

The SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR

No. 23.

JULY, 1924.

GUARANTEED CIRCULATION, 30,000.

THE HARD LOT OF THE BLIND.

A SPECIAL ENQUIRY.

We have been making a special inquiry into the lot of the blind people in Sheffield. The finances of the Institution came prominently before the public some months ago, in a most unfortunate manner, and it is time the people of Sheffield were stirred by a knowledge of other conditions relating to the Institution.

Let it be made perfectly clear at once that there is no intention or wish to bring any charge whatever against the committee responsible for the Blind Institution. What we are anxious to do is to make the public feel their responsibility towards people whose eyes are forever closed, and who consequently are not equal to the task of earning their living in the rough-and-tumble fashion that is our lot. Those who can see owe a debt, in the name of humanity, to those who cannot see.

The Blind Institution.

In the first place, the Institution in West-street is ill-arranged and ill-equipped. The building is a haphazard series of main-traps to a blind person, we should think; with its steps and staircases, its lack of accommodation for the industries carried on, and the consequent crowded nature of the floor space. To a blind person, familiarity with any room means that the same paths across it shall always be there, and never under any circumstances encroached upon by a variety of articles such as ozers, brushes, and baskets partly manufactured or manufactured. The accommodation for the passage of blind people through workshops should be as fixed and systematic as the arrangement of a telephone exchange. A false step, or fall over some obstacle, may easily mean serious injury.

Certain parts of the premises—notably those in which dormitories are made—are fearfully over of antiquated machinery. Even a man with good eyesight must take care there or he will bump his head, or knock his shins, or be lost in a maze of machine parts and piles of mats. The sight of one of these men at work under such trying conditions was pitiable in the extreme. His task reminded us of the medieval ideas of punishment, and one can only expect that the drudgery of his work under such circumstances will make him a very crushed or a very sour man. An old wooden machine, no room, obnoxious everywhere, poor light, and the air filled with oakum dust!

Light for the Blind.

You may imagine that the lack of light is no hindrance to the blind. What use can it be to those who cannot see?

Well-lighted rooms are necessary to the health of the blind, as they are to the rest of us. The connection between sunlight and health needs no arguing to-day, surely.

The Cathedral and the Town Hall are very good in their way as public institutions, but how badly the institution for the local blind compares with them!

Blind Adults.

There are some 480 blind adult persons in Sheffield, with about 160 more under sixteen years of age. At the age of sixteen they are supposed to come to

the Institute in order to be fitted to maintain themselves in part.

But there is no accommodation for 480 persons! In fact, only eighty out of 480 are employed there! It is very clear, then, that quite apart from the present premises being unsuitable in arrangement and equipment, they are very much too small.

The National Institute for the Blind.

It should not be overlooked that there is also a National Institute for the Blind,

with headquarters in London. We are credibly informed that it has workshops in London only, that its balance sheet is a national one purely, and that it has contributed some £1,500 to the Sheffield Institution since 1915, after the application of some pressure. On the other hand, the same authority informs us that many thousands of pounds were paid to it in the way of subscriptions from various Sheffield firms during the same period. Undoubtedly the National Institute is doing good work, and we do not wish to see the growth of any spirit

of proclamaism, but we do wish Sheffield people to know that the National Institute for the Blind and the Institution for the Blind in West-street are two entirely separate organisations. We desire all blind people everywhere to be well-cared for, and as the Sheffield Institute is legally responsible for the blind of Sheffield and district, according to the Ministers of Health, both this and the last Government, we must devote our energies primarily to it. According to all the information at our command, it could be made perfectly clear that the National Institute is doing its work exceedingly well from a national point of view, and will have any particular responsibility for the blind of Sheffield.

Charity.

The heugher of all this assistance is that it is solely the result of "charity." The kind-hearted, the humane, the sociable-spirited, render their help; the thoughtful and selfless—even if comparatively well-to-do or very rich—escape any liability. The result is that all "charitable" affairs, it is fearfully indicative as compared with what it ought to be, and the standard of assistance varies enormously in different towns and cities. Other Yorkshire towns, for instance, pay higher wages, give a week's holiday, and so forth, instead of three days, as in Sheffield. A wide range of these variations could be shown, all of which go to prove that it is time we had a clearly defined national minimum of assistance to all blind people, entirely free from the chance and the taint of "charity."

As an instance of the operation of "charity," Sheffield blind were allowed half-fare railway tickets during holiday seasons up to 1915. The Government put an end to that, and the concession has never come into force since.

Organised Charity.

Since times more slowly, mainly because people in the mass learn very slowly, the blind people of Sheffield and the committee of management are attempting to go into operation a scheme similar to that adopted for financing the hospitals—but a *holpenny* in the pound. Perhaps this is the best of the social consciousness of the moment—and the point of Sheffield—but what a task! What labour to organise small but regular gifts! At the very least we might give the Institution from its present burden of debt, and make sure of its future success by an addition to the rates of one *holpenny* in the pound. This would meet needs, and do the job possibly well.

A National Scheme.

Not that any merely local scheme can ever be entirely satisfactory, though. The blind of Sheffield, £2 per week State pension, and deserves every penny of it. And we feel sure that no blind soldier would consider his lot too good for any other blind man. A national scheme that will put the blind in country districts on the same footing as the blind of our cities, with suitable workshops and suitable work, would remove a very bad blight from our civic life. A large co-operative idea put in practice would make the lot of the blind at least tolerable.

"THE SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATORS" WHO'S WHO SERIES.

No. 7.—MR. E. S. NICHOLSON.

The subject of our portrait this month is one of those servants of the People who would rather work for the People's Cause without the limelight.

He has served the twin movements of Labour and Co-operation with care

It is largely owing to Mr. Nicholson's fine organising work in the Attercliffe Division that Mr. Cecil Wilson secured such splendid majorities, both as councillor and Member of Parliament, since joining the Labour Party.

During the last two years Mr. Nicholson has addressed no less than 200 popular meetings in the Attercliffe Division. His voluntary registration work resulted in 777 successful claims on the Voters' List.

He was elected to the D. and C. Co-operative Society's board of management in March this year, and is already justifying the members' choice by his keen attention to the business.

The Attercliffe Labour Party has chosen him as their candidate for the City Council next November. Attercliffe will be well advised to send as their representative one who has resided for twenty-one years amongst them, and is therefore familiar with their problems and needs.



MR. E. S. NICHOLSON.

invaluable faithfulness and sincerity for a number of years. He has been treasurer to the Attercliffe Labour Party since its formation, and was an active member and treasurer of the I.L.P. for nine years prior to the amalgamation. He was one of the first members of the first Co-operative Guild in Sheffield, and he has been closely associated with the co-operative movement in its educational, political, and propaganda work ever since.

Educated in the hard school of working-class experience, (Ivan Nicholson has spent the bulk of his spare time in informing himself—and his fellow-workers of those things which make for the betterment of the worker. In this sense he is a well-educated man. Coupled with an extensive knowledge of economics and politics, he is a lover of both literature and art. He knows what the worker "ought" to enjoy. He is endeavoring to get these things for him, not as a privilege but as a right.

We sincerely hope that he will be given larger opportunities next November to congratulate "Councillor" E. S. Nicholson.

SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATIVE PARTY.

NOTICE.

INTERVIEWS—6, BANK STREET.

Owing to the large number of applications re Pension, Unemployment, Relief, and similar cases, two days per week are now reserved for this purpose, viz, TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS, 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Interviews with Mr. Alexander, M.P., may be specially arranged through Mr. A. Ballard (Secretary).

C-W-S

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Every woman knows the Corset is the foundation of correct dress. Every woman should know that the

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In its own special works specifications on the design and manufacture of corsets to conform with Quality, and Comfort, and the most Hygienic Service in Dress.



QUAL. C. SPORTS.

For the ideal model for every woman, this corset is made of fine white material, with a soft, moderately deep, well-shaped bust, and a smooth, elasticated back, which has no rivets.

St. 21 inches to 23 inch.

PRICE, 7/6 PAIR.



UPLIFT.

A corset that is designed to give you the most perfect support, and to lift and support the bust, and to give you a smooth, elasticated back, which has no rivets.

St. 23 inches to 25 inches.

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ALICIA.

Corset with a beautiful, smooth, elasticated back, which has no rivets, and a soft, moderately deep, well-shaped bust, and a smooth, elasticated back, which has no rivets.

St. 22 inches to 23 inches.

PRICE, 9/11 PAIR.

May be bought from the Sheffield Co-operative Societies

MUNICIPAL TOPICS.

By "CO-OPTICUS."

Salaries of Medical Officers.

Once more Alderman Wardley was in straits on the "salary" question. As everybody knows, Wardley maintains that it is always easier to get an increase of "salary" at the City Council, than of "wages"; and he never misses an opportunity of criticising any increase of salary for the Council.

In this case, Wardley pointed out that the men concerned were young doctors who were using the Lodge Moor Hospital for their apprenticeship; in Wardley's words, to "learn the trade." Not only so, but they had everything found them besides their salary. He wanted to know whether it was a fact that the committee was at the mercy of the Medical Association and whether the same would apply with regard to a trade union? Would the committee allow a trade union to say just what wages Corporation servants should receive? However, the committee's recommendation was agreed to.

Profits on Water.

Alderman Styling gave the report of the Water Works Committee, showing that the undertaking had a surplus of £42,779. It was interesting to learn that in spite of all the complaints about a wet season, actually less rain had fallen during the present season than corresponding periods of the last eighty years. He specially mentioned two factors which had contributed to the successful working of the department. One was the economies brought about by the pumping scheme, and the other, the very large increase in the consumption of water, indicative, said Alderman Styling, of a trade revival.

The Tramways.

Alderman Sir William Clegg gave the tramways report, which showed a gross profit of £227,000, and after deduction for charges, left a balance of £106,000. "We can fairly say that our tramways and motor buses are the finest in any country," said Sir William. "We are all proud of the tramways and the motor buses, and the way in which the undertaking is managed." On behalf of the Council he expressed to the general manager and staff and employees his warm thanks for the admirable manner in which they had carried on a very efficient system.

The Brightside representatives pressed for the cheapening of fares on the Petre-street route. Sir William pointed out, however, that in the very near future they were extending that section, and that if they reduced fares at present, a principle would be introduced which would have to be applied all round; in addition to which the extension of the route would mean another revision in the very near future.

The Hawkers.

The Labour group attempted to raise the matter of the hawkers who carried on their business in Dixon-lane and Castle-bells. The Lord Mayor, however, ruled Councillor Rowlinson out of order as to the matter. Councillor Rowlinson asked for the suspension of the Standing Orders; the Lord Mayor would not, however, allow this.

It was pointed out during the discussion that these hawkers were being prosecuted day after day; that a number of them at present were in prison; and it was maintained that the people suffering in this way constituted a matter of urgency which justified the suspension of Standing Orders.

The minutes of the committee, however, were carried without any definite achievement in this connection.

Co-operators and the Parks.

A matter of great interest to co-operators was their application for the use of the Endcliffe Park to celebrate Bancroft's Anniversary. Councillor Bancroft tabled a resolution "that the application of the joint committee of the Brightside and Carbrook Co-operative Society Ltd. and the Sheffield and Ecclesall

Co-operative Society Ltd., for the use of Endcliffe Park, on Saturday, July 20, for the celebration of "Co-operators' Day," be granted."

It was reported that the Sheffield Grocers' Association and Drapers' Association had both written, pointing out that if the application was granted they would hope for similar facilities for themselves. This, of course, was unquestionably an attempt to bias the Council against granting the facility. Councillor Bancroft made a good speech in favour, intimating that it was impossible to get any logical explanation for the Parks Committee refusal, and pointing out that there were 70,000 citizens—ratepayers and members of the co-operative movement—who wished to hold a celebration in just the same way as any temperance, Sunday School, or other organisation may do. He outlined the programme to be given, and stated that the idea of a purely trading demonstration was a mere bogey trotted out by "Curren Topics" who, in his (Bancroft's) opinion, was voicing the wishes of some of the committee. He gave the names of a number of large cities which had already granted similar facilities, and urged the Council to reverse the reactionary decision of the Parks Committee. Councillor Rowlinson, in responding, made a good case by showing why co-operation which he did was simply to go to the park in swags and enjoy themselves, and show the public what was being done in the way of education, recreation, &c., under co-operative auspices, through the children, the choir, and so on.

Parks Committee's Poor Case.

Councillor Peck, who had acted as chairman of the Parks Committee when both refusals were made, pointed out that the co-operators had asked for permission to erect a marquee, and even to sell refreshments. He feared that to allow this would be to open the door to other trading institutions. He had secured the journal broadcast throughout the country in connection with "Co-operators' Day," and found that "the real purpose of 'Co-operators' Day' is to provide a great opportunity for co-operative propaganda." That was "the meat in the egg," said Councillor Peck. Nobody, however, seemed to trouble! It was soon obvious that if this was the only case the Parks Committee had, the Council was not going to be responsible for such mere lunacy.

Our Sheffield "Sir Frederick Bancroft."

Councillor Mitchell strongly opposed the application, which he was expected to do. He saw in the application the Labour Party who were using co-operative societies for "a political purpose." This was met by derisive laughter from the Council, members of the Labour group crying out "Russians" and "Bolsheviks Gold." Mitchell tried to show that the parks were upheld by private people, and advocated the co-operative societies using that Councilor Mitchell knows where about them. His whole speech was of the "die-hard" type, and he struck anything else.

Sir William Clegg's Fine Speech.

Sir William Clegg made marvellous use of the Parks Committee's case. On the question of the sale of refreshments, he made many things before for shows, &c., held in the park. As to the programme, why and so on in the park? As to the principle by granting the use of the park to the Trades and Labour Council. He admitted that the co-operative movement was one for trade, but maintained, it was more than that—it is a great truth and educational society," he said.

Ultimately the resolution was carried.

BRIGHTSIDE & CARBROOK CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

FISH AND GAME BRANCHES: Outer Lane, Shefferson, 1 and 17, Arundell Cottages, Girth Road, Octoberhouse.



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MR. A. V. ALEXANDER on HOUSING AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

MR. A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade), paid his usual weekly visit to Sheffield on June 13th, 14th, and 15th.

At the Labour Hall.
The Hillsborough Labour Party arranged a meeting in the Labour Hall, Sheriffe-road, on Friday, the 13th. Mr. Jarvis (the president) occupied the chair, and Mr. W. Rabehus also spoke. Mr. Alexander addressed himself principally to the question of "Housing," and dealt in closely-reasoned detail with the housing proposals of the Minister of Health. He showed (1) the full extent of the problem, (2) the necessity of obtaining an agreed measure, (3) the problem of materials, (4) the problem of finance, (5) the reconciling of employer and employee, (6) the prevention of profiteering, and so on.

Mr. Alexander was speaking for fully an hour, and afterwards a good number of questions were asked, and a keen discussion followed. An enthusiastic resolution of appreciation and confidence was carried by the meeting.

The room was crowded, and the hope was expressed that a larger room would be requisitioned for further visits.

Saturday, June 14th.
Mr. Alexander devoted to the usual interview.

One-Day School.
On Sunday, June 15th, a one-day school was arranged in the grounds of the Restaurant, Castleton, Derbyshire.

Well over a hundred students attended, and they left with them Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., who gave two lectures on "The Economics of Unemployment," and Mr. Ballard, who presided. The school was held in the open air, and each lecture was preceded by singing.

The morning lecture was devoted mainly to the consideration of the "Economics of Markets," a theory which, according to Mr. Alexander, was held by capitalist and worker alike. Mr. Alexander showed how the idea of "ex-cumy" among statesmen, employers, and workers really resulted from the tacit acceptance of this theory. He also stated that there need be no limitation of markets, and that the constant increase of human need, with human development, could always maintain a sufficient market for the consumption of all the wealth that need be created.

In the afternoon the party visited Perrett Castle, the famous Wincott Pass, Mam Tor, Eldale, and other beauty spots in the district.

The evening lecture was devoted to the "remedies." Mr. Alexander showing that whilst the wages of capital were unlimited (except in the co-operative movement), the wages of labour were strictly limited, and that the only real remedy was a system whereby labour obtained its fair share. He was against all preferences and tariff walls of every description. Even the Labour Government could not solve the problem of unemployment.

[Continued at foot of next column.]

CO-OPERATORS' DAY. :: JULY 5TH, 1924

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SPECIAL EXHIBITION

- MEN'S TROUSERS, from 1/11 to 5/11 per pair
- LADIES' CORSETS, from 2/11 to 5/11 per pair
- LADIES' COMBINATIONS, 6/6 to 15/6 per pair
- LADIES' NIGHTDRESSES, 4/11 and 7/11 each
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ALL SEASON'S MILLINERY NOW REDUCED.

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This Hard-wearing Hosiery and Underwear can be obtained from your Drapery and Outfitters Departments.

MADE BY **The Wigston Hosiery Ltd.** (CO-OPERATIVE PRODUCTIVE SOCIETY).



For every member of the Family.

Sheffield Cooperator. JULY, 1924. CO-OPERATORS' DAY.

The Central Committee of the International Co-operative Alliance, who first brought the Co-operators' Day to be celebrated annually in each country where a co-operative movement has been established, had in mind not merely the trading side of the movement—they realise, of course, that the co-operative movement has a definite economic basis—but that it is something infinitely more than a merely trading concern.

It is a remarkable fact that although the international organisation extending over almost the whole of the civilised world, comparatively few people are aware of its true purpose and significance. Even in Sheffield there are not too many co-operators even who understand how their own society and local store relate them to co-operators and co-operative bodies in other countries, whilst members of the general public in Sheffield are not fully aware of the growth of the international co-operative movement in recent years.

When the joint committee responsible for the celebration in this city applied for the citizens' privilege of using the public interests which were politically opposed, pretended to read into the application an intention of political propaganda, whilst the Sheffield Independent, which most co-operators were obtaining some privilege. Thanks, however, to the attitude of the "Sheffield Independent," the Labour Group in the City Council, the Labour and aldermen of goodwill in all parties, particularly Sir William Clegg, the Parks Committee's two decisions were reversed by a substantial majority of the Council meeting.

There is no attempt to make political capital out of the position. What we were, and are, anxious to do is to show the Sheffield public the real significance of the co-operative movement. In the words of the Co-operative Union—
"The real purpose of Co-operators' Day, therefore, is to provide a great opportunity for co-operative propaganda. Each year it must be used as a chance for demonstrating the strength and power of the co-operative movement—local, national, and international. On the first Saturday in July all must be made aware that the co-operative movement knows no frontiers, no racial, no religious, no political, no social, no class, or no country, or no continent; that it stands for international peace, goodwill among the nations, and active co-operation by all peoples for the benefit of the whole world."

On July 5th, therefore, we give a special invitation to every one of our readers and their friends to join with us in our celebration in the Fodcliffe Park. Music, singing, and dancing will be the order of the day. The co-operative movement in Sheffield will be *en fete* for the occasion. The tableaux, fancy dress, and dance dances of the co-operative movement will help us to visualise the great ideal before our movement. Into the mercenary city let us introduce something of colour, pageantry, and beauty. For a few hours let us catch the spirit of the pioneers, rejoicing over the victories of the past, and strengthening our faith in the possibilities of the future.

(Continued from third column.)

ment unless it had a majority, and then no quick or revolutionary change would bring about the desired result.

A splendid discussion followed each lecture; the facts and figures given by the students obviously coming from well-informed minds.

On the return journey the school entertained quite a large audience on the station platform by singing songs from the "Co-operative Song Book." The school was so successful that arrangements are already in hand for another to be held in the same place in September, when Mr. H. B. Blamhain, a well-known Sheffield co-operative lecturer, will be the lecturer. Further particulars of the next school will be given in future issues of this journal.



THE STORY OF IVAN.

By MARGARET CARLTON.

Ivan, a peasant boy, recalled to his own contentment from the tyranny of the tsar, of his people gave him a little such thing named *the little boat*, and a wonderful little boat.

Ivan travelled down the mountain thinking of the maiden who to help him, until she came to a little stream leading over the stones. After he had quipped his thimble he thought of the little boat, no bigger than a walnut which he had in his pocket. Would it really grow big and carry him anywhere? He could hardly believe it. Yet his faith in the draft was very strong because the sick had been proved. So he went along by the stream to a small pond where the water was several inches deep, and gently he placed the tiny ship on it.

Instantly it began to grow, until it filled all the little pond-top. Ivan was amazed then to see the stream extend, and presently there was a mighty river and a beautiful boat waiting for him. Seated on board he drew deep for him to ascend to the deck, and when he had climbed up to be seated admiringly at the beautiful white deck and the clouds of sail above him.

Several sails bore before him but never spoke a word. They were not real men-part of the ship. There would be no?

"Why to the maiden who weeps," cried Ivan, and immediately the ship threaded and began to move. To Ivan, who had never been on a ship before, it was wonderful, but he did not let his wondering make him forget his mission. It was resolved to free his country from oppression; to free his people from the children, and make everyone happy and contented.

Soon the ship sailed through a town and Ivan recognised the king's own city. On sailed the wonder ship, past big buildings and under bridges, and finally up a narrow river into a lovely lake. Then it stopped.

"Here," thought Ivan, "I shall find her. I must get out and look for her."

He went down the steps to the green turf and then, firmly grasping his ship with one hand, he tried to land. Let it sink into the tiny water side boat, and lay in his hand light as a feather.

As he slipped it into his pocket several men came dashing towards him. "Here there you enter the king's grounds? Where is your boat which we saw with our own eyes? They cried: but Ivan took no notice of them and walked towards the palace which he saw not far away.

So 'twas to the king's palace his ship had brought him.

The king pursued him, shouting all the time. At the foot of a high wilderness tower Ivan turned and faced them.

"Who teaches me this? Now tell me where the unhappy maiden is?" "You teach Loh, who weeps always. She is in the tower behind you. Get her out if you wish to save her life. If you do not, you and your ruler they are all buried." Then laughing they ran away.

Ivan was almost daunted to be afraid, but receiving to be heavier than the ice above before him, he looked at the tower.

Nothing but wall, smooth and plain, no windows. Ah! one but such a day one, and so high that he could never hope to climb to it. He called out loud.

"Loh, Loh, I'll help you to escape." No answer. Perhaps she did not hear, he thought, so he called again. This time someone heard for a change of water fell on him. Startled, Ivan drew back, and saw an old woman leaning out of the window far above him.

"I'll show you to call out, young sir," she cried, and slammed the window to. Ivan stood still thinking.

"Help me, kind sir," a little voice softly said. The old woman threw water three times and then hid her head.

That was all, but Ivan knew it must be Loh. How could he help her? (To be continued.)



HOME NOTES.

By "PATRICIA"

Am I, now hot and weary here in town. The days crawl by!

How otherwise they go my heart records Where the market waters cease. And when sleep comes the grass, and scowls sail

Between the lovely earth and lovely sky.

Here the sun grins along the dusty street Through pale blue skies; 'Hark! spiritless, and tramp of tolling feet. Hoarse hawkers, crows, crows—

There's this I hear the bug that the sun sings. To the far meadows of Paradise.

—In Nostr.

"You spell of fine weather makes one's thoughts fly to holidays, just as if Dame Nature called to her children to come and revel in the sun's rays by mountain, moor, and sea."

Most indeed are those who can afford to spend a week or two each year amid new scenes and new surroundings.

One could the world spirit of the age penetrate and, and the crowded train, and jostling throng, in the congested hotels, and endless long-homes, keepers, all detract from the joys that a real holiday should give.

Still, all these evils will vanish when mankind realises the need for a real holiday in mind and body.

CULCHETH HALL

COUNTRY RESIDENCE FOR CO-OPERATORS

OPEN ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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It will not be beyond men's ability to organise a better order. In the meantime it is the duty of all to keep it as we can, and those who cannot afford to go away for a period there are the daily rambles, and when all is possible, to get out for a few days, a really cheap and healthy holiday is possible, so long as the company meets itself out.

No use the first member who has been on the first few hours before starting off, expecting to keep pace with the men and company folk who can easily cover a few miles.

Better for folk to set off with those whose energies are similar to her own. How many good rambles have I attended? I am sure you cannot afford to go away for a period to walk as much as possible, the woman folk with a family has too many hours on her feet to be able to find pleasure in a tramp of a few miles for a holiday.

This year may well be "having up" a great necessary preparation for holiday in every working-class household a trip to the wonderful exhibition of Wembley, though a trip there will not be in any case a real, but rather a very attractive time, and to do justice to the exhibition one ought to have at least a month of days really to see it all.

The day visitor gets a bewildering impression of its vastness and vastness, and the more interested one is the more things it is. Still the visitor will have much to remember for months afterwards, when the physical weariness has passed.

To the day visitor I pass on a hint. Take your own food for yourself, although there are plenty of refreshment-tousers with very varied prices, it is tempting to be served with a meal that a considerable part of your day is given to waiting, and day visitors cannot afford that, the time is too short.

Most readers of the "Co-operator" will have seen reports of the Co-operative Summer Congress, held in Nottingham during Whit-week, and also the Women's Guild Congress, held in Leeds a few days later. Some, no doubt, will have read the fuller reports, it is a source of "Co-operative News." To many really interested co-operators, it is a source of regret that this last more-sincere conference year by year, does not meet with such huge responses and great possibilities, meeting in its various parts in such imposing conferences year by year, does not more eagerly assert itself and avoid itself as a definite part of the great Labour politics of the day. Apparently many who fill positions of responsibility in the movement politically, are so thoroughly "so darkly." Fortunately, time and experience work wonders in men's and women's minds.

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IMPERIAL PREFERENCE.

FINE SPEECH BY MR. A. V. ALEXANDER.

MR. ALEXANDER was deputed by the Government to reply to the Imperial Preference debate in the House of Commons on Tuesday, June 17th.

Old Arguments.

After replying to interruptions by Sir H. Cross, Mr. D. Herbert, Major-General Seely, and Sir Philip Lloyd-Greame, Mr. Alexander went on to say—

"If they want reciprocal trade, of course, without interfering in any way with their right to manage their own fiscal affairs, but simply opening up on the economic basis, surely there is some reason for the Dominions making a move. If they want a wider market in this country than now, they can get it best by an exchange of goods and by giving us a better market than we have at the present time having regard to the existing tariff walls, and enable us to purchase their products in return. I will not go deeper into that, because I do not want to be represented as desiring to interfere with the Dominions in regard to their fiscal affairs."

"Then there was a point made by the right hon. gentleman who introduced the motion, that there were periods—think he said between 1875 and 1890—when there was a very marked increase in the percentage of United Kingdom trade done with our Dominions. I think he will find, if he takes a survey over a long period of years, that the ratio of trade of the Dominions with this country, as compared with our trade with foreign countries, has remained steady, in spite of the offering of preference to British goods in the Dominions. The right hon. gentleman ended his speech with a reference to possible resolutions and the possible withdrawal of preference, and my right hon. and gallant friend below the gangway suggested there was a danger of some of these preferences being removed. That is not a new argument in fiscal topics in this House. That has been put up ever since the issue was raised, twenty-two or twenty-three years ago."

Appreciation from Canada for Mr. Alexander.

"The right hon. and gallant gentleman said during his speech that proposals put forward during the war had been accepted by all parties without demur."

What, apparently, he overlooked was that there had not been an appeal to the electorate on that specific issue until last December, and when that appeal was made there was an overwhelming vote as to what the attitude of the country with regard to the question of the right hon. gentleman who opened the debate. He referred to the speech of a *quid pro quo* being given to us by the Canadian Government with regard to the removal of the embargo on Canadian cattle. I think the Secretary of State for the Colonies referred to that point, but let me say that for nearly thirty years people with whom I have been associated were working, and working against successive Governments, for the removal of that embargo, and in December, 1922, I myself received a letter of appreciation from the Canadian Government for the efforts used towards getting that embargo removed. This was in the face of the opposition of many hon. members opposite who talked to us in favour of Imperial Preference."

The Tobacco Combine and Prices.

"I think it proves my point, that if you remove fiscal barriers you are going to develop reciprocal trading between this country and the Dominions rather than by putting up fiscal barriers in this country and the Dominions hope that you will give preferences here and there. Just one other point. It is assumed in regard to preferences given to the Colonies that any benefit which might accrue would always go to the producer. I suggest that that is not so. Take the resolution on the paper in regard, say, to tobacco. I wonder whether the right hon. gentleman opposite has really thought about that resolution. If there was to be any advantage gained from a preference in regard to the tobacco duty, it would have to be gained because there was a free market for the Colonial producer of tobacco to send his product in. Is there such a free market? I suggest that, whatever additional preferences you may give in regard to tobacco, it would be very unlikely to go to the producer in the Colonies, and that because the control and buying of the leaf is in the hands of an almost world-combine between this country and America. Very little of the preference

would go to the producer to stimulate the growth of the tobacco leaf in the Colonies, and certainly, whatever some people who are supporting this resolution say, we have had no benefit for the consumer of tobacco. We have had an increasing importation of the tobacco leaf of a poorer quality than some of the American tobacco leaf, but we have had no benefit in price from the tobacco combine. I would suggest that if inquiries were made it would probably be found that the producers were also dissatisfied."

Free Trade and Employment.

"Altogether, I think we may say, in regard to this question, that taxes of any kind which are levied between the producer and the consumer, whether over- or under- are not going to help trade, but are going to hinder trade. It is still true that we and I put this to the hon. and gallant gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight (Major-General Seely), because he says he is an unrepentant Free Trader, and he also referred to John Stuart Mill—it is still true to say, as Mill said, that one of the most vicious forms of taxation is a discriminating tax between the source of supply and another. Amongst other ill-effects, it is a waste of both capital and of labour. As to the general view of those on these benches—the right hon. gentleman (Sir P. Lloyd-Greame) suggested we must get new trade and more markets if we are to get away from our present position—let me say that I myself believe that the imposition of tariffs is an indication that there is a belief in the minds of thousands and thousands of people that there is a limited market for the product of labour applied to capital. I do not believe it. I still believe that there is no limit to an expansion of the wants of man and the amount which the human race can consume. What really is the point is this: that the masses of the people in this country and in our Dominions get such a small portion of the result of their labour that they are unable to consume what they should of the produce of their work. You are never going to settle the world's problems of unemployment and idleness until people have been converted to the view, not only in this country, but in other countries as well, of the right of the worker to a proper share of the wealth he produces, so as to increase his capacity to consume the produce of his own labour as applied to capital."

[The above speech is taken from the Official Parliamentary Report (Hansard), Tuesday, June 17th, 1924.]

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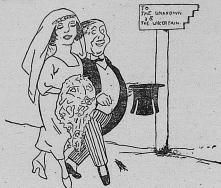
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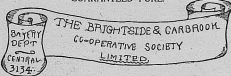


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