



THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK.

By THE RIGHT HON. A. V. ALEXANDER.

"Tanner is no doubt that the "stock" of the so-called National Government has been badly damaged in the last few weeks. Very soon after their display on the hordings of the claim that the Government were responsible for reducing unemployment and "returning prosperity," they had to publish the melancholy fact that the registered unemployed had increased by no less than 235,000, that the total registered unemployed had reached a figure of over 3,351,000, so that with the addition of 175,000 persons known to be unemployed but no longer included in the registers, the figure is brought up to 2,500,000. What a record for a Government which has been in office for three-and-a-half years with the largest majority ever known in British Parliamentary history.

Even worse has been the effect upon the Government's standing of their shocking handling of the new regulations in the Unemployment Assistance Board, and their inglorious retreat from the attempt (from which they cannot escape responsibility) to economise still further at the expense of the unemployed. It was not as though the Government could not be expected to know the disastrous effect of the proposed regulations. On the contrary, the Opposition in the House of Commons repeatedly drew attention to this, but were refused the right to move any amendments, and compelled to vote upon the regulations as a whole. No supporter of the National Government who voted for those regulations can escape his responsibility.

Moreover, at last, the country is beginning to understand that the Government's economies at the expense of the unemployed have merely served to pass immense additional burdens on to local ratepayers. For the past two years I have been pressing this point home at meetings, and now the official national figures confirm my view in overwhelming fashion. In the statement issued by the Ministry of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland show the following figures:—

Persons in Receipt of Public Assistance.

England and Wales:—	
September, 1931	975,883
" " " 1932	1,225,103
" " " 1933	1,775,717
" " " 1934	1,995,433
Scotland:—	
October, 1931	193,628
" " " 1932	252,492
" " " 1933	291,841
" " " 1934	377,744

These figures clearly show that since the National Government took office up to October last, there was an increase of no less than 592,461 persons in receipt of Poor-Law relief. A fitting commentary upon "returning prosperity."

Further, the Local Authorities have been badly treated by the Government in regard to assistance in meeting this additional burden. They were, in their view, definitely promised that the new arrangements with regard to the care of the able-bodied unemployed should operate from October 29th, 1934, but that date was postponed until March, 1935, with a consequent increase of thousands of pounds upon all distressed areas.

I think we cannot too strongly press upon constituents the effect of the Government policy upon the public assistance position in Sheffield. In August, 1931, with a Labour Government in office, the number of persons in Sheffield in receipt of Public Assistance was 28,357. In August, 1932, as a direct result of the National Government economies, that figure had increased to 54,437. By January, 1933, it had reached the appalling figure of 64,010, equal to 2.238 per 10,000 of Sheffield's total population. In January, 1934, after two-and-a-quarter years of National Government, the figure was still 61,857. When the cuts in the unemployed allowances were restored in certain instances in July, 1934, there was an immediate reduction in the Poor-Law figures. Here is the significant statement of the Ministry of Health on that point:—

"The cuts in the rates of unemployment insurance benefit and transitional payments imposed in the autumn of 1931 were restored on July 21st, 1934, and the payment of Poor Relief by way of supplementation to large numbers of persons in certain areas ceased. The substantial decreases shown in the first two weeks of the quarter net due to this cause.

The Ministry of Health therefore admits that the cuts imposed by the National Government reduced large numbers of the unemployed to below the Poor-Law standard, and the ratepayers had to make up the deficiency."

The Sheffield figures prove this, as the local figures persons in receipt of Public Assistance fell to 36,125 in July, 1934, but so far from "prosperity returning," this is nearly 8,000, moreover, by December, 1934, the figure had once more advanced to no less than 51,978.

The results to the finances of the City of Sheffield have been devastating, as the following figures supplied to me by the following figures demonstrate:—

	Expenditure on Out-relief.	Ordinary.	Unemployed.	Total.
Year to March 31st, 1930	174,257	4	173,081	353,368
" " " 1931	225,391	—	225,391	450,782
" " " 1932	261,161	—	261,161	522,322
" " " 1933	317,528	—	317,528	635,056
" " " 1934	374,659	—	374,659	749,318
Estimated Expenditure for Year to March, 31st, 1935	—	—	—	743,759

Total additional cost to Sheffield of Public Assistance compared with and since the year ended March 31st, 1931, £1,160,681. Special grant



RIGHT HON. A. V. ALEXANDER.

received from the Government amounts to £58,558. A sum of £53,673 is expected this year, making the total grant £112,237, leaving the City of Sheffield an additional burden of £1,058,444 to be met out of rates.

No doubt the local anti-Socialists will try and blame the Labour majority in the City Council for the increase in local rates. Clearly, however, they would do well to examine the above figures first, or they will have the tables badly turned against them.

When we came to examine the rest of the Government's policy, or lack of it, we find the same record of failure.

Just as I was sending this to press of a White Paper on their intention to expand British armaments to a greater extent than any year since 1922, and (on the eve of Sir John Simon's in-

tended visit to Herr Hitler) laying the principal blame for this upon Germany. The German Dictator developed a "cold." There was a further "blight from the pound," and no wonder. The whole tone of the White Paper clearly indicated that we were entering a new competition in armaments as deliberate and as costly as the arms race of 1907-14. Such a step taken now in comparison with 1907 can hardly be expected to do anything but create financial anxiety.

In 1907 our national debt stood at approximately £800,000,000. To-day, it is over £7,000,000,000! In 1907 the "peace time" income tax was at the rate of one shilling in the pound. To-day it is 4s. 6d. in the pound. In 1907, apart from taxes on sugar, tea, coffee, and alcoholic drinks, we were practically without taxes on imports. To-day, the Customs Duties amount to at least £186,000,000 per annum. In 1907 we owed nothing to foreign governments. To-day, the National Government has found it "inconvenient" to pay the U.S.A. the instalments of debt repayment for the last three years.

In such circumstances as these, to increase the fighting services estimates by £10,500,000 over last year, and to footslog away by the programme an expenditure on armaments which can hardly amount to less than £125,000,000 in two years' time, must be expected to create lack of confidence at home and abroad.

And just to round off their efforts the Government in another White Paper have indicated their intention to raise a levy on all imported meat—in other words, a new tax on the consumer for the purpose of subsidising the home farmer. This in spite of the repeated pledges by Mr. Runciman and others that no such tax would be imposed.

It has just been admitted there is an adverse trade balance for the year 1934. In their agricultural schemes they are pouring out millions of pounds in subsidies, taxing the people's food to the extent of £27,000,000 per annum. In all, they have increased taxation of commodities by no less than £95,000,000 per annum to "protect" the home producer of all commodities, and the net effect of the protection is to leave us with 2,500,000 unemployed, reduced consumption of food, and the rapid growth of megacities for private profit. No wonder they hesitate to come to the country for a judgment of the electorate on their terrible record. Mr. Walter Elliot and Mr. J. H. Thomas have been clearly trying, by lying lies, to see what public opinion would be in the direction of postponing a General Election. They find they dare not do this, and I am confident that not only in Sheffield, but all over the country, the people will unite to throw out one of the worst Governments (with the greatest opportunity and power) we have known in history.

HILLSBROUGH PARLIAMENTARY DIVISION.

RIGHT HON.
A. V. ALEXANDER

AND
REV. G. S. WOODS

WILL ADDRESS A PUBLIC MEETING
On FRIDAY, MARCH 29th, at 7.45 p.m.

In the WYCLIFFE HALL, CHANNING STREET, LANGSETT ROAD
ALL ELECTORS GORDIALLY INVITED.

MR. MACDONALD'S BETRAYAL OF PEACE.
(See page 4).

THE COUNCIL AND THE PRESS.

The February meeting of the council was an important one, since it had to make up its mind on the matter of what to do about the Government's Unemployment Assistance Board. Many of our unfortunate fellow citizens were likely to be seriously short of public assistance pay.

Immediately before the council meeting, however, the Government climbed down and promised to satisfy everybody. Notwithstanding this promise, the council took steps to show its dissatisfaction with the board's proposals. It is noteworthy that all parties in the council agreed upon this action.

THE PROCESSION.

An unemployed procession took place during that same afternoon, and the writer regrets that deputations are not received by the council. Any hundred or so ratepayers who have a reasonable case of any kind should have a proper means of stating it to those who have the duty of making the rates. It is regrettable that there was some rough play on somebody's part, and some persons were injured.

COUNCILLOR ASBURY.

A tribute should be paid to Councillor Asbury, who went to much trouble to get the payment made by the Government without delay. At considerable inconvenience, and after much telephoning, he went to London as an emergency measure, and got a settlement—the first in the whole country. There is no more loyal and no more efficient member of the council than Councillor Asbury.

All the other matters were trivial, having been fully considered and settled in committee. One or two of the speakers ought to get in a higher gear, or at least step on the accelerator. This applies to two in particular; both Aldermen!

A WORD ABOUT THE FUTURE.

The City Council needs more courage, more vision, and very much more efficiency. It will have to face up to the fact that inside the existing money system there is no chance of doing anything worth doing. Rates at 17s. in the pound are too high for half our people—though we cannot avoid that figure. Alderman Blanchard dropped to 10s. by the mere expedient of not paying the bills, but somebody has to pay them, all the same.

WASTE.

Here we are bawling about with small sums of public assistance grants to people who are not given a chance to work, whilst at the same time we badly need their services. Governments must be pressed to secure for us the chance to use people intelligently and pay them well. Our Press in Sheffield is not very helpful in this, and concerns itself with criticising the rates at one moment and helplessly asking for suggestions as to where savings can be made! At another, we shall have to turn Mr. H. Ramsbottom, M.P., on to the Board of Education—a "Nationalist." He spoke to the teachers at Grimley on February 2nd last.

THE PRESS.

Said he: "About 70,000 teachers in elementary schools educate some five million school children for about forty weeks in the year. Every single day, twice that number of adults obtain their instruction from a few immensely wealthy newspaper owners. What a colossal power, what a staggering responsibility, what a limitless opportunity of doing good. How is it exercised? Are the values and the standards of taste and judgment that we try to foster in our children maintained and encouraged and enhanced by those exceptionally potent individuals?"

THE REPLY.

He answers his own question. "Look at the posters. What do they display to attract the public? Sensational tragedy, drama, battle, murder, and sudden death. Turn to one of these sensational newspapers—headlines and

columns about some sordid domestic quarrel; details of somebody's insignificant and squalid private life; and the miserable wreck of somebody's home and fortune; gossip of the sily trivialities and peevish extravagances of social climbers, and the blatant idiocies of film stars and racing motorists; denunciations of public men whose opinions are distasteful to the proprietor, and the suppression or distortion of their speeches. . . .

EDUCATION.

He goes on to add the remedy, in his view. "You teachers can provide a control for you can equip the children with the weapon of discrimination. You can teach them how to read a newspaper, you can warn them not to believe everything that they see in print is true."

There is still more of it, but that is all there is a good summary of one of the main purposes of our education committees.

THE QUESTION OF MONEY.

By the time these lines are read, the rate for the forthcoming year will have been considered and decided upon by the council. We can persist in our pressure upon the fact that—in our existing financial system—the poor always pay too much and the rich too little. B.

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HOW EINSTEIN SEES THE WORLD.

"The World as I See It," Einstein; published by John Lane; 8s. 6d.

EINSTEIN first became known to us when he let Relativity loose upon the world. We had many explanations of that, most of them not fit of which we take into penance when the Nazis came into power in Germany, for he was a Jew. The detestable treatment of Jews by Hitler's followers disgusted and pained him, and he wiped the dust of Germany off his boots and denounced his German nationality.

This book is a translation from the German original, and shows us the picture of a kindly, thoughtful, and courageous man. It is a selection from his articles, addresses, and pronouncements on various occasions.

CO-OPERATION.

Says he: "A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are dependent on the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received, and am still receiving. I am not free to do as I please, to live in idleness, to be idle, to the simple life, and I have often suffered by the feeling that I am unjustly an unnecessary amount of the labour of my fellow-men. I regard class differences as unjust, and I am in the last resort, based on force." That, we think, is a plain and a fine statement, worthy of a great mind.

DEMOCRACY.

His political ideal is democracy. "Let every man be respected as an individual and no man idolised." He therefore has always been passionately opposed to systems such as we see in Italy and Russia to-day. For the same reason he "abhors that worst outcrop of the herd nature, the military system. As it is that we not stand clear enough, he continues: "That a man can take pleasure in marching in formation to the strains of a band is enough to make me despise him. He is not free, he is not free, he is free by mistake; a backbone was all he needed. This plague spot of civilization ought to be abolished with all possible speed. Heinous by crime, senseless violence, and all the pestilential nonsense that goes by the name of patriotism—how I hate them! Was it necessary to me a mean, contemptible thing; I would rather be hacked in pieces than take part in such an abominable business."

EDUCATION.

In an examination-ridden world, he scatters the school-curriculum idea with this: "The principle art of the teacher is to awaken the joy in creation and knowledge." And his views on wealth are just as challenging: "I am absolutely convinced that no wealth in the world can help humanity forward . . . the example of great and pure character is the only thing that can produce fine ideas in noble souls. . . . Can anyone imagine Moses, Jesus, or Gandhi armed with the money-bags of Carnegie?"

ARMAMENTS.

The book gives us a pretty clear picture of Einstein's mind, by giving views on a variety of subjects; not mentioning the Jews, and one complete section on science. It is a forthright speaker and writer, by no means modest in his expression. "The armament race that has been making" is an example. He is a citizen of whom any country might be proud, with a large range of general ideas, and practical touch with affairs; a man of vision and courage who believes in the people. Friend to friends, he would suffer but he will not quietly see his brethren—Jews or Gentiles—treated unjustly. Nazi-dominated only acted in a beastly manner away one of Germany's greatest geniuses and robbed itself of a man of high character. B.

GREAT CO-OPERATIVE CAMPAIGN.

GOVERNMENT INDICTED.

The Co-operative Union is launching a great campaign at a particularly appropriate time to bring home to the whole of the country the ill which have been inflicted upon co-operators as individuals and their societies by the National Government in defiance of previous promises made at the time of the general election. The indictment of the Government's record falls into three principal categories:

(1) **The Penal Tax** on the funds of co-operative societies imposed in spite of the Premier's personal pledge that he would not be a party to a Government for additional taxation of co-operative societies.

(2) **The Marketing Scheme** whereby the cost of living has been kept up artificially for the benefit of a small section of the community and in order to stabilise existing agriculture of production and distribution.

(3) **The Unemployment.** The failure of the National Government either to tackle the root evils of unemployment or to provide effective mitigation of the sufferings of those who are unemployed.

On all these points the Government has laid itself open to the charge, not only of incompetence, but also lack of consideration of the national interest. There is a growing anger at the contrast between the huge Treasury subsidies lavished upon well-to-do shareholders, landowners, farmers, &c., and the parsimony and injustice with which the unemployed have been treated.

The time has arrived when co-operators must be urged to pull their full weight in order to overthrow the tottering Government and to replace it by one which understands and studies the needs of the people.

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RAISING THE SCHOOL-LEAVING AGE.

EVASIVE REPLY TO A POWERFUL DEPUTATION.

"A RE-EXAMINATION of the whole problem." That was all the Prime Minister could be induced to promise the influential deputation organised by the School Age Council, which visited on February 21st to put the case for the raising of the school-leaving age. No indication was given as to whether this re-examination of a problem which should by now be familiar to the Government in all its aspects was to be speedy or leisurely. Mr. Macdonald observed that to raise the school-leaving age would be "tantamount to a complete reorganisation of the present educational system." In view of the fact that such a measure has always been considered an essential part of the general reorganisation scheme recommended by the Hadow Committee, which is already being put into operation, Mr. Macdonald can hardly claim that the idea of radical educational reform is a new one. Local education authorities have repeatedly represented to the Government that this task of reorganisation is being seriously hampered by the failure to raise the school-leaving age, since the second stage of education envisaged by the Committee, beginning from the age of eleven, cannot be compressed into less than three years. In the case of the deputation it is an unworkable one, both from the educational and industrial points of view, and has consistently been put forward by the Labour Party as an essential feature of its policy. Juvenile unemployment, already extremely severe, will show a

big increase during the coming years. The Ministry of Labour attributed much of the recent increase of 440,000 in the number of the unemployed to the increase in the number of boys and girls available for employment.

A recent analysis made by the Ministry showed that unemployed boys and girls under sixteen increased from 36,930 in March, 1934, to 50,123 in November, 1934, and that nearly half the children employed had had no registered as unemployed since they left school. In Wales, less than a third of unemployed boys under sixteen had a job; in the Midlands and the North-West, little more than a third; and in Scotland and the North-West, two-fifths.

That religious difficulties are no longer a serious obstacle was shown by the presence of both the Archbishop of York and Dr. J. Scott Lidgett on the deputation, which also included Mr. Herbert Morrison, Sir Percy Jackson (chairman, County Councils Association), Mr. J. W. Calfow (chairman of the Association of Education Committees), Mr. P. Mander (N.U.T. Vice-President) and other men and women distinguished in various spheres of public life.

Opinion is united on this matter. Vague promises to investigate, though better than Lord Halifax's refusal last summer to take action of any kind, are not enough. The Government must be given no respite until it fixes a definite date for the raising of the school-leaving age.

CO-OPERATIVE PARTY NOTES.

ATTERCLIFFE.

OWING to the illness of the secretary (Mrs. Barringer) there has been no meeting of the Attercliffe Party this year. The Divisional Council will, however, meet on Wednesday, March 13th, at the Attercliffe Co-operative Institute, at 8 p.m. when, in addition to the Section officers and other business, Mr. A. Ballard (party organiser) will speak on "The Place and Work of the Co-operative Party." Old and new members are cordially invited.

BRIGHTSIDE.

The next meeting of the Brightside Divisional Council will be held in the Shegwen Co-operative Institute, Bell-house-road, on Saturday, March 23rd, when Mr. J. H. Pearce (secretary), Brightside and Carbrook education committee) will give a cinema lecture on "Co-operative Production." Afterwards a social evening will be held. The committee announce that they are hoping to double their membership during 1935, and are well on the way to last year's total. Old and new members are cordially invited to the next meeting. Secretary: Mrs. F. Ward, 58, Sneyce-avenue.

BURNGREAVE.

The Burngreafe Women's Section meets in the Burngreafe Vestry Hall every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. Secretary: Mrs. E. Yelland, 139, Scott-road.

HILLSBOROUGH.

The Hillsborough Co-operative Party meetings, which are held in the co-operative guildroom, 55 Hillier-road, every Thursday evening, have been well attended during February, when, on the 7th, Councillor E. Gandy gave a very informative address on the city's finances; 14th, Councillor Abbotts gave a resume of City Council affairs, with special reference to the work of the Public Assistance Committee; 21st, Press Cuttings were discussed, and on the 28th, Mr. G. W. Evison (secretary, Sheffield and Ecclesall education committee) was the speaker. Programme for March: 7th, Mrs. Fletcher will give an address; 14th, a social evening; 21st, Mr. A. E. Butcher will speak on "Are We Poor?"; 28th, a play-reading will be given.

The Women's Section continue their weekly meetings on Monday afternoons 4th, a social, the entertainment being provided by the women's own concert party; 11th, a social meeting, as many of the members were engaged in the Peace Ballot; 18th, Alderman T. H. Watkins, J.P., gave an interesting address on "What Co-operation Means"; and on the 25th, Councillor T. E. Eaton was the speaker. Programme for March: 4th, an American tea, proceeds towards the new Women's Section of the Orthopaedic Hospital; 11th, speaker, Miss Atkin (Anti-Vivisection League); 18th, "Lutoma" recites; 25th, Alderman C. W. Beardsley, J.P., will be the speaker. All co-operative women cordially invited.

NEEPSEND.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27th, in the Co-operative Institute, Manners-street, at 8 p.m., when Councillor J. Gill will give the monthly City Council report in place of Alderman Watkins, who has another important engagement. The Women's Section have an excellent programme arranged for their meetings to be held in March: 4th, Miss Halliday will speak on "Home and Housing"; 11th, the annual ball-growing competition will take place, Mr. J. H. Allen (president, Neepsend Party) to act as judge, while Councillor J. W. R. B. Billam will distribute the prizes. Councillor J. A. Longden and Mrs. Speight have also promised to attend; 18th, Mrs. Allen will give a report; 25th, the annual concert of the North-Eastern Section of the Co-operative Party, held at Halifax, and on the 25th, Alderman (Mrs.) Tebbutt will be the speaker. The section is endeavouring to secure

a record membership this year, and all women resident in the Neepsend area are cordially invited to the meetings, which will be held Monday afternoons, 7-15 p.m. in the Co-operative Institute, Manners-street.

SOUTHEY.

The Southey Party report a most successful month in the way of attendance during February. On the 6th, the first annual tea and social was held jointly with the Women's Section. There were sixty people in tea, and a good programme of music and dancing followed; 13th, Councillor Stokes, presenting the monthly City Council report, was able to correct several misleading statements that had been made with regard to the Labour Party in reference to the unemployment cuts. At the same meeting the speaker said in the action of Alderman E. G. Rowlinson and Councillor W. Ashby in providing a way out of the impasse created by the National Government's wicket cuts in unemployment pay, and in alleviating the lot of the unfortunate unemployed in Sheffield. On the 20th, a "Mock Election" meeting proved both educational and enjoyable. Mr. A. E. Butcher, who presented the reports of the Estates Committee with a proposal for the National Government's wicket cuts to be an entirely different problem than the one we have heard on the Co-operative and Labour platforms in the past! Mr. Hasley presented the P.A.C. report, while the Highway report was presented by Alderman Womersley, and General Purposes Committee report by Mr. Peckitt; 27th, Councillor G. W. Rowlinson gave an address on "The Present Political and Economic Position."

Most of last year's members have rejoined for 1935, but there are still a few friends whose association is awaited with favourable anticipation; new members are also being recruited, and we are asked to make a special appeal to all in sympathy with co-operative ideals to join up. Meetings held in the guildroom, Southey-avenue, every Wednesday, 7.30 p.m.

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL.

The Sheffield and Ecclesall Section held meetings in the Napier-street premises every alternate Monday. February 25th, Alderman Bancroft was the speaker and dealt with City Council affairs, with special reference to electricity, housing, and the direct labour department. A successful social took place on March 4th, when Mr. G. W. Evison gave an inspiring address on the Co-operative Party. Dealing with the many subsidies of capitalist enterprise on the one hand, and the restrictions on co-operative development on the other, Mr. Evison showed the absolute necessity for co-operative representation. The Bill introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Metcher for the reorganisation of industry could very well have serious repercussions upon the workers' co-operative movement. Mr. Evison said the speaker's plea for individual adherents to co-operative principle as well as trading loyalty to the society. Music was provided by Curly Goodall's band for dancing. Mr. Evison, Mr. G. W. Evison, and Miss E. Borsley (electionist) gave several recitals. Mrs. Vickers (chairman of the party) presided. Mrs. Vickers also represented the party at the national conference at Southport.

The Women's Section meetings, which are held every Thursday at 2.30 p.m. in the Napier-street premises, have been well attended during February: 9th, Co-operative Party Monthly Notes were discussed; 16th, the annual tea and social took place; 14th, Mrs. Billam, secretary, spoke on "Peace Training in Schools"; 21st, the section was entertained by the Sheffield and Ecclesall play-reminders; 28th, a social was held. Programme for March: 7th, Councillor Atkin on "A Visit to Germany"; 14th, "Press Cuttings" will be discussed; 21st, Mr. A. Ballard (party organiser) will speak on "Civic Ideals"; 28th, a whist drive.

MEANS TEST LIE NAILED TO THE COUNTER.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL REFUTES CHARGE ON MR. GREENWOOD.

THE oft-repeated false statement made by Tory speakers and Tory publications, that Mr. Arthur Greenwood was the author of the "Means Test," was frankly refuted by Sir D. Somervell (Solicitor-General) in the House of Commons on February 22nd.

Mr. George Lansbury raised the matter on the second reading of the Unemployment Insurance Bill, which is a measure for consolidating the various existing legislation into one Act. He explained that a certain Tory M.P. had made a speech in the House accusing Mr. Arthur Greenwood of responsibility for the Means Test. When challenged to give his authority for the accusation, the Tory M.P. had quoted the Act which consolidated the Poor-Law, passed while Mr. Greenwood was Minister of Health, and had declared that it was possible for the "Means Test" to have been repeated in that Act.

Mr. Lansbury pointed out—and nailed the Solicitor-General to confirm the point—that when Acts of Parliament are being consolidated nothing can be repealed or altered in any way.

He protested against the dishonourable action of Tory M.P.s in attributing to Mr. Greenwood the authorship of the Means Test.

The Solicitor-General's Reply.

The Solicitor-General replied to Mr. Lansbury as follows:—

"It is important that it should be stated in the clearest possible terms that when a consolidation Bill comes before the House the only issue is: 'Shall the law be consolidated, and that the issue is quite definitely not. Do we approve of the terms of the laws which are consolidated?' It would be most unfortunate if, in this very necessary process of consolidation, that were not made as clear as words can make it.

"What applies to this Bill applies equally to another consolidation which has been referred to as a great piece of work—the consolidation of the public health law which was introduced during the time of the late Government. Mr. Greenwood brought that Bill before the House and said that it was not asking the approval of the House or of his Party for the various measures which it contained, but he was only asking the House: 'Do you agree that this is the House of our law should be consolidated?' I hope I have made that clear enough."

Now that this lie has been nailed to the counter, Labour's opponents no longer be able to use it in a vain attempt to hide the truth that the "National" Government is solely responsible for imposing the Poor Law Means Test on the unemployed.

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During the danger months ahead by wearing

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SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

In a memorandum recently issued by the Economic Committee of the League of Nations, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross shows with great clarity the folly of economic nationalism, and the fallacy of that argument which seeks to convince us that our own country intends to and can use its recently adopted restrictive measures to beat down those of other countries.

In outlining those actions which have resulted in the present chaotic position, it is shown how, ironically enough, the difficulties of certain agricultural countries such as Canada, Argentine, and Australia have been aggravated by the help they gave to Europe during the war. It was to meet the demand of the belligerents between 1914-1919 that these extra-European countries increased their production of foodstuffs and acquired those increased means of production which are now the chief cause of bankruptcy! Shortly after the war, the European countries erected tariff barriers to prevent, or at any rate reduce, the importation of foreign produce, including that of agriculture, and it is to this policy that our own country has recently been committed. Certain of its inevitable results have already made themselves clear. The world's "natural" agricultural countries are unable, in the first place, to sell the products of their industry, and, in the second place, to buy the products of the older industrial countries. The European countries reduce them to bankruptcy by restricting their exports, and they, in turn, bring us to bankruptcy because, with a reduced income, they are unable to buy the products of our industries.

One of the measures," concludes the report, "which would indubitably promote world recovery would be to gradually relinquish all the present intensive agrarian protectionism of the industrial countries of Europe. . . . No time, however, must be lost; each year that passes creates vested interests which become more and more difficult to uproot, and drives more deeply into the economic structure of the world the tendencies summarized above."

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POINTS FROM PARLIAMENT.

THE Prime Minister was very unfortunate in his reference to the coal industry during the debate on the cessation motion moved by the Labour Party on February 14th. 1934, he said, "it was the best coal year since 1930." There were indignat protests from the miner M.P.s, but the Prime Minister insisted on citing coal as an instance of the good work of the "National" Government. Four days later (on February 18th), in reply to Mr. Tom Smith, the Secretary for Mines gave the following figures of the number of wage-earners employed in the industry—

February 8th, 1930	— 557,300
" 27th, 1931	— 581,300
" 6th, 1932	— 539,800
" 11th, 1933	— 788,500
" 10th, 1934	— 787,800
" 9th, 1935	— 777,500

Compared with February, 1930, the figures for February, 1935, show a drop of 184,400. And during the "best coal year since 1930," there was a decrease of 15,000. Coal was the last thing the Prime Minister should have mentioned. Obviously he had not gone into the "pros and cons, the consequences, and the consequences of the consequences" of his statement.

THE CHANCELLOR TRIPS UP.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer was equally unfortunate in his reference to British exports during the same debate. He claimed the January increase in exports of 2.7 per cent. The House, however, and told the House that so other country in the world except Japan could show a similar increase in its exports. But figures given by the President of the Board of Trade on February 8th told a different story. They showed that in 1934 British exports increased by only 7.7 per cent., while there were much larger increases in other countries. Sweden's increase was 20 per cent.; Canada's, 22.8 per cent.; Finland's, 17.2 per cent.; Yugoslavia's, 10.1 per cent. The United States (eleven months only) did even better, with an increase of 37.6 per cent., and the Argentine Republic (eleven months only) showed an increase of 31.5 per cent.

WHAT "ECONOMY" DID TO PUBLIC WORKS.

On February 13th the Financial Secretary to the Treasury gave the following figures of loans sanctioned by the Public Works Loan Commissioners during the past five years—

1931	£ 20,482,405
1932	18,579,093
1933	8,274,654
1934	7,697,395
1935 (first ten months)	8,042,079

The figures are for the year ending March 31st each year. They need no comment.

AN EXAMPLE OF "ECONOMY."

On February 21st Lord Scone, the Tory M.P. for Perth, asked the Secretary for Scotland whether he was aware that, while £157,500 was provided last year for the improvement of Scottish rural water supplies, the applications by local authorities for grants for this purpose amounted to over £1,000,000; and whether, in view of the seriousness of the water situation in rural Scotland, as shown by the above figures, he would endeavour to provide in this year's estimates a sum of not less than £250,000 for further schemes of improvement? Here the answer that was given to this modest request from a loyal supporter of the "National" Government—"The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. With regard to the second part, I can hold out no hope that the amount provided last year for this purpose will be supplemented."

SCOTLAND'S BURDEN.

For the year ending May 15th, 1931, the cost of able-bodied poor relief in Scotland was £95,107.4 for the year ending May 15th, 1933. It was £1,512,250; and for the year ending May 15th, 1934, it was £2,059,665. These figures were given by the

Secretary for Scotland on February 13th, in reply to a question by Mr. David Kirkwood. They show that, under the "carefully planned" activities of the "National" Government (vide the Prime Minister) the cost of able-bodied poor relief in Scotland has more than trebled.

PARLIAMENT AND THE AMENDED REGULATIONS.

When the Unemployment Assistance Board regulations were presented to Parliament by the Minister of Labour last year, the elected representatives of the people had no choice other than to accept or reject them as they stood. No amendments were permitted under the procedure of the House. The result was disastrous for the unemployed, and to the Government. But a reply given by the Prime Minister to a question by Mr. Jack Lawson, on February 22nd made it clear that the same procedure is to be adopted when the revised regulations are presented. Mr. Lawson asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that the administration of the Unemployment Assistance Act depends largely upon the nature of the regulations, he would, before any amendments to the regulations are submitted to the House for approval or A.C., consider the desirability of enabling members to see the draft and of providing time for a preliminary debate in which an opportunity for proposing amendments might be afforded?

The Prime Minister's reply was: "No, Sir. I am afraid this would not be possible."

HOUSING "PROGRESS."

The Housing Act of 1933 was declared by the Minister of Health to be the best means of securing a sufficient number of working-class houses without the aid of a subsidy.

Now let us see the result so far. Replying to a question on February 21st, Sir Hilton Young said that up to December 31st, 1934, guarantees had been given by local authorities under the Act in respect of 3,513 completed houses!

"NO TIME IS BEING LOST."

Critics of the "National" Government must be fair. So I hasten to give the Government credit for speedy action in one direction. On February 13th, Mr. Clouston, the Tory M.P. for Plattin (Manchester), asked the Under-Secretary for Air what special steps were being taken to provide the increased quantity of material for the expanding Air Force.

Sir P. Sassoon replied that all preparations were in hand to ensure that the necessary equipment will be available to keep pace with the formation of new squadrons.

But Mr. Clouston was not satisfied. He asked for more details. And the Under-Secretary assured him that "no time is being lost" in dealing with the matter.

W. J. C.

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A BETRAYAL OF PEACE.

That White Paper on "Defence" issued under the signature of the Prime Minister, will be read with dismay by every peace-lover in the country. It tells the people that the "National" Government has thrown over the collective peace system, and is now entering on an armaments race which must inevitably intensify the danger of war.

But was there a more complete betrayal of the cause of disarmament and peace. No man has the right to do more than the Prime Minister to warn the country that there can be no security in armaments. As the "Daily Herald" has recalled, Mr. MacDonnell declared little more than a year ago—

"Arms have never yet saved a nation from war, nor have they given security to either strong or weak nations against attack. History has placed that on the throne of an unassailable truth."

Nor could any warning have been more forceful than Mr. Baldwin's when he said: "We can give no security, that the 'bomber will always get through.' Now we are told that there can be no 'complete security' unless we pile up our armaments."

The Prime Minister and Mr. Baldwin have made indignant protests against the Labour Party's statement that the policy of the "National" Government is endangering the cause of peace. The publication of the White Paper and the estimates for the fighting services justify Labour's case up to the hilt. It is a pity that it is following a policy of giving its services to the League of Nations, the Government has steadily increased expenditure on armaments. Before the present estimates were published, there had been an addition of £10,000,000 to armaments; the latest estimates add nearly another £10,000,000. And this is being done while negotiations are taking place with a view to securing a general peace settlement and the organisation of the security of Europe on a collective basis.

The Prime Minister used the reassurance of Germany as an excuse for the Government's decision, and points to the fact that other countries are also increasing their armaments. But these facts ought to make the British Government more energetic and more determined in the pursuit of essential agreements for the reduction of armaments; they are certainly not an excuse for throwing up the sponge, rendering general disarmament still more remote, giving an irresistible impetus to the already menacing armaments race, and making it certain that further security of our social services which have already been seriously restricted.

The "National" Government has never been whole-hearted in its belief in a collective peace system; it is indeed Mr. Baldwin and other Government spokesmen have publicly expressed their doubts about its practicability. But as the Labour Party has never ceased to insist on Germany as an excuse for its point out, there can be no hope of peace without such a system. The people of the issue is crystal clear. The people of the country can see under no illusion about the urgency of the need for getting on with the "National" Government and returning a Labour Government pledged to throw all its energy into the task of achieving peace.

HOLLYWOOD HAS A CO-OPERATIVE STORE.

A CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY with 350 members has just opened its first grocery store in North Hollywood, California. It hopes to open a barber's shop, a car and petrol service station very shortly.

In Los Angeles, near by, 23,000 people of families, representing 37,825 individuals, are members. They each pay a dollar a month, for which they are entitled to receive free medical advice and assistance of every type. The store is most simple to the most modern, and often as they need. Fifty-two doctors, twenty-three nurses, and forty other people are employed by the organization, and an average of 400 people a day visit its clinic.

THE PEPPER POOL SCANDAL.

It is quite clear from the replies given in the House of Commons to questions put by Labour M.P.s on the recent crash of thought about by speculators in pepper, that the Government does not intend to order an inquiry into this scandalous attempt to "corner" commodities. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appears to regard the matter as a joke, and in a recent speech, he declared that there was "not a sneeze" left in it.

But it is no joke to the persons concerned in the crash. Two companies in the City have had to be wound up, with the result that employees who have given the best years of their lives in the service of these firms are now thrown on to the street. There is also the wider issue involved in these transactions which affects the whole community. Under the present chaotic system speculators are allowed to gamble in commodities regardless of the consequences to the general public. A successful "corner" of any particular commodity results in increased prices to the consumer and huge financial hauls by the speculators. If the "corner" attempt fails, it brings disaster to thousands of workers, and to those who invested their money in the concern.

The successful speculator is regarded as a person worthy of praise for his cunning. Provided that he achieves his aim within the law, he may find himself in the courts, receiving honours and distinctions. Those who overstep the mark find themselves in prison. But there is no method of ensuring that the savings of the nation are properly utilised in the best interests of the nation. There is no protection for investors against men who gamble in commodities at the expense of the community.

BALDWIN'S NEW BOGEY.

And while this orgy of speculation is going on, accompanied by a big financial crash at intervals, the defenders of the present system are asking the electors to believe that the Labour Party's financial policy would mean that—to quote Mr. Baldwin's speech at Chelsea—"our whole trading system would be paralysed within six months." But one of the essential parts of that policy is the establishment of a National Investment Board for the very purpose of preventing the kind of thing which is now an all-too-common occurrence.

LABOUR PARTY'S PROPOSAL.

The Labour Party proposes that such a board should be set up as part of a general plan of industrial reconstruction. Its function would be the effective control of new capital issues. It would consist of persons chosen on grounds of ability and willingness to carry out the work, and would be assisted by a permanent staff of economists and statisticians. The board would be in close touch with a publicly-controlled Bank of England, and would act as a kind of general staff of the Government for planning and co-ordinating the mobilisation and allocation of that part of the national wealth which is available for capital investment.

The pepper pool scandal provides yet another instance of the need for the public control and regulation of investments. An impartial inquiry would, we believe, establish that fact. Is that the reason why the "National" Government is not prepared to set up such an inquiry?

WOMEN'S NOTES.

Very another food committee has just been appointed, this time an Agricultural Marketing Co-operation Commission for Milk, to inquire into, amongst other things, the working of the Agricultural Marketing Board, and its effect on production and consumption. This is welcome evidence that the Minister of Agriculture has at last recognised the existence of the consumer; and it is also a sign of the growing criticism of the Government's food policy. We all want to see a prosperous countryside, but we may well doubt whether we are giving the right way to it.

THE COST OF UNDER-FEEDING.

I have just read a very interesting pamphlet, "The National Food Supply and its Influence on Public Health," by Sir John Orr, who is a member of the new Commission I have mentioned. Written by an expert, with as political axe to grind, this pamphlet gives facts which show how sound is our argument that one of the most important things to do for both the revival of agriculture and the better health of the people is to increase the buying-power of the consumer. Dr. Orr shows first how enormously our power to produce food has increased. He says, for instance, that the egg yield from hens is more than double what it was twenty-five years ago; and that if the average yield of cows in the country were raised to the level of that of the best herds the total milk output would be nearly doubled. Then he goes on to show that much of the disease from which we suffer is due to insufficient food of the right kind, and that much of this insufficiency is due in turn to poverty. To give just one piece of evidence: in an investigation in one of the cities of Scotland in 1913, it was found that nearly half of the women of the poorer classes were suffering to some extent from anaemia, a third of the cases being classed as "severe anaemia," and that most cases could be cured by an improvement of diet alone. The situation is, then, that with the

progress of science our land is able to give us more and more food; while a large number of the people are unable to get the food which is necessary to their health; and much public money has to be spent on trying to cure the disease which results. The Milk Marketing Board will be faced again this spring with a large surplus of milk which cannot be sold in the liquid form; but the people, unable to buy as much as they need because the retail price is too high, are using every year more imported dried or condensed milk.

CONSUMER AND PRODUCER.

Surely the right way to deal with this situation is not to organise scarcity, to allow less food to come in the market, in the hope of raising the price? That this policy is a failure is shown, for example, by the fact that, in spite of the cutting-down of our purchases of chilled and frozen beef from abroad, the price of home-grown beef has continued to fall—the people are not buying more home-grown beef, but are just going without. Here, as in the case of milk and other foodstuffs, the remedy is not a smaller supply but a larger income, for employed and unemployed.

We must not think, however, only of the consumer's end of the problem. Farmers and market-gardeners are on the whole getting too low prices for their produce, and do not always even receive the full advantage of the subsidies paid by the Government, because too much of the consumer's and the tax-payer's money goes to middlemen's charges and other costs of marketing. In the case of milk, for instance, the "gap" between the wholesale and the retail price is often as much as 2s. a gallon. Here co-operative methods are the remedy, and it is our job to show that by these methods the housewife can buy good quality food at fair prices.

Much more could be said about the twin problems of agriculture and our food supply, but these suggestions would go a long way towards solving them, whereas to-day the Government is getting into more and more of a muddle with its mixture of tariffs, quotas, subsidies, and the rest.

CRACE COLMAN.

CO-OPERATIVE DIVIDEND ON TOBACCO.

At the annual meeting of the Imperial Tobacco Company Limited, which was held recently, a small number of shareholders urged the directors to take such action as would prevent the payment of dividends on the company's products by co-operative societies.

Lord Delverton (chairman) stated that this question was fully discussed and debated a year ago, and that it would serve no useful purpose to go into it again. He added that his board of directors endeavoured to protect its fairly and as reasonably as possible the interests of all customers.

It is significant that this attempt to increase the difficulties of the co-operative movement was led by a director of a West Riding company which controls in that area about 150 branches.

WONDERLAND!

In the last issue of the "Quarterly International Cotton Bulletin," published by the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers' Associations, a Texas cotton farmer pays a striking tribute to the worker's industry.

"In 1933, he says, "I was paid ten dollars per acre for ploughing-up cotton, besides getting an option of half-a-bale per acre, which amounts to ten dollars per bale at present prices. This year I was paid four cents per pound for planting cotton, and was given the acreage to plant peas, potatoes, &c. I am not paid for not raising wheat, which gives me plenty of pasture for milk cows and work stock. I have been paid for my old cows (they would have died this winter) and am being paid for not raising logs."

THE ECONOMY OF CO-OPERATION.

DANISH PRICE STATISTICS.

The annual report of the largest co-operative society in Denmark, The Consumers' Society of Copenhagen, gives some interesting figures which show how the consumers benefit by buying at a co-operative society. It shows that the expenditure of a family making all its purchases at private shops would, on the basis of the official figures of retail prices, be 11 1/2 per cent, 9 1/2 per cent, 10 1/2 per cent, and 20 1/3 per cent, respectively greater than that of an identical family buying similar goods at the co-operative society for the four quarters of the year 1931! It is no wonder, then, that, as the report shows, the Copenhagen Society has increased its sales during the year by 16 per cent. to 10,220,000 Danish kroner (at the present rate of exchange 11=22 1/2 kroner). Membership has also increased to 30,000 families.

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ARMS COMMISSION : CO-OPERATIVE MEMBER.

One of the seven members of the Royal Commission on Arms Traffic is an eminent co-operator, Sir Thomas Allen. The commission is to consider whether a State monopoly in the manufacture of arms should be substituted for private manufacture in the United Kingdom alone or in agreement with other countries, and whether the system of controlling the export of arms can be improved. The establishment of this commission has aroused wide public interest, and its report is anticipated with highest expectations.

Sir Thomas Allen, the co-operative member, prior to his retirement in 1932, held many of the most responsible positions in the co-operative movement.

In 1908 Sir Thomas was president of the Co-operative Congress held at Newport, his home town. Sir Thomas was elected to the directorate of the C.W.S. in 1920, and was ultimately vice-president of the society. He was also vice-chairman of the Co-operative Insurance Society, and served the interests of the International Co-operative Alliance with distinction as vice president and member of the executive.

Sir Thomas Allen has been associated with various other Government inquiries. He was a member of the famous MacMillan Committee, and has been frequently appointed on Government Trade Commissions to West Africa and the Far East.

THE SUGAR SCANDAL.

The work which the co-operative movement has done in revealing to the general public the extent to which they are being robbed as taxpayers to support dividends of sugar refining firms is now bearing fruit. Public opinion is too strong to tolerate an indefinite continuance of the sugar subsidy, and the attempt to supplant it by an even more objectionable and a more expensive subsidy directly imposed on the consumer is the price of a marketing scheme has been revealed in the limelight of co-operative publicity as a scandalous wangle. It is doubtful now whether that scheme which would involve a tax (called a levy) of a farthing per pound on all sugar will now be pressed as it certainly would have been had the co-operative movement refrained from educating the public as to its implications.

SWEET-FOR THE SHAREHOLDER.

The Minister of Agriculture still has a tender spot in his heart as to policy for the beet sugar refinery and their shareholders, for he has hastened to suspend the present subsidy for a further limited period, and more millions will be poured out of the Treasury into the pockets of capitalists in this economically unjustifiable industry.

A caustic commentary on the effects of the sugar subsidy is to be found in the revelation that the Central Sugar Company Limited has announced the distribution of new shares equivalent to a bonus of 60 per cent. The new share will be given to existing shareholders in the form of three fully paid £1 shares for every five held previously by the shareholder. These new and free shares, of course, rank for future dividend equal with the older shares of the company so, as a matter of course, they will reduce the nominal rate of dividend received without affecting the real return to the shareholder whose capital holding is, of course, sensibly strengthened by the measure.

PIGS MARKETING BOARD AND TRANSPORT CHARGES.

The inquiry into the flat-rate charge for the carriage of pigs by the railway companies under the marketing scheme was concluded recently at the Ministry of Labour.

Under the visiting arrangement the railway companies receive a sum of 2s. 1d. per pig whether transported or not, and evidence was given in the course of the investigations that co-operative societies alone stood to lose £5,000 per year. It was pointed out also that in many cases 2s. 1d. per pig was the price the railway companies when the pig was killed in adjacent premises and carried into the retail shop, and that an arrangement of this kind was likely to drive small men out of business and extend the principle of monopoly.

Mr. Edward Short, K.C., the chairman of the committee of investigation, intimated that a report would be submitted to the Minister of Agriculture.

THE CONSUMER PAYS THE BILL.

SEVERE criticism of the Government's penalisation of the consumer through the quota schemes is contained in the annual report submitted to the produce section of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. After providing figures to show that the wholesale price of bacon between 1932 and 1934 rose from 52s. 8d. a cwt. to 80s. and that 6,386,173 cwt. of foreign bacon were imported in the first ten months of 1934, the report states:

"The 1934 average was admittedly a paying proposition to the foreign producers; therefore a further 1.25 to 1.58 per cwt. paid to them in 1934 is simply a bonus to protect a home production of 1,551,000 cwt.; a very expensive way, and this has been paid by the British consumer. . . . Through this artificial scarcity, consumption is restricted; the poor members of our country are denied the benefit of a good, cheap food."

EXPERT CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S HOUSING BILL.

SEVERE criticism of the Government's Housing Bill was expressed at a recent meeting of the Council of the Association of Municipal Corporations. The secretary of the association stated that where they were satisfied that in the large industrial areas, the subsidy provisions in the Bill coupled with the amendments in the law proposed by the Bill which would add materially to the expense of slum clearance procedure, would not enable new housing accommodation to be provided at rents which the working classes could pay. He pointed out that whereas the principle of the 1930 Labour Housing Act had been that the slum clearance problem in large towns must be dealt with as a whole, the new Bill would enable individual houses to be isolated from any general plan in a most unsatisfactory manner.

"The municipalities," he added, "do not object to proper compensation to property-owners, but do not consider that compensation should be paid for houses dangerous to health or unfit for habitation for whatever cause. They desire to make clear their view that if proposals now being made are accepted, it would be impossible for the present slum clearance campaign to be successfully pursued."

CO-OPERATIVE LITERATURE

which may be obtained from the Co-operative Party Office, 17, Bank Street, Sheffield, 1.—

"The Co-operative Movement," by Edwin C. Fairchild (price, 3s.), giving an historical and economical survey of the British movement since its inception almost a century ago. The Rochdale principles, the recent Press attacks, trade union membership, and the Co-operative Party, are a few of the points touched upon by the author.

"Broadcast Debate on Co-operative Trading between the Right Hon. A. V. Alexander and Mr. P. Howling (secretary, National Chamber of Trade)," (price, 1d.). Published by the Co-operative Union by kind permission of the B.B.C.

"Legal Limitations on Co-operative Progress," by R. A. Palmer (price, 1d.).

"Britain Reborn," outlining the Co-operative Party's policy and programme (including No. 7 booklet, "Civic Ideals") price, 1s. 2d. the series, or 2d. per booklet.

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