



HOW DEAR IT IS TO LIVE!

By "ECONOMIST" AND THE CO-OPERATIVE RESEARCH GROUP.

As everybody knows, we have a Food Commission sitting and taking evidence—part of Mr. Baldwin's attempt to fulfil his promise to bring prices down.

As witness after witness has been examined, one has had the spectacle of self-sacrificing "princes of commerce" in the public interest, and at a financial loss! Without being unfair to any of these witnesses engaged in "private enterprise," we think it is definitely true to say that their economic ideas are woefully out of date.

But first let us consider the figures with regard to the cost of living, just so simply that any householder or his wife can understand them. The first fact to start with is, that if it cost £1 a week to maintain a man and his wife in 1914—to pay for their food, the rent of their little house, their gas and coal and clothing—in 1924 (year ending March 31st, 1924) it would cost them £1 12s. 20d. If there were three children, and if the whole family £4 to live in 1924, then in 1924 it would have cost them twice £1 12s. 20d.—£2 4s. 8d. This is what is meant by saying that the cost of living was 74 per cent. higher in 1924 than it was in 1914.

The Housewife's View.

Now, the first thing that would happen if you told a Sheffield housewife this, is that she would say, "You're wrong; prices have gone up more than that." In reply, you might tell her that it could not be, since the calculation was made by a Government Department manned by people who were famous for statistics, and couldn't possibly be wrong.

No Government Department and no statistician can convince a housewife against her own experience, though, and while she may not understand percentages, she has a very vivid notion as to "how far" a pound goes. As a matter of fact, there are reasons of a technical nature for disputing the accuracy of the Ministry of Labour's figures—which need not be gone into here—and there are means of making comparisons. The Co-operative Research Group have

been giving consideration to the matter, and so far as Sheffield is concerned they can say definitely that the cost of living is very much higher than the Ministry of Labour says it is. The high rates of Sheffield actually have had much to do with this.

At one of the Sheffield workhouses the cost of "keeping" one inmate for one month in 1914 was 5s. If Government figures as to the increase of the cost of living were correct, 1924 should have meant a cost of about 15s. 8d., which is 74 per cent. higher than 5s. But mark the fact: the cost actually was £1 0s. 5d. per head—an increase of 127 per cent. It is surely obvious that if costs are as high as this, it is surely obvious that where kept down to their lowest point so far as food, clothing, light, and warmth go, that place is a workhouse, and the people whose cost of living is a final authority as to prices are the workhouse inmates. We may take it for granted that, with high rates, the cost of living there—managed as it is by our political opponents, believers in "private enterprise"—will show what is possible with the very extreme of economy. Let us take three separate years: 1914, pre-war; 1921, when prices were highest; and 1924, the last complete year for which figures are available:—

Year	Cost of maintenance of one inmate per month	% of increase on 1914
1914	£0 9 0	0
1921	£1 5 2	23 7/8
1924	£1 0 5	12 7/8

We will next place the actual increase at a local workhouse side by side with those of the Ministry of Labour, and note the difference:—

Year	Ministry of Labour	Workhouse
1921	£1 15s. 9d.	£23 7/8
1924	£1 7d.	£12 7/8

It is well to be quite clear that wages are considered in the light of the Ministry of Labour's figures, but the cost of living in Sheffield is much more likely to be according to the workhouse figures!

The Food Commission.

Having said which, we return to the Food Commission.

Witnesses have appeared respecting

tea, wheat, and meat. Our newspapers lurch dithered up certain parts of the evidence to make it appear that the Co-operative Wholesale Society is "cornering" tea—buying up as much as it can. Even if that were true, as stated, then the co-operative society is only doing what the present system compels it to do; and what merchants do—buy up as much as possible when prices are low. The main difference between the co-operative society and the merchants' and multiple shops lies in the fact that the latter buy for their own profit; the co-operative society returns all profit to consumers, either in dividends or services. When the Co-operative Wholesale Society buys it does so for the public good, and can do so other; when multiple shops and companies or merchants buy, they do so for their own and their shareholders' profits. It doesn't take a supernumerary to see that, surely.

Meat in Particular.

Points in the evidence of Lord Vestey (director of the Union Cold Storage Co.) are interesting. The Chairman of the Food Commission asked: "If the statement were made to me that you were rapidly displacing all the retail butchers in the country by crushing out all the small traders, would you agree?" Lord Vestey's reply, according to the newspapers, was that he "absolutely disagreed. Multiple butchers' shops decreased the fullest support of the public. They were of the greatest value in keeping down the retail prices of meat, as they were run on a smaller margin (of profit) than single butchers' shops could possibly be." It appears to have escaped both Lord Vestey and Sir Auckland Geddes that this evidence is contradictory. If multiple shops can run on a smaller margin of profit than private traders, then, of course, they are "crushing out the small individual men!"

The Real Cause and the Real Cure.

All this inquiry by a Commission is really futile. The real cause witnesses, with their ancient economies and their philanthropic conducting of industry "at

a loss," said that prices were "solely a question of supply and demand." People with ideas like this, however well-intentioned they may be, are really dangerous—especially so when they control any branch of the food supply. Unless they mean that of present society has no more sense than allow its livelihood to be at the mercy of mere chance, they are intolerably ignorant. Sir I. G. Chiozza Money put the case to them intelligently and clearly, and they would do well to read his evidence. It is a simple, sane, and scientific thing to find out how much wheat and meat and tea we need a month or a year, taking the people as a whole, and then to find out how to secure at least that amount at the cheapest rates—which will not be by buying from any company or trust, but by growing or breeding it ourselves, as a whole. That is what the co-operative society is doing for its members, and when it does not succeed to the farthest degree, the reason is that it is amongst so many piratical trusts and combines, who seek, naturally, to keep their own pockets. Trusts and combines are not to be trusted by the people, but by ignorant people or out-of-date people—and sometimes selfish people. When the whole population becomes a combine or trust, it is itself with all that it needs, there will be no room for profits, and prices will be low. When the human power can make them, incidentally, the whole population then will also be a Co-operative Society!

LOOK TO YOUR VOTE.

NOW IS THE TIME TO CLAIM.

The new register, which comes into operation on April 15th, 1925, is now being compiled. NOW is the time for you to watch that your name is on the new register. DON'T WAIT, and then, when the time comes that you wish to record your vote, find that your name is not included in the NEW REGISTER. CLAIMS IS FEBRUARY 10th, 1925.

Parliamentary Vote.
1. If you are a man, being twenty-one years of age previous to December 15th, 1924, and having resided in the borough of Sheffield for six months previous to December 15th, 1924, you are eligible for a Parliamentary vote.

2. If you are a woman, thirty years of age, and have occupied premises, dwelling-house, or unfurnished rooms for six months previous to December 15th, 1924, in the borough of Sheffield, you are entitled to a Parliamentary vote.

3. Every woman thirty years of age, whose husband is entitled as occupier of premises, dwelling-house, or unfurnished rooms to be on the register, is entitled to a Parliamentary vote.

Local Government Vote.
1. All men and women are eligible to be on the register for Local Government purposes if they are twenty-one years of age, and have occupied premises, dwelling-house, or unfurnished rooms for six months previous to December 15th, 1924, in the borough of Sheffield.

Information can be obtained from A. Ballard (Secretary), Sheffield Co-operative Party, 6, Bank-street, Sheffield. (Telephone, Central 398.)

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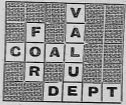
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Direct from the Coast.

CO-OPERATION AND TEA.

THE CHARGE OF SPECULATION REFUTED.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT'S OFFICIAL REPLY TO SIR AUCKLAND GEDDES AND THE PRESS.

Our readers will remember that the issue, which ran from sale, owing to insufficient bids being made; and the merchants, believing as they do in their former position, have now reduced their offer by 50 per cent., so that the immediate effect of this Press attack has been to reduce the offerings of tea in public auction, which must tend to higher prices. In fact, last two week's auctions have seen an advance of 8d. to 24d. per lb. already.

The charge of speculation has been made. By whom has it been made? Does it come from the general containing public or our competitors in trade? We have every reason to believe it comes from the latter, knowing, as we do, that a certain section of the trade has been busy preparing schemes to avert conditions of public sale and the introduction of buying restrictions, which, if successful, would make what is now an open public auction a close preserve. In this connection we state quite definitely that we shall resist such attempts against the public interest to the utmost of our power and to the full extent of our resources, believing as we do that only in open public auction and a free market can tea realise its economic value.

If buying tea at the lowest point in the wholesale market and realising it at the lowest price in the country as long as those cheaply-bought stocks exist, is speculation, we have nothing more to say. It is what we have done, and which, apparently, is the crime to which our opponents so strongly object.

Having tea at the lowest point in the wholesale market and realising it at the lowest price in the country as long as those cheaply-bought stocks exist, is speculation, we have nothing more to say. It is what we have done, and which, apparently, is the crime to which our opponents so strongly object.

Who are the speculators in tea? We ask the Alarmist Press to make inquiries elsewhere.

Our sales for packet tea are the largest in the world. That we have given complete satisfaction to our public is proved by the fact that our sales for the year just ended show an increase of over five million lbs.

By refusing to raise retail prices for many months we have saved our public over £600,000. In this respect we have undoubtedly conferred a benefit to the consuming public generally.

Another lasting benefit has been set on foot in tea, which is now the law of the land, owing entirely to our efforts. This has ensured the housewife obtaining 16s. to the lb. instead of having to pay for paper at the price of tea.

The very constitution of the co-operative movement is in itself sufficient to refute the charge made. The organisation, therefore, that it is interested in buying tea at the lowest possible price for tea is a "radioactive absurdity."

January 28th, 1925.

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What?

The "MILGATE MONTHLY," which costs 5pence, and has the magazine at a special price at its co-operative stores, bookstalls, or railway bookstalls.

Having been practically out of the market for four months and our sales continually increasing, we came into the market again in October, but between that time and the end of the year our purchases were only a little above the normal.

The suggestion that our buying increased the price of tea is thus absurd, because the price of tea at October was 2s. 0/6d. per lb. for Northern Indian tea and at December 2s. 10/2d., whilst the price of Ceylon tea remained the same. It must be remembered that good quality tea is generally only available during these three months, and the quality at this time was exceptionally good.

The market during January has shown a fall in quotations. This has been brought about by abnormally heavy shipments during the month of December, owing to greater facilities for freight and the heavy offerings of tea in public auction and a sudden fall in quality. The threat of Government intervention has also apparently caused some timidity on the part of some big operators, who have shown great anxiety to sell, as evidenced by the catalogues in a public auction, which have recently contained heavy quantities of cheap-bought tea. The inferior quality of the tea now coming forward, however, must necessarily have brought lower quotations.

Most of the offerings during the week

Men's and Youth's High-Grade Footwear.

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London, Made in England. Famous Co. of Rubber Soles. Sole and Lining in rubber. All sizes. Every pair guaranteed.

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HOUSING.

INTERESTING FIGURES. BY A BRICKLAYER.
W. ROBINSON.

AFTER many years the down-and-out ragged-trousered bricklayers have become recognised, and the dignity of our labour respected. As one of the bricklaying fraternity, I feel we must be thankful for the large amount of publicity that has been given on our behalf. We are travelling very rapidly with all kinds of solutions for the housing problem, such as bricklaying records, concrete houses, steel houses, a device whereby anyone may lay 2,000 bricks per hour, patent bricks that slot into each other, dilution, piece-work, and oak and pine new method, which appears to me to be the most appropriate of all the new methods.

Why have bricklayers been given such prominence? What is wrong with the other craftsmen and the labourers in the industry? Are they not entitled to a little publicity and respect for their labour? They contribute their share to the building of houses, &c.

Supply and Demand.

Obviously the answer is "supply and demand," which is slightly in favour of the bricklayers. It is not the law of Nature, but the economic law of the present system. It sometimes operates in favour of the employers, and very rarely in favour of the worker. The brick working class is in dire need of employment. But why was Dr. Addison's scheme wrecked? The result was that unemployment rose in the building trade. In July, 1921, the figures were 163,072; in December, 1921, 184,467; in March, 1922, 204,234. For the four weeks following October, 1922, building labourers received £26,000,000 in employment benefit. Between 1921 and 1923, £34,000 was paid in unemployment benefit to bricklayers and masons alike. It will also be surprising to some to be informed that during the last three years a total sum of £80,773 has been paid back to members of the bricklayers' and masons' unions in unemployment benefit at the rate of 5s. per week over and above the State Insurance.

The following are figures of building workers engaged on Sheffield municipal housing schemes. In December, 1921, 424 men engaged; in December, 1922, 594 men; in December, 1923, 1,659 men; in December, 1924, 189 men only engaged; in December, 1925, only 146 men engaged; in December, 1924, 544 men engaged on housing.

The madness of such economy when the people are crying aloud for houses! The question I wish to ask the politicians in power in the City Councils and the House of Commons is: Why were these men walking to the Labour Exchange to sign on when they desired to do work of public utility?

Shortage of Materials.

The housing shortage is not merely a political question providing a subject for discussion on the floor of the "House," or in the columns of the Press, but something far more important, being in short a factor that will affect the development of physical, mental and intellectual of the next generation. If there had been no war the housing position in this country would have been serious apart from the shams and the general overpopulation problem; though, of course, far less tragic. One of the primary difficulties is the shortage of materials. From 18,000 to 20,000 bricks are used per house, but it must be understood that methods of building vary in regard to foundations, partitions,

and so forth. At the lower figure 200,000 houses use up approximately 3,800,000 bricks. Mass production of bricks is necessary to-day. The need is urgent. In a recent issue of the Kingsley Wood, in reply to a Parliamentary question on December 16th, 1924, states that it was estimated for the three years prior to the war was 2,805,000,000 per annum. It has been estimated that the productive capacity of bricks at the present time is about 5,000,000,000, and the actual output this year will probably approach that figure. The output of slates was 25,000,000 to 28,000,000 per year; and this is short of requirement for housing alone on the scale necessary by at least 300,000,000. This problem is similar to that of the brick supply.

The Labour Problem.

To build 200,000 houses a year, skilled craftsmen to the number of 228,000 are needed. Of these some 34,000 require to be bricklayers, with a proportion of walling masons. Existing factory buildings, steel works, railways, their own staffs of built workers. The bricklaying and masonry crafts provide for this class of "subsidiary" work approximately 30,000 men (including non-union men) out of 68,000 to 70,000. In the A.U.B.T.V. there are 38,000 bricklayers and masons engaged on work outside the subsidiary industries indicated; that is to say, in new commercial buildings, public buildings, luxury buildings, and the building of new cities. The average regional apprenticeship rate in the building trades accepted on both sides will give 50,000 apprentices. Actually there are only 20,000. There are many reasons for this dearth of apprentices. Next to the absence of a reasonable prospect of securing work, some building men lose 25 to 30 per cent. time when in full work through inclement weather, owing to rain, frost, and snow, which is the characteristic curse of our industry. In this materialistic world, many hearts go with full stomachs. Another reason is to be found in the altered condition of the industry itself. The day of the small established builder of a good class with a steady practice has almost passed. Beyond this the nature of a foreman's duties under modern conditions does not encourage the young apprentice. The building trade operatives are not antagonistic to apprentices. In fact, we welcome the infusion of young blood into the industry.

Apprenticeship Scheme.

The national scheme of apprenticeship is now being organised under the auspices of the national building societies of operatives and employers appointed for the purpose by the late Minister of Health (Mr. Wheatley, M.P.). The new Minister (Mr. Neville Chamberlain) declared his desire that the committee should go on with its work, and has promised continued Government assistance. The duties will include registration of apprentices, collection of information as to the number of craftsmen and boys in each trade, arranging for the placing of apprentices, and the invoking of the aid of technical schools for theoretical training. The nominal period of apprenticeship is to be four years. Apprentices will be eligible to enter any trade up to the age of twenty-

A lad entering at the age of sixteen would receive in the first six months 20 per cent. of the craftsman's wage. In the second six months the wage would be 25 per cent., and so forth until the last six months of the four year he would be getting 60 per cent. If the age of entry were over eighteen, the starting percentage would be 40, and at the end of four years it would be 85.

New Constructions.

I hope if the Government are going to embark on new constructions they will not cover the countryside with unseemly buildings which would be an insult to the passer-by, as well as an inconvenience to those who would have to live in them. We are having far too many engineers and far too few architects in the building of houses. The workers want houses that they could look upon with pleasure as well as dwell in them with comfort. I note the steel houses will be difficult to maintain. The only means of preventing corrosion would be by frequent painting externally, which would mean a heavy cost. This process could not be done internally. The estimated cost of the steel houses is nearer £500 than £300, which in the main, is dearer than the brick or stone house. The concrete houses, in the main, cost more than the brick or stone house, and they have a tendency to "sweat," which is unhealthy for the people who live in them.

Genius Co-operation.

During the debate on housing in the House on December 16th, 1924, Mr. Chamberlain stated that during the

twelve months ending September 30th, there were built no fewer than 110,000 houses. The maximum number of houses ever built in one year, as far as he had been able to find, was 129,000. It was a remarkable fact that to-day, in spite of the extraordinary limitation of labour and material they had got within 29,000 of that figure. "Agreed." In view of the fact that in all the trades concerned there were, last January, about 367,000 men against 720,000 twenty-three years ago. In face of these figures, who can charge the building workers with co-waddy methods we have heard so much of in the Press. Co-operation of operatives, employers, and the State ought to be made possible by the establishment of appropriate machinery. Proper appreciation on lines such as a self-respecting industry can fully support will, I venture to prophesy, be quite equal to the possible progress of the production of materials, and in time will build the requisite number of houses per year. This is the only method whereby houses can be built of a standard of comfort, and which will stand the test of from seventy to one hundred years.

Under the spreading scaffold poles the framed building stands. Reeking the sleep from out his eyes, And spitting in his hands. Younging, he lays the strain Placed on his frail physians (is plain), As his union contemns him.

Thus are we paraded; the bricklayer knows differently, but we don't mind a joke at our expense so long as the jokes are not mistaken for the facts.

BRIGHTSIDE AND CARBROOK CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED.

Grocery Dept.

EXTRACT FROM DIRECTORS' REPORT.

We are pleased to report a gradual but continuous increase in the sales of this department since the half-year end. Satisfaction in the rates covered by our society's operations has been very keen, and to obtain the trade of extra therefore our members have cut our prices much dearer than usual. To a great extent these our members have received the benefit of the extra over the counter. We are convinced that price and quality assured our goods compare favourably with those of our competitors. This department is stocked with a choice selection of commodities of first-class quality, and we appeal to our members to give the society their whole-hearted support, as it is only by increased interest that we can bring the working expenses down into proper relation to trade.

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Let us renovate one of your rooms, note the result. A HIGH JOB GUARANTEED at a reasonable price. We stock the latest designs in Wallpapers. C.W.S. paint is the finest manufactured. Everything you want for home decoration.

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PURE RICH MILK OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY ONLY IS SUPPLIED.
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DO NOT DRINK IMPURE MILK.

GET THE PUREST AND BEST FROM YOUR OWN SOCIETY.

The Sheffield Co-operator.

FEBRUARY, 1925.

OBSCURING PLAIN ISSUES.

"Co-operative News" Special.

We print the movement's official reply to the Royal Commission regarding tea in another part of this journal.

The co-operative movement has been in the limelight since last month, when its witnesses gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Food Prices; but, as frequently happens, the actual facts have followed by irrelevancies.

Food prices affect the consumer very directly, and the presence of co-operative witnesses, in view of the fact that the co-operative movement is the only organisation which represents the consumers, was, therefore, an event of considerable importance. The Commission was engaged, for the time being, in considering the prices of wheat, flour, and bread. The co-operative movement offered evidence and information upon these subjects, and its witnesses attended to supply such evidence and to be cross-examined upon these points. The witnesses made it clear that the co-operative movement in many parts of the country keeps down the price of bread, and that its mere existence prevents needless increases in bread prices which others would impose but for the refusal of the co-operative societies.

The co-operative evidence also showed that this great organisation, formed by the consumers for their own protection, is the largest milling organisation in the country, and therefore exercises a decided influence upon the price of the stuff of life, which influence, because of the nature of the constitution of the movement, is all in favour of the consumer.

These are very important facts, but the Press, for the most part, threw them into the shade by giving excessive prominence to what we feel we are justified in calling the irrelevancies of the day's session.

One of the members of the Commission introduced the first irrelevancy by raising the question of how co-operators pay income tax.

The whole question of income tax was a specific subject of inquiry by an ad hoc Royal Commission, the records of which are in print and available. Why the question should be introduced in the consideration of the costing of wheat, flour, and bread prices is not quite clear.

If the question be relevant to that question another bigger question is raised. The admission of the question as relevant to the selling price of goods simply implies that it is permissible for a company to say: "We shall make a profit of so much" on that which we shall have to pay income tax amounting to so much; that will not leave us all the profit we want, therefore we shall add the income tax we have to pay (plus a little more) to the cost of the goods, and make each customer pay our income tax as well as his own."

The admission of the relevancy of this question therefore gives countenance to a suit-interpretation of the law regarding income tax. The "Co-operative News" has exposed this misinterpretation, and misapplication, of the law on several occasions, and the fact that the question was raised in the form in which it was raised last month confirms this exposure.

We do not know why the chairman of the Commission thought it right to introduce the question of tea supplies on an occasion when the subjects under discussion were wheat, flour, and bread. Mr. Collier asked about stocks in general, but Sir Auckland Geddes asked about tea particularly; and Mr. Alexander gave the fitting reply.

NEEPSEND

MEN'S CO-OPERATIVE GUILD
 meets every Wednesday at 7-45.
 Parkwood Springs Chapel.

Interesting Topics. Come and spend a pleasant evening.



By "PATRICIA."

When in the last reckoning the liver I need
 Shall find usual, feeling touch of mine here
 asked for joy or woe?

She'll be who looks their records o'er—
 name and line and place—
 Say "Here a slight influence came," or
 "Here it came from."

—SIRERIASD GULLING.
 Good wishes for the New Year none scarce,
 but bland, seeing the "New Year none scarce"
 month old. Still, at this is the first time this
 year I greet you through this column. May
 I wish you all a real, interesting year? You
 full of things to hope for, work for, and, if
 you wish you can for good as well, real business
 in attainment.

I would have many of us realize the im-
 portance of being interested in something! So
 many women look dull, they do their work,
 in a heavy manner, they do it in dull and
 even places of amusements with faces that
 are like live iron.

It may be that bad conditions have dulled
 or blighted their minds, or that they have
 too much to resist. What a tragedy of a
 life is a dreary thing without a ray of hope,
 and interest in things around us is a ray
 of hope. Hope is free to all who have the
 courage to grasp it. The woman who makes
 up her mind that she will take an interest
 in things around, is a woman whose life will
 be improved by her own interest. The
 resolutions that ought to be made and
 kept are to know ourselves, to know our
 duty to life. We live in such a wonderful
 world, and there are some wonderful people
 in it. Let us all in our lives do some
 things that we could get rid of many evils
 that are all in our lives. The first thing
 to do is to believe in "Life." Then you
 realize the things that hinder you and your
 dependence on others.

I see a certain Medical Officer of Health is
 suggesting that people who reduce to many
 or three who, though married, are children,
 ought to be banished.

If his idea is to increase the birthrate
 through this means, surely no reasonable
 person will agree with him.
 To see the thousands that are out of work
 and the many thousands who are in want,
 are living dull, poverty-stricken lives, not
 counting the thousands of the fever children
 there are being the letter.

There may be some men and women who
 through such means as the mean children,
 and others there are even more selfish who
 do not care for children, yet who have them
 and disgracefully neglect them. Well, taxation
 will not make either of these types fit
 guardians for children. It is a question of
 a low type of mind. But there are others, and
 these are the real ones, the few who know
 who do love their children, and whose lives
 are centred round working and striving to
 keep a home round the dear or children as
 the case may be.

There is a man who said the chains that keep
 the workers enduring much wrong are made
 up of their children.

There are many persons in comfortable life
 talking of the selfishness of the working-
 class when they begin to limit their limita-
 tions. They are not one or two who think
 they cannot do for seven or eight, and those
 who do not care for children will never breed
 or care for offspring in a way likely to be
 beneficial to society.

Until some reorganisation of society takes
 place, and a place is found for all who wish
 to live decently, the decline of the birth-rate
 is a good sign.

Don't forget to keep a little milk fat or
 meat into the rice pudding. It adds to the
 richness of the milk in the food value of the
 pudding, and is very necessary in winter time
 when milk is less creamy. If finely spread
 it disappears entirely from the mouth.
 Don't discard your old felt hats. Cut out
 a paper pattern of the size of your hat, and
 use it to make a coat of felt. The material
 is also extra to eat for covering the
 small pieces. This adds to comfort and saves
 the stocking.

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"SELF-HELP"
 is a new series.

Between You and Me.

The Liberal Party has held a convention to discover what it did from. It found that it was without funds—a very common complaint—without a leader, without an organisation, and without a policy.

Its funds had been dissipated; its leader had been transferred to a higher region; its organisation had fallen to pieces; and its policy—well, it had lapsed.

So it was decided to obtain funds in the democratic way (apparently a new way to the Liberal Party), not to rely upon fat cheques—which, by the way, no one is now willing to furnish—but to collect the shillings of that fast-departing old man, the Liberal trade unionist.

As for a leader, there being only Lloyd George in the offing—and nobody wanted him—well, we will "wait and see," said the Liberal corpse to itself.

On the question of organisation, however, the remedy could not be made public.

As for a policy—well, what has one to do? The Conservatives have the only negative one and the Labour party the only positive one, and, as the "Observer" remarks, "a three-party system is in itself fatal!"

So there the Liberal Party must be content. It would seem to the outsider that the corpse will have to remain a corpse, despite the joyful songs of the Cocoa Press attempting to celebrate a resurrection.

The Liberal Party, we are told, is to place candidates in practically every constituency in the country at the next general election. That is worth doing, and we hope, in the interest of democracy, that it will not fail in putting forward the candidates. The Labour Party and the Tory Party will fight the real battle, the Liberals supplying the comic relief.

An appeal to Liberals is being made by a member of the Party, suggesting a week of abstinence from tobacco, alcohol, tea, and so on, which Liberals could very well do without for a week at any rate.

I note there is no mention of abstaining from cocoa, and I would be the last person to suggest that this is because the appeal appears in the Cocoa Press! I think the better explanation would be that there is no sacrifice involved in giving up cocoa. Who ever heard of anyone signing the pledge against cocoa? On the contrary, scores of people would be glad of the opportunity to substitute tea for cocoa, but the doctor forbids! . . .

My friend Thomas Smith, secretary of the Sheffield Property Owners' Protection Association, has got the "wind up" appeal regarding the substance of Sheffield property owners to subscribe to his organisation. In his latest circular-letter he says: "If there were no property owners' associations property owners would be in a sorry plight."

"Have you ever thought what the owner of only one house, let us say at 6s. per week, owes to his association? This is what he has got—"

Per week	s.	d.
40 % on net rent	1	5 1/2
Excess rates and water	1	2
	2	10 1/2

If conversion has taken place, about 0 6 3 1/4

"That means that the owner of only one house gets an increase of 1s. 6d. per year, or ten hours 18s. per annum, every penny of which has been bought for and maintained by the association!"

So now, dear reader, you can appreciate the anxiety of one—Thomas Smith you pay rent, that your trade union or co-operative political life is a wicked thing. Quite right to use political means to increase your rent and rates, but very wrong for you to defend your position as a householder.

Our dear friend goes on to point out that "the Labour Party are intent on taking away" the advance of 5s to 5s 6s.

The association also exists, we learn, to resist "unreasonable demands for repairs, &c." Query: What is "reasonable" demand for repairs? The Sheffield Co-operator will be pleased to receive answers to this puzzle; no prizes given, but a reward to the landlord who is prepared to define any repairs as "reasonable." . . .

In the election issue of the "Sheffield Citizen" there appeared the following: "Every vote, therefore, given to a Labour-Socialist at the Parliamentary or Municipal Elections is a vote for Atheism," and in the current issue the Editor says that it is not his intention to withdraw one word. He then proceeds to give quotations in the manner of the person who "proved" that the Bible told people to "go and hang themselves," by the simple process of finding each separate word on different pages. It is in this way that the "Citizen" attempts to prove that Socialism and Atheism are synonymous terms, and tries to take Mr. Alexander to task for challenging that contention.

I am always just a little bit suspicious of the perfect saint who propagates his own saintliness by vitriolic abuse of other people, and when the "Citizen" says, as it does, that "Russia is a nation of Atheists," these half-baked peasants say there is no God, and that Jesus Christ could not be the Son of God, because there is no God! I am doubly suspicious, because as it happens one of Sheffield's best-known men, Dr. Starr Burt, who was familiar with Russia before the Revolution, and has visited Russia since, gives evidence of a sane unbiased kind, proving that religions in Russia have as much freedom, if not more, under Socialism than they had under the old system.

As for the attempt to "throw" dust in the eyes of the people by the old cry of "Atheist," I thought the "Citizen" had more respect for the average man's intelligence.

I note that both the Tory and Liberal papers are lauding Mr. Arthur Neal as the possible "Independent" chairman of the proposed Sheffield Poor-Law Union. Mr. Neal is not yet a member of the Board of Guardians; the people have not yet decided whether he shall represent them in that capacity or not, but the Press has already made him the chairman. The Press which denounces dictatorship in Russia, in the Trade Unions, and in the Co-operative Movement, proceeds to dictate to the City of Sheffield who the chairman shall

be of a body not yet fixed up, and of persons not yet elected by the people. It will be for the new Board, therefore, to appoint their chairman when they themselves have been democratically appointed by the people of Sheffield. Mr. Neal may be a great man, but surely he is not the only possible chairman in a city of over half-a-million people, and for my part I sincerely hope that wherever and wherever Mr. Neal puts up for public office, he will be opposed by people who hold different views and who nevertheless may be quite as capable as he.

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20 "	£40
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MR. ALEXANDER AT MALIN BRIDGE.

FOOD PRICES AND PROTECTION.

MR. ALEXANDER addressed a crowded meeting recently in the Malin Bridge Council School.

Taking for his subject "Co-operation and the Food Commission," he dealt in detail with the evidence supplied to the Commission by the co-operative movement.

At the outset he prophesied that very little would come of the Commission. After sitting two months they had not yet completed their examination relating to two single articles of food, and if the Commission was going to deal with all vital foodstuffs at that rate, we looked like getting a final report by about 1927.

Referring to the Press reports of his own evidence on tea, he pointed out that he was subpoenaed before the Commission for evidence on flour, wheat, and bread, and that the questions relating to tea were flung at him without previous notice. Given then, the Press had not given full publicity to his reply, and the consequence that great numbers of people had got an entirely wrong impression as to the co-operative movement's position regarding tea.

He went on to demonstrate that the co-operative movement's operations on the tea market, so far from increasing the price of tea, had kept the prices down and had saved the consumers of this country at least £400,000.

Turning to the general political situation, he dealt first of all with foreign affairs, asserting that Mr. Chamberlain himself had practically admitted that the ultimatum to Egypt was wrongly worded and too drastic in its demands.

On the question re the evacuation of German territory Mr. Alexander advocated the same pacific policy as was followed during Mr. Macdonald's tenure of office, and protested strongly against the assumption that any German suggestion or scheme should not receive earnest consideration. Wherever any constructive suggestion emanated from, if that suggestion was conducive to international peace and amity it should be carefully examined before being rejected.

He asked his hearers also to consider the principles involved in the Geneva Protocol, pointing that in his next visit he would deal with the question. He asserted that it was essential to get a good solid opinion behind the main principles of the Protocol if we were to settle international affairs without recourse to the arbitrament of war.

Dealing with our relations with Russia, he pointed out that the very people who had repudiated the Russian agreement

and refused to recognise Russia were now endeavouring to get into close business relations with them. Quoting from "Hausser" an answer given to Mr. Cecil Wilson in the House of Commons on the question of British exportations to Russia, he showed that flour, rapeseed and safflower had been exported to Russia in considerably increasing quantities during Labour's period of office. Mr. Alexander asserted that Sheffield could not ignore the position of Russia as a potential market for iron and steel goods.

On the question of Protection, he showed that the proposals for the safeguarding of industries were really a back-stair method of accomplishing Tariff Reform. He preferred the method that would give the House full opportunity to discuss the proposals before they were put into operation. He was a Free Trader, and believed that tariffs could not help industry, and that these particular proposals would not really help even the industries they pretended to assist.

Dealing with the proposed subsidy of the sugar beet industry, he showed that the consumer invariably had to pay to the grower the subsidy in the form of a tax of this kind. He contended that it would not help agriculture in the slightest degree, and so far from cheapening the particular commodity, the tendency would be for the price to be increased as a result of that action.

Mr. Alexander was given a splendid reception, and although questions were given for questions and discussion, everybody was so satisfied that no questions were asked.

DAMAGED, BUT REPAIRABLE.

Scott talks at the foot of his sleep that was torn off and rolled into a wretched cocoon. Having a sense of humor, he is wrung a few stitches of happiness around the ruin and shipped it to Henry Ford. In due time comes a communication saying: "It will cost you £400 to have your car repaired. How heaven's sake tell us what all you!"

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FRIDAY 8.15 P.M. Men's Social Union
SATURDAY 7.45 P.M. Women's Social Union
SUNDAY 11.15 A.M. Public Meeting
SUNDAY 2.15 P.M. Public Meeting
SUNDAY 5.15 P.M. Public Meeting
SUNDAY 8.15 P.M. Public Meeting

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A Silent Song. "I shall sing for you, Tom?" "Have you a song with a refrain?" "Then please refrain."

A Truthful Answer. A POLICEMAN on point duty saw a festive gentleman staggering along the street on the way home to his wife. At four o'clock in the night? "asked the policeman gruffly." "In fact," was the truthful reply.

A Cool Suggestion. "I think that young fellow you were with the other night, I so asked him to dinner business clothes." "Oh, father! He's a returning instructor."

The Brute. "I CHIEF on Pilkington last evening," said Mr. Dawson. "Did you have a pleasant time?" inquired his wife. "Very; Pilkington was beating his wife when I got in."

"What?" said Pilkington was beating his wife. "A lot of covers he stopped when I went in." "Well, I should hope so!" "I begged him to go on, but he said some other time would do just as well."

"You begged him to go on?" "Who, yes; I didn't want to spoil the fun, you know." "Oh, you bruto! do you mean to say your wife was?" "Yes, she was! I asked her to go on, but she said she would do just as well."

"Yes, I think I could if you'd play cards with me." "Play cards?" "Yes, that's what Pilkington and his wife were doing."

Honest Confession. "THE HOUSE agent," he says, "you see you love no children, cronies, or wireless, and you want to keep a dog. You seem just the quietest man the agent knows."

The Only Way. "MORNING stars, run and see whether the cake is done. Put a knife in it, and if it falls out, it's done." "Put all the others in!"

Plenty to Cram. "LADY on tram (bearing half-crown for a penny fare): "I'm sorry I have no pennies." "Conductor (halting): "Don't you worry, lady, you're going to have twenty-nine in a second or two."

So They Do. "WARRANTY: "The best time you brought this watch for repair it had a handsome gold case, didn't it?" "Mr. de Breda: "Yes, but circumstances alter cases, you know."

A Shock for the Teacher. "THE schoolmistress was about to dismiss the class for the Christmas holidays. "Now children," she said, "I hope that you will have a pleasant time, and what is more important, that you will all come back with a lot of news in your heads." "Presently came the chorus of voices, "Some to you, some to you, some to you!"

The Better Get the Worst. "DEAR ME, Pat," said the doctor, "been fighting again?" "No," replied Pat. "I put Murphy five shillings he couldn't carry up on a ladder on top of a box full of bricks, and I won!"

Look After the Pennies. An Aberdeen man, leaving home one morning before Christmas, said to his wife: "Auntie, I'm thinking I shall be late at home to-night, and if I can't I shall telephone my cousin at six o'clock, but for goodness sake don't let the receiver wear a pair of boots, and then we shall save a lot."

Logical. CANDIDATE for Parliament: "Now you've heard my opinions, and I think you'll agree stand on." "But what my opponent hasn't got stand on." "From crowd: "All the more reason he should have the seat."

The Irony of It! MR. HUGHES A. SWANE had been giving a lecture to a certain guild, and with his usual self-confident faith that he had scored heavily both in subject and style, the offered him his "fate." This he off-handedly refused it; and when pressed to take it said: "I will give it to some charity."

"Well," said the secretary, "would you mind if we pay the fee into our special fund of the guild?" "What's the special fund for?" asked the professor one. "It's to enable us to engage a better class of lecturers for next session."

With a Shock. "How much money would you like to-day, my love?" "And how?" "I don't want any at all, my dear," replied his wife.

"Come over, darling, here's five pounds. Go and do some shopping," urged the husband. "Oh, my darling, but I'd much prefer to stop at home and help Mary," she insisted. "Then he took her."

Then He Cooled Down. "MARK FATHER: "Gladly, that young man says here very nice. Haven't your mother spoke to you about it?" "Gladly," said the father. The said man haven't altered a bit."

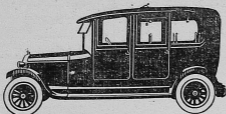
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