in the Hillsborough Institute, February 27th and 28th. Nearly 600 people were present at the two evenings. Mr. Alexander gave a short address on each occasion, and thanked the workers for the splendid service they had rendered, and were rendering, to the cause of the programme took the form of a concert and dance, during the latter half of which Mr. and Mrs. Alexander busied themselves among the guests. So much so that practically everybody present had a word or two with their representative and his active and helpful partner.

MEMBERS! send in your Share Books NOW to guarantee obtaining Voting Slip at your Branch.

ELECTION TAKES PLACE SATURDAY, MARCH 15th.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

MEMBERS! send in your Share Books NOW to guarantee obtaining Voting Slip at your Branch.

ELECTION TAKES PLACE SATURDAY, MARCH 15th.

Sheffield and Ecclesall Co-operative Society Limited.

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We believe our members have appreciated the difficulties which we overcome in the recent Railway Dispute by a supply of coal in bags. We hope very shortly to receive bulky ORDERS FOR TON LOTS which has been hitherto suspended. The weekly delivery of coal in bags will be continued until full supplies again come forward to enable us to override arrears of Ton Orders which will be delivered in rotation.

Our Coal Trade for the half-year is an Increase of 80 per cent on Last Year, and the Sale over 10,000 tons.

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Best South Yorkshire, High Hazel, & Superior Quality Coal.

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| Best Selected | DELIVERED FREE. | 42/- per ton. | Best Washed Nuts | DELIVERED FREE. | 35/- |
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LOAD COAL DELIVERED IN BAGS at an extra charge of 10 per ton for bagging.

MEMBERS! This Department requires your more loyal support, and we ask you to place your orders and valued requirements as early as possible. We are now working on a new quick service delivery system, and we can now guarantee the delivery of best coal within twelve hours, and best coal once a week, days according to districts, or any special delivery arrangement.

MADE MAGISTRATES.

WELL-KNOWN CO-OPERATORS HONOURED.

We have pleasure in announcing that Mr. A. Laing (president of the Sheffield Ecclesall Society) and Mr. J. Dismore (president of the Brightside and Carbrook Society) have been appointed Justices of the Peace for Sheffield. We are informed that this is the first time the movement has been recognised in this way in Sheffield.

Mr. Laing is a well-known trade union organiser, and in many ways has been able to give the true movement of co-operation and trade unionism valuable service on the many important committees to which he has been elected, and whose success especially dealing with these problems. His period of service on the Sheffield and Ecclesall Society's board commenced in 1907, and he still occupies the position of president, to which office he was elected in 1920. He is the society's representative on the



Mr. A. LAING. Mr. J. DISMORE.

South Yorkshire District Association executive, and a director of South Yorkshire Federal Laundries' Association.

Mr. Dismore became a member of the Brightside and Carbrook Society in 1902, and shortly afterwards became a member of the educational committee, and acted successively as president and secretary, holding the latter office for a period of five years. In the year 1909 he was elected to the board of management, and continued in that position until 1916, when he became president. Practically the whole of his spare time has been devoted to serving the co-operative movement.

Amongst the appointments which Mr. Dismore holds at the present time are the following: Member of the Co-operative Printing Society's board, member of the executive committee of the South Yorkshire District Co-operative Association, member of the South Yorkshire District House and Vages Board, president of the South Yorkshire District Co-operative Laundries' Association Limited, director of the Co-operative Fibring Society Limited, and South Yorkshire District member of the North-Eastern Sectional Board.

Mr. Dismore has always taken a keen interest in the local hospital movement, and is at present closely associated with the Joint Hospitals' Council. He has also for many years been associated with the Sheffield Federated Health Association, whose objects are to promote healthy houses and surroundings for the citizens of Sheffield. He feels that his appointment to the magistratical bench is a recognition of the movement than himself.

At a general meeting of the society's members, held on Wednesday, February 28th, a hearty vote of congratulation was extended to the chairman on his appointment.

Mr. Dismore is a member of the Council of the local branch of the League of Nations Union, and has taken a deep interest in the work of the League since its inauguration.

Happy Mr. Spook.
 "Herey (whose wife is singing to elderly great, velder deef)?" "Don't you think my wife has a good voice?"
 "That's what you say?" "Querrel the other."
 "You think my wife can sing well?"
 "Be axery, but that woman's making such noise. I can't hear a word you say."

A Bachelor.
 "What?" "Now I don't expect to see you here any more, Reg."
 "Why not?" "Not see me here again, 'judge? You ain't a-goin' to resign yo' job, is you?"



Why They Fall.
 An old lady was listening with keen interest to the captain's narrative by the military wine-bag, who pulled himself on having made a deep impression.

"My great-grandfather told of Waterloo," he said.
 "You're flummied in the old lady. It's a horrible story. You see, know, on a neck of mutton and a turkey; sip on some strong port and have his leg. I hate those railway stations!"

He Was Grateful.
 "Has anyone any whisky?" shouted a man in a crowd, a comrade has fainting.
 A flask was passed to him, and after taking a good drink, he roused it back. "Thanky, a good drink, it always sports me to see a lady faint."

A Long Time Dying.
 It is related of Mr. Fred Terry, the actor, that during some rehearsals he practised a fiction. He tried several positions, while one of the stage hands, tired of waiting, went Terry was still trying to pose in some position.

"What is, Bill," said the stage-hand to his mate. "Ain't he dead yet?"
 "No," answered Bill, "we wanted to finish the scene and get home." "No, no, sir, it's my belief the... slighter's immortal!"

No Doubt About It.
 Young Lyle ranvasser to borrow damn at door: "Can you tell me which party your husband belongs to?"
 "Yes! Take a good look at me, young woman. I'm the party what he belongs to."

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