



The SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR



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COLLECTIVE SECURITY THE ONLY WAY.

BRITAIN'S DECLINING PRESTIGE.

MR. ALEXANDER ON FOREIGN POLICY.

THERE was a large audience at the Bolehill Council School, Walsley, Sheffield, on May 8th, waiting to hear Mr. A. V. Alexander, M.P., but when he limped into the room they looked alarmed. However, he quickly reassured them by explaining that he was now paying the penalty for some years of strenuous football when younger, and that it was a return of old trouble with a dislocated cartilage.

Mr. Alexander said that it might be easy to ignore the Budget, because of the wider considerations of the payment for the foreign policy of the Government. There was one sentence in the speech of Mr. Neville Chamberlain in opening his Budget which was the keynote to all the speeches and the reasons for it, and also the Labour Party's charge against it. That sentence was: "As the restoration of our defences is in the interests of all, it is only right and fair that all should contribute to them."

"So," said Mr. Alexander, "it has been drawn so that it hits all because you are all to be saved by the defence programme of the Government." Mr. Chamberlain was very angry with him (Mr. Alexander) because he used these words to show that in fact, his tax upon the tea of the people, raised to 6d. per lb., was going to hit everybody, even those in receipt of Public Assistance. He had even said that the destitute had some interest in the rearmament programme, but Mr. Chamberlain did not want it taken that way. Anyone who was unemployed was immediately taxed under the Budget when they went to spend money. That was entirely against Labour and Co-operative principles. He always held that they had no right to tax people until they had a reasonable standard of existence.

PAYING FOR ARMAMENTS.

As to the Budget and what led up to it, they had to remember that this was the Budget where they had to pay for it. Tories never changed their policy. They were faced with an enormous increase in the expenditure which had gone up to nearly £800,000,000 for the year, and there was no specific provision made for the sinking fund. He wondered what would have been said of the Labour Government if they had attempted not to make provision for the sinking fund when Lord Snowden (then Mr. Snowden) was the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was not because there was not money

in the country, for the banks were so full of money that Mr. Chamberlain was able to borrow the money he needed at 6d. per cent. When this Government had to deal with finance, as with most, they were worse than muddle to muddle, and were worse than ever. As for the nation's debt, the capital sum was larger now than when the Labour Party went out of office, and he supposed Mr. Chamberlain would take statutory powers to borrow to meet it.

RAIDING HEN-ROOSTS.

In the first place there were some manipulations. Once more the Road Fund was ruled to the extent of £5,200,000. This was much more than when Mr. Churchill was Chancellor, but they were now to have the whole of this revenue put into the General Treasury Fund, and no longer to support the Road Fund. When the Government went in, in 1931, they cancelled the programmes which the Labour Party had made for the making of roads, which would have found work for thousands of unemployed.

They were now being asked to pay their first instalment for the rearmament policy. He did not believe that most of the people today understood the extent of the expenditure involved on it. In 1931 the expenditure on the navy was £51,000,000, while this year, with the supplementary estimate, it was £86,000,000. On the Air Force this year they would spend £40,000,000, which was more than double than was spent in the time of the late Lord Thompson. The expenditure in all sections of the defence forces in 1931 was £109,000,000, while this year with the supplementary estimates it would be £179,000,000.

A POWERFUL NAVY.

There were curious sidelights to be thrown on this armament question. He was charged at the last election that whilst the Labour Party supported the covenant of the League of Nations they were not prepared to pay for sufficient force to back it up. He said then that the British navy maintained the freedom of the sea during the war and continued to do so. Sir Roger Keyes, in a recent speech, said that whatever the Italian Government might think, Britain had a sufficient force to tackle any force. That was a testimony to what he (Mr. Alexander) had said.

He had asked in the House, if they were prepared to support the League, which they said was the keystone of their policy, had they consulted the other Powers of the League as to what was the contribution expected from Britain in a system of collective security, and he could never get an answer. If they took the tonnage of the fleet today it was 1,200,000, and that of France 800,000. Those two were easily strong enough, properly led, to maintain the marine side of any collective defence of nations against the aggressor.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY.

If the Government of this country was really prepared to stand firm for a policy of collective peace, never to move, a line of aggression themselves, never to adopt an aggressive foreign policy, the Labour Party would not at any time refuse the provision of such necessary force as was consistent with that policy and of membership of the League of Nations. So far, the other side had not been able to produce a single argument against this, or to show that they were not prepared to take their share.

FEEBLE AND VACILLATING.

Mr. Alexander then proceeded to an examination of what he said could only be described as the disastrous policy pursued by the present Government in foreign affairs and which had led up to the present expenditure on armaments—an expenditure which need not be if the Government would adopt a sane policy with the Labour Party behind them. When the Labour Party left office in 1931 they were at peace with the world and led in peace matters. They had made an agreement with Japan in 1930, and the British foreign prestige was never higher than when under the leadership of the late Mr. Arthur Henderson. No one was glad that they had come down, because it was such a pity.

The last four-and-a-half years had been a disaster. There had been the vacillation over the dispute between Japan and Manchukuo which led to the taking over of Manchuria and the threat to China in Mongolia. This country had pursued a feeble, vacillating policy for seventeen months which led to a blow at the prestige of the League of Nations from which it had never recovered, and which had led Mussolini to think he could follow a similar line. If they had

shown sufficient pluck in the first month of Japan's actions in Manchuria to say: "We support the League against any aggressor," there would have been no trouble now.

What an enormously grave disaster the Abyssinian debacle had been to the prestige of this nation. This country's name had been dragged in the mire. Some of the Government's own supporters considered that they had betrayed Abyssinia, which put its case to the League in connection with the Wal Wal incident of 1934, and said then they would not treat with the aggressor but put themselves in the hands of the League.

Truly reduced to comply, this country had a duty to stand up to the pledges given not only by the League Powers, but by the British Government. Mr. Eden said they had given a lead to the League, but what a lead it was. It had not prevented the slaughter of the innocent or maintained the prestige and honour of our own country. Before the 1935 election there was a change in the political outlook of the Government, and it appeared to be supporting the League.

When Sir Samuel Hoare made his speech on September 11th, the world thought this country was in earnest for State and collective resistance to aggression. Within three weeks of the General Election he was making a backstairs bargain with M. Laval to hand half of the Abyssinian Empire to the aggressor.

Mr. Baldwin became Prime Minister in 1935, and about the first pronouncement he made was of the disturbing event of the naval treaty with Germany. He asked Sir Samuel Hoare, and declared it was a mistake.

SANCTIONS.

As to the policy of sanctions, they would always be told that if they imposed sanctions, that sanctions meant war, but experience of industry as well as international affairs proved to him that an economic boycott, fully employed, did not necessarily mean war, because the aggressor would not more. Instead of employing sanctions as this country did with Russia over two arrested engineers, within seven days, to their disgrace, they never ceased to supply oil to the Italian Government. This was one of the greatest disgraces to civilisation. The Abyssinians had resisted the

(Continued on page two.)

Hillsborough Parliamentary Division.

Right Hon.

A. V. ALEXANDER, M.P.

will address a

Public Meeting on Friday, June 12th, at 8 p.m.,
in the **RUTLAND HALL, RUTLAND ROAD.**

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SHEFFIELD ESPERANTISTS' NEW CENTRE.

OPENING CEREMONY,
SATURDAY, JUNE 6th.

Ten Sheffield Esperantists are to open a new centre for their social work at No. 17, Howard-street. The opening ceremony will be performed by Messrs. Pearson and G. W. Roome, two of Sheffield's earliest Esperantists, on Saturday, June 6th, at three o'clock. A playlet in Esperanto will be given, and all interested persons will be heartily welcomed to the opening. The centre is open to membership for all, and will be available during the day and evening. It will contain a library for book lending and a common room for reading, writing, &c. Another room has been provided for learners' classes, lectures, meetings, &c., and it is hoped to form sports and indoor games sections. The rooms themselves are to be made attractive, and should prove a social centre for all interested in international affairs.

A class for beginners will be inaugurated on Thursday, June 27th, at 8 p.m. A cordial invitation is extended to all old and young alike, to join the new class.

All co-operators will find the centre a veritable home from home, where they can enjoy the many amenities of social life that are provided at the ordinary club. When in the centre of the city, call at 17, Howard-street, and introduce yourself as one interested in internationalism.

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POINTS FROM PARLIAMENT.

On the Thursday before Easter, when most of the Government's supporters had already left the House for their holiday resorts, Labour M.P.s took to raise the question of the adjustment motion of the Unemployment Assistance Board.

Since the "standstill" order given in February of last year, in response to the request of the Unemployment Assistance Board, the Government had declined to overlook the fact that the situation under the Means Test was not stopped when the regulations were withdrawn. A few illustrations of the kind of thing that is happening all over the country, given by Labour M.P.s in the course of the debate, may serve to emphasise the rights of Labour's demand for the abolition of the Means Test.

THE WIDOW'S SON.

Mr. Rowson told the House of a widow with two unemployed sons and a one son working as a hand in a mine. She is in receipt of a widow's pension. In order to assess the unemployment pay of the two sons out of work, the Minister of Labour asked the employed son's earnings, and took into account. The son who was working said he would not remain in the position of having his earnings used in this way to deprive his brothers of employment pay. If he stayed at home, it meant that he could not get the clothing he needed, and that he had to go without pocket money. So he left home.

Within seven weeks he was killed while at work on a colliery haulage road. And when Mr. Rowson, as miners' agent, had to deal with the claim for compensation, he was told by the employers that the dead son was not living at home his mother could not claim to be a dependant. Therefore, the widowed mother had to suffer the double injustice of having her son driven from home by the Means Test, and then to accept less compensation than she would have got had he stayed at home.

Mr. Rowson also revealed that when the miners of Durham recently received an increase of 6d. per day under the wages agreement, the U.A.B. made elaborate calculations which resulted in a reduction of 3s. per week in the unemployment allowances going into some of the miners' homes!

PENALISED FOR WORKING.

Mr. Bates mentioned the case of a father, mother, and three children, both father and mother being unemployed. The father and mother received 38s. a week, and the sons 6s. a week each, making a total of 46s. Then the father got work in one of the pits at a wage of 35s. a week. Whereupon the board reduced the payments to each of the two sons from 9s. to 5s. Thus the total income of the household was reduced to 42s. because the father had got a job.

FEAR OF THE "MEANS TEST MAN."

Mr. Grenfell drew attention to another aspect of the U.A.B. administration which should not be lost sight of. Referring to the inquiries that have to be made by the investigation officers, he said:

"These inquiries are pushed almost to the point of indecency. The private affairs of men and women are prised into a way which is intolerable to a person in a people who are so poor. A large number of people refuse to answer the questions that are put to them, and they conceal their poverty rather than expose them to the investigations which are so vexatious. For instance, they (the officers) are asked to report whether the houses of applicants have a decent appearance and whether there is any debt on the family."

FAMILY RIDE A HANDICAP.

Mr. Grenfell did not make a general charge against the officials, but he declared that not all of them are truthful in their distasteful work. "We find," he said, "that the appearance of a house is a disability to the applicant. Neatness and evidence of family pride

constitute a disability, and the applicant receives less on that account. The person who has striven and struggled and made sacrifices to avoid increasing debts is in a disability. Not only must the people be poor and stripped bare of their belongings, but they must be in debt before they receive the attention of the officers of the Unemployment Assistance Board."

THE MINISTER HAS NO POWER.

Mr. Bennett Brown, in reply, did not attempt to refute the evidence produced from the Labour benches. On the contrary, he admitted that M.P.s had mentioned similar hard cases in "hundreds of letters" to him. But he professed to be surprised that even more letters had not reached him. As to what he could do about it—well, here is his answer:

"It is easy to get up and ask for the abolition of the Means Test, and it is quite simple to bring forward hard cases. If any member has a particular case that he knows of, if he will send it on to me I will at least have it inquired into, although when the Appeal Tribunal has done its work, I have no statutory power."

That is the position. It justifies fully the protest made by the Labour Party against the administration of unemployment pay out of the control of Parliament. When the Minister of Labour produces the long-promised new regulations in the spring, Parliament will again have to accept or reject them as they stand.

But, as the experience of the first regulations proved, not even this reactionary Government can deny an outraged public opinion, and Mr. Brown may yet rue the day when he stepped so blithely into the shoes of his unfortunate predecessor.

UNEMPLOYED BUILDING WORKERS.

In certain towns where private enterprise has failed to produce as many houses as were previously produced by the Local Authorities, "a shortage of labour" is being used as an excuse. But on April 9th, in reply to a question by Mr. Winchster, the Minister of Labour knocked the bottom out of this plan. He stated that the total number of insured persons, aged fourteen to sixty-four years, in the building industry, recorded as unemployed in Great Britain on March 23rd, 1929, was 120,236, of whom 123,601 were men aged twenty-one to sixty-four years, 7,132 youths and boys under twenty-one years, and 413 women and girls.

An analysis of the total was also given. It showed that those unemployed were 10,723 carpenters, 3,291 bricklayers, 2,081 masons, 923 slaters and tiles, 2,260 plasterers, 20,593 painters, 3,381 plumbers, 13,242 labourers and the above, 29,017 navvies and general labourers, and 28,950 all other occupations.

THE ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY.

The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is among those from whom Mussolini secures oil for his aeroplanes that bomb and poison the Abyssinians. As many different figures have been given of the shares in this company controlled by the British Government, the following reply by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on April 9th, may be of interest:—

Of the £11,435,000 ordinary stock of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, His Majesty's Government owns £7,500,000. The other issued capital of the company consists of £9,234,838 first preference stock, and £5,473,414 second preference stock. Of the former, His Majesty's Government owns £4,000,000, and of the latter none.

W. J. C.

HOUSES FOR THE WELL-TO-DO.

"On every 100 houses built since 1921, when the 'National' Government came into power, eighty-seven were for the upper and middle classes, and only thirteen were for the working classes." — ARCHITECTS AND TECHNICIANS' ORGANISATION.

B. & C. INCREASED TRADE.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

Good progress is recorded by the Brighton and Carbrook Co-operative Society Limited for the quarter ended April 27th, 1930, when the sales reached £1,617,567, as compared with £1,394,446 in the corresponding quarter of last year, an increase of £241,000. For the year ended April 27th, 1930, the sales were £1,555,122, an increase of £134,600 over the previous year.

The contributions to share capital amounted to £47,830, this being £4,988 more than in the same quarter of 1929. One thousand four hundred and nine new members were admitted during the quarter, making the total membership 66,676.

In the penny bank section deposits amounting to £17,253 were made, the total claim of members being £98,814. The trading club, 31d. club, clothing club, and holiday club continue to show a satisfactory advance.

The death benefit scheme has been a source of great assistance to estates of deceased members, in that no fewer than 346 claims have been paid by the society during the quarter, involving the sum of £7,296. This brings the total claims paid to 14,325, representing £93,330.

In the dairy department the quantity of milk dealt with in the period under review was 472,995 gallons, which was an increase of 13,779 gallons over the corresponding quarter.

Extensions to the city stores are now being proceeded with, having been rendered necessary in order to cope with the expanding business in all departments. Plans for new branch premises to serve the requirements of the Stanstead area are also under consideration. Progress is being made with the erection of a central boot repair factory at Broughton-lane which, when completed, will be in a position to deal expeditiously and efficiently with all boot and shoe repairs.

THE CONSUMERS' SPOKESMAN.

MR. ALEXANDER'S RECORD.

THE MEMBER for Hillborough (the Right Hon. A. V. Alexander) has kept the Government, besides pretty well the trade union movement, pretty well engaged in replying to his many criticisms of their maladministration, and created a record in the speeches he has delivered. The parliamentary report, "Hansard," shows that he has spoken 132 columns during the parliamentary session December 3rd to April 9th last. The speeches of other runners-up only fill seventy to eighty columns.

FOOTWEAR FOR GENTS AND BOYS.

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SANCTIONS OR SURRENDER?

MUSSOLINI'S impudent declaration of the annexation of Abyssinia has had an effect which he could hardly have contemplated. It has brought to members of the League a more realistic understanding of the issue involved. Instead of weakening the demand for the retention of sanctions, Mussolini's action has rallied the forces standing for collective security.

The Labour Party declares that Mussolini's proclamation cannot be regarded as ending the Italy-Abyssinia affair, and that the issue between Italy and the League remains unaltered. That issue is whether the League and the whole system of security based on collective action against an aggressor is to be wrecked by a Fascist dictator who has seen fit to defy the League. To such a challenge there can be only one answer if civilisation is to be saved from disaster. Sanctions against the aggressor must be maintained and intensified until the authority of the League is vindicated.

It is satisfactory to note that at the opening meeting of the Council of the League a decision was unanimously reached, which, in effect, refuses to recognise Italy's claim to Abyssinia. The Council ignored Bacon Alet's theatrical protest against the presence of the representative of Abyssinia at the Council table. The discussion on removing or increasing sanctions is postponed for a month. When the question comes to be dealt with a month hence, a new French Government will be in power with a majority of the "Left," whose League policy is in line with that of the British Labour Party.

Meanwhile, sanctions are to continue, and it is significant that in spite of the demand of a section of the Government's supporters for the withdrawal of sanctions and the recognition of Mussolini's ill-gotten "victory," the pressure of public opinion has created a counter-demand by the M.P.s for the "main-tenance of collective sanctions against the aggressor State." There can be no question that an overwhelming majority of the British people are strongly in favour of the fullest possible application of a real League policy as they were when they condemned the Government's approval of the Hoare-Laval "peace" proposals.

Between now and the next meeting of the Council of the League the British Government will have to make up its mind where it stands on this vital question. Mr. Leon Blum, the Socialist leader, who will be head of the new French Government, has made it clear that his Government will be a loyal supporter of the League and will not recognise the "fait accompli" in Abyssinia. This will deprive the British Government of the excuse that it could not carry out an effective sanctions policy because of the obstruction of France.

The choice facing the League is between sanctions or surrender to the aggressor. Italy must not be allowed to reap the fruits of her aggression. Failure to uphold the authority of the League would send the world back into a state of anarchy and inevitable war—not because the system of collective security is wrong, but because the members of the League had not the courage to make it operate effectively.

CO-OPERATION AND PARLIAMENT.

MARKETING AND OTHER LEGISLATION.

CONSUMER INTERESTS DISREGARDED.

THE Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Group, representing every section of the co-operative movement, was appointed to watch the interests of co-operators and the consumers generally on all legislation and statutory rules and orders. The committee has just issued its annual report in which it shows that—

THE CORPORATE STATE.

"At no time since the early days of the Great War has the interest of the consumer been more disregarded than to-day.

"Whilst the Industrial Reorganisation (Hawthorn) Bill has not, up to the present, made any progress, the curtailment of monopolies, whole or partial, protected by licensing systems is proceeding apace, and the continuation of this policy will inevitably lead to political decisions of what is usually termed the 'Corporate State.'"

FOOD TAXES.

Food taxes in many forms and the working of the various marketing schemes have caused a good deal of work for the committee. The pig marketing and bacon marketing schemes have been amended, and the changes are not satisfactory to the Parliamentary Committee.

Opposition to arrangements for a flat rate for the transport of pigs resulted in the new offer made by the Bacon Marketing Board for the current year, which although altogether not satisfactory, definitely excludes pork pigs from being compulsorily subject to the flat rate.

The Parliamentary Committee also made a big effort to secure satisfactory arrangements under the bacon development scheme, which came into operation in October, 1935.

COMBINE'S DOMINATION.

In spite of all efforts the bacon development scheme was approved by the Minister of Agriculture, and the committee therefore took steps to organise co-operative opposition at the statutory meeting of registered bacon carvers called to approve the amended scheme to Parliament. As a result of the committee's action the movement was well represented at the statutory meeting, and the secretary (the Rt. Hon. A. V. Alexander, M.P.), together with representatives of societies, voiced the co-operative case.

The first vote on the scheme was very close, but it was subsequently carried by a majority through the use of the proxies and the strong voting power of the combine.

The scheme was, unfortunately, approved by Parliament, and the Development Board commenced its operations in October, 1935. Serious difficulties were at once experienced, applications from both the Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society for licences for extended production being refused, although licences were granted to other interests. A deputation representing the Parliamentary Committee and the Wholesale Societies waited upon the Minister of Agriculture and the Secretary of State for Scotland on February 19th. Some amelioration of the position has since been obtained.

THE FORGOTTEN CONSUMER.

The need for specific representation of the consumer has been stressed in evidence before the Milk Reorganisation Commission of Great Britain, and the regulation of the marketing of eggs and poultry in England and Scotland has been expressed for a similar reason.

Opposition to the sugar industry reorganisation in the House of Commons was organised by the committee, who describe the registration of sugar refiners and the regulation of new entrants into the industry as

a specific instance of growth towards a Corporate State.

The only success that resulted from the opposition up to date is that it undoubtedly prevented the original scheme for imposing a levy upon the consumer of 2s. 4d. per cwt. from coming into effect.

INCOME TAX AGAIN.

In the last report attention was drawn to the steps taken by the Parliamentary Committee to secure a discussion on an amendment to repeal Section 31 of the Finance Act, 1933, which was the clause imposing additional taxation upon co-operative societies. It was made quite clear that there was no way of getting a vote on the question of co-operative societies and income tax, except on the initiative of the Government, and consideration was therefore given to a suggestion that the question should be referred to in the Labour Party's resolution amendment on the second reading of the Finance Bill for the year 1935. This course, however, proved impracticable, and an amendment to the Finance Bill was drafted providing for the payment of tax at half the normal rate, but only to the misunderstandings which might have been created the executive committee eventually felt that this proposal could not be agreed to.

TRADE BOARDS URGED.

A deputation from the Parliamentary Committee and the Co-operative Union Executive waited upon the Minister of Labour in March, 1935, when a detailed statement was submitted showing the difference between co-operative wages and those of competitors, instancing many and widespread cases of sweated wages and long hours, and pressing the necessity for immediate action on the lines of the Trade Board Act.

The Minister of Labour is calling a series of conferences with representatives of the distributive trade to discuss generally the question of employment in the industry, and the committee understands that the co-operative movement will be consulted and that the question of distributive wages and conditions, &c., will be included in the subject matter of these consultations.

NUMEROUS STATUTORY RULES AND ORDERS.

Numerous other items dealt with by the report include the Road Traffic Acts, various import duties, Coal Mines Acts, bacon import restrictions, Cattle Industry (Emergency Provisions) Acts, most import restrictions, potato import restrictions, Merchandise Marks Act, milk for schoolchildren, the national mark, and the duty on ivory, the Unemployment Assistance Board, the Pharmacy and Poisons Act, 1933, and Sunday trading restrictions were also considered by the committee.

FOOD COUNCIL.

The report recounts the negotiations with the Food Council in regard to bread prices, retail cream prices, and the costs of milk distribution, and concludes with an account of the proceedings in regard to the 1935-1936 milk contract.

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BIRMINGHAM'S HOUSING SHORTAGE.

FAILURE OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

BIRMINGHAM has a big 'tory majority on its City Council. A report presented to the Council reveals that housing progress has been seriously checked since the Council, in obedience to the lead given by the "National" Government, landed the building of working-class houses over to private enterprise.

The number of applications for houses on the Corporation register is nearly 27,000. The report states that, apart from the demand created by them, there is an immediate need for 7,500 houses.

Out of an annual requirement of 2,538 dwellings of the type previously provided by the Corporation only 1,546 were built last year by private enterprise.

A comprehensive survey of the needs of the city showed that while slum clearance orders obtained involved the prospective demolition of 5,000 houses, alternative accommodation is not yet available for a considerable proportion of the people concerned.



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PRIVATE TRADE IN ARMS.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE ENDORSES LABOUR'S CASE.

"WHEN in 1914 it came to the need for increasing our supply of munitions on an enormous scale, private firms broke down completely," said Mr. Lloyd George in his evidence before the Arms Commission on May 6th. He produced general agreement by expressing his written opinion in favour of the Arms case made by Mr. Noel Baker, corroborated by Dr. Addison, for the monopoly of the manufacture of arms.

Among the reasons given by Mr. Lloyd George for advocating the abolition of private manufacture was the existence of powerful vested interests whose property depends on war preparations. He instanced the enormous increase, amounting to tens of millions in a few weeks, in the value of Government shares on the intimation of the Government's rearmament programme.

After quoting instances of the propaganda engaged in by private armaments interests prior to 1914, Mr. Lloyd George referred to the failure of private enterprise to cope with the situation when the war came.

"It is a lamentable story of failure," he said. "Dr. Addison has given you striking figures of the promises and performances of the first few months of war. No one who peruses them will fail to realise why we were not only unable for nearly two years to make any attack on the German trenches without appalling losses due to the lack of artillery and high explosives; our troops had not enough ammunition to defend themselves by retreating upon the enemy's guns."

STATE CONTROL SAVED THE SITUATION.

Mr. Lloyd George added that while private firms were failing to execute orders for the British Government, they were actually accepting orders from Russia, and not even an appreciable percentage of the obligations undertaken were discharged.

"When the Government took in hand the organisation of all our engineering resources for the production of munitions," he said, "we had no difficulty in securing the fullest co-operation and the largest output under complete Government control."

Further evidence in support of State ownership and control was given by Capt. J. G. H. Llewellyn, R.N. (retired), who for ten years was Inspector of Naval Ordnance at Woolwich. He said:

"It is often stated that private enterprise can produce more cheaply than State enterprise. That is not true. Woolwich Arsenal can and does produce at costs below the trade. The price per pound of State-produced cordite would astonish trade producers. Many millions have been saved in past years."

"Private monopoly is a decided disadvantage. So complete is the monopoly in heavy armour-piercing shells that the manufacturers can dictate their wills."

Replying to a member of the Commission, Captain Llewellyn said that private firms often made use of Government designs and then manufactured arms and sold them to foreign countries.

On the following day evidence was given by Mr. R. Stevenson on behalf of the Foreign Office. He made it clear that the Government's views on this question have not changed since Britain, Italy, and Japan, by their refusal to agree to the American proposal for international supervision of the armaments trade, destroyed the hope of securing an agreement at Geneva. The Government still defends private manufacture, and advocates a convention for the control of the manufacture and export of arms, and for ensuring publicity.

Even more emphatic was the evidence given by Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey (Secretary to the Cabinet and to the Committee of Imperial Defence) on May 8th. The gist of his evidence was that the prohibition of private manufacture and trade in arms would be disastrous to imperial defence; that in any case it was out of the question when the country was in the throes of a great rearmament programme, and that the case for it had not been established.

POST-HASTE.

Millions of letters, postcards, and parcels are being handled by the Post Office each year. Glad news and bad news reaches the most remote parts of this little country of ours through the postal services. The letter posted a few hundred miles away reaches its destination, perhaps a house in a great city; perhaps a farmstead perched high on a hillside. Telephone bells ring incessantly from morning till night. Telegrams by the thousand convey emergency messages. The Post Office, years ago a monopoly of the Duke of York, is now an important department of State facilitating industrial and social relations. There are some 247,500 workers engaged by the Post Office in hundreds of different jobs ranging from sorting assistants and "Hello" girls to highly-skilled professional workers, such as architects, solicitors, and engineers. Important as the organisation is, and large as the staff it employs is, there are fewer postal workers than co-operative employees. Even 1934 saw 284,445 co-operative employees as compared with the 247,500 in the Post Office—a difference of 49,000. The co-operative wages bill was larger than that of the Post Office for the year 1935 by about £3,000,000.

MAN CAUGHT STEALING FROM HIMSELF!

DROSSMAN! you exclaim. It sounds impossible, but it is true, nevertheless. Every consumer who lives in a town that has a co-operative store but still patronises a private business man is stealing from himself.

NEW CO-OPERATIVE INSTITUTE AT WISEWOOD

OPENED BY MR. ALEXANDER.

COUNCILLOR J. H. Bingham presided at the opening of the new social centre for co-operators, when the Right Hon. A. V. Alexander, M.P., performed the opening ceremony.

Mr. Alexander said he hoped that the co-operators in the district would use the building for educational, social, and propaganda purposes, and that the effect would be to bring increased trade and new members to the trading department adjoining. This was one of the joy days, and marked the beginning of a new period of cultural development. He saw a great deal of the problems as well as the achievements of societies; and the education side some special largely in providing halls that become white elephants. In Sheffield they had a mixed experience, but he trusted they would all be able to look back on this day as a beginning of a new development of co-operative consciousness on the Wisewood estate. To the women there he said that they might easily be providing from their own ranks some public member for the service of the community for the future. As an instance of the interest co-operators were taking in national affairs, he gave the case of a Government inquiry set up to examine the Minister of Labour's cost of living figures. The movement had been asked to nominate a suitable woman, and Mr. Alexander had had pleasure in sending the name of Alderman (Mrs.) Gansley (Women's Guild, and director, London Co-operative Society)—a society, which had a trade of £13,000,000 per annum. Mrs. Gansley was just a working-class housewife, but she had been trained in the guild and co-operative movement, and could be relied on to represent the housewife's point of view effectively.

Mr. Alexander commended the institute to the safe keeping of the enthusiastic band of people present, and hoped that the time would soon come when the room would need enlargement. Mrs. N. Wood (institute secretary) moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Alexander and to the Right Hon. Bingham, and to the secretary and president of the society's education committee, for all they had done. More than 100 guests sat down to tea, and afterwards an enjoyable social was held, the "Mixers" providing an excellent concert.

"OUR CIRCLE" MONTHLY - ONE PENNY

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CO-OPERATIVE TRADING.

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL SOCIETY'S MAINTAINED PROGRESS.

MAINTAINED all-round progress is reported by the Sheffield and Ecclesall Co-operative Society Ltd., as a result of the trading operations for the quarter ended May 2nd, 1906.

Sales of £341,619 are an increase of £23,614 on the corresponding period of a year ago (equal to nearly 7 per cent.), and have produced a new and record annual business figure of £1,283,376. Members' share capital exceeds by £50,000 the total at the end of the first quarter of last year, and now amounts to £169,858. A slightly increased number of penny bank depositors, who now total 15,284, have to their credit £41,997, or £2,907 more than a year ago. Membership of the society now stands at 52,349, and includes 1,072 new members admitted during the quarter. Dairy sales for the thirteen weeks, 377,502 gallons, are an increase of 20,090 gallons over the corresponding quarter, while the output of pasteurised milk for the year of fifty-three weeks is 1,437,707 gallons, equivalent to more than 12,000,000 pint bottles.

During the quarter the society's confectionery department has been installed in its newly-erected, modern, and hygienic bakery on the Archer-road site, while, nearby, the dairy department has secured the use of a much-needed extension. Various branch developments and alterations to the central premises are proceeding satisfactorily.

The society has just repaid to members of its 44d. holiday and clothing club more than £13,000, comprising small weekly deposits, plus interest. This is in addition to the £70,000 repaid to 31d. club members last November.

Full particulars of the quarter's trading operations will be found in the two-hundred-and-forty-ninth quarterly report just issued. The election of officers takes place by ballot voting on Saturday, June 13th, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., at The Arcade and city branches, and from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Dronfield, Hathersage, Bradwell, and Totley. The following retire, but are eligible for re-election: President, Mr. W. Buckley. Committee of Management: Messrs. W. Moulton, G. Horn, A. Briddon, Alderman F. Marshall, M.P., J.P., and Mr. T. Colley. Auditor: Mr. W. Bashforth, F.C.A. Education Committee: Messrs. G. W. Evison, A. Walton, and H. Ward.

The result of the election will be declared at the annual meeting to be held in the Education Institute, Napier-street, on the following Tuesday, June 16th, at 7.30 p.m.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

LABOUR'S POINT OF VIEW.

IN the House of Commons on April 30th Mr. Arthur Greenwood whilst welcoming, on behalf of the Labour Party, the Government's Bill for establishing an adequate service of midwives and trained midwives, presented maternity service, and criticised the limited character of the present scheme. Stressing the fact that childbirth is at present more dangerous than the most dangerous occupations, he pointed out that the Bill under consideration was little more than a slight extension of the existing law, making it easier for local authorities to carry out powers which they already possess, and suggested that after the experimentation of past years, the time had now arrived not for small piecemeal measures but for a far-flung comprehensive policy.

In the case of rearmament," he said, "the Government are thinking in terms of an additional expenditure of £50,000,000, but in this problem they are thinking in terms of peace. From 1931 to 1932, the expenditure on the Navy has been increased from £50,000,000 to £50,000,000 a year. All that the Bill offers . . . is that the total additional expenditure of the authorities may ultimately amount to approximately £20,000 per annum. That is a very significant contribution to a great constructive service, compared with the willingness with which money on the one hand, gentlemen spend in the case of rearmament."

Discussing the measure of the problem, Mr. Greenwood reminded the House that 3,000 mothers are dying every year in England and Wales and that half of these deaths are preventable. That excellent work done by certain local authorities proved that the problem could be dealt with. In the Labour borough of West Ham, the maternal death-rate was only half what it was in the rest of the country. In the East End Maternity Hospital, there had been in the seven years from 1921 to 1928 17,500 confinements, and the death-rate was only .68 per 1,000—less than one-sixth of the average rate for the country.

"That malnutrition is in some areas an important factor in maternal mortality had been proved," said Mr. Greenwood, "by authoritative investigation undertaken by the Departmental Committee on Maternal Mortality and by many local medical officers of health. He developed the Labour view that expectant mothers should be properly fed; that ante-natal care should be extended; that the provision of maternity hospitals within the means of working-class housewives should be increased; that the services of the midwife should be supplemented by those of skilled gynaecologists; and that home help should be provided as a natural corollary to the midwifery service. "We shall never banish the graver social evils," he concluded, "unless we show the same enthusiasm, the same pitiful spirit, the same generosity for the constructive social services as we are prepared to do in such full measure when it comes to the destructive agencies of war."

THIS PRONUNCIATION BUSINESS.

PADDY (visiting a store in town): "I would like a toy." "This way, sir!" Shop Assistant. Paddy through warehouse to toy department.

"What kind of toy would the gentleman prefer?"

Paddy: "Toy! Sure, a toy for me neck, plash other here ye?"

TO THE LETTER.

As the old vergie was becoming respectful, a churchwarden undertook to speak to him.

"Mr. Blank, twice lately you've forgotten your keys, and several times have left the pews dirty and undusted. Unless you mind your keys and pews we'll have to find a new vergie."

FOOD RESTRICTION POLICY.

A TORY PAPER TELLS ITS READERS ABOUT IT.

THE "Morning Post," a consistent supporter of the "National" Government's tariff policy, contained the following news story on May 4th, which we reproduce without comment:

An acute shortage of fish in London on Saturday caused the closing of a large number of fish shops and restaurants early in the evening.

In certain districts many poor people were unable to obtain their usual evening meal.

A prominent member of the retail fish trade told a "Morning Post" representative yesterday that the sudden shortage was the climax to events which had been increasingly felt for three weeks.

Prices of many kinds of fish had been from 30 to 40 per cent higher on the average than is usual at this time of year, and on Saturday there was a further big jump.

Flour, for instance, rose from 12s. a stone to about 18s. Turbot and Dover sole were practically unobtainable, while the quality generally was very poor. A large proportion of the supplies on sale were taken from cold storage. "Unless the situation improves considerably," the retailer stated, "a much more serious problem will arise when these supplies, laid up during a low price period, are exhausted."

BEST FISH FROM ABROAD.

The shortage was attributed by the retailer to Government restrictions on imports of foreign fish, and to the collapse of an important fishing fleet a short time ago. This fleet brought fish direct from the Dogger Bank to London, and since it ceased operations all supplies have been taken from coast ports.

Britain, he said, was practically dependent on imported fish. If all imports were stopped, one fish shop in every three would be forced to close.

All the best quality fish came from abroad, such as haddock from Norway, and the British fisherman could not supply the home demand because he was unable to go sufficiently far afield. There was a strong feeling, the retailer said, that the Government should modify the restrictions on foreign fish so as to bring prices down to a more reasonable level.

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"THE MILLICENT," which costs sixpence, and beats the magazine at a shilling. Order it at your co-operative or stationer, or railway bookstall.

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Manufactured by the Makers of the "ASHFIELD" BRAND Hosiery and Underwear

The Kirkby-in-Ashfield Co-operative Manufacturers Limited, Byron Street, East Kirkby, Notts.

Are you a Member of a Rambling Club?

IF NOT, WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO JOIN US.

The advantages of a rambling club are:—

- (1) The club assists in preserving Rights of Way and a proper respect for the countryside.
- (2) It tabulates the by-paths, beauty spots, places for catering, natural water supplies for "al fresco" meals.
- (3) It secures special permission to traverse prohibited areas.
- (4) It places at the service of every member experience and knowledge of the countryside gathered over a period of years.
- (5) Fellowship with lovers of the countryside.

The Sheffield Co-operative Rambling Club was established in 1910, and is affiliated to the Sheffield Ramblers' Federation. The club provides picnic stoves and kettles, and supplies tea at the low cost of 1d. per member.

WALK AND KEEP FIT.

"The Sheffield Co-operative Ramblers' 1936 Syllabus" is now on sale, price 1s. The syllabus contains a weekly programme of rambles for the whole year round, in addition to rambles arranged for Bank Holidays, &c., and is illustrated by photographs of beauty spots to be visited. Purchase of syllabus includes membership of the club.

Why not spend Whiteautumnide hiking in our glorious countryside? Syllabuses can be obtained from: Mr. Shearman, 204, Hatfield House-lane; Mr. Sillitoe, 105, Bellhouse-road; Mr. A. Wood, 13, Hillsborough-place; Mr. Orndale, 54, Kendal-road; Mr. S. Dickinson, 99, Walkley Bank-road; Mr. Hall, 19, Lozdale-road; Mr. Taylor, 23, Studfield-crescent; Mr. Wells, 22, Beal-street; Mr. Burley, 32, Stanwood-avenue; Miss Ladlow, 221, Whitehouse-lane; Miss Hampton, 88, Hoole-street; or the Co-operative Party Office, 17, Bank-street.

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DAINTY WEAR for the Kiddies

Little girl's Coat and Hat set in good quality Crest Coat. Trim. Tightly tailored style, shaped waist. Inverted pleat at back. Coat is fully lined. **18/11**

Dainty flowered Georgette Frock with Silk Under-rop. Embroidered with a pink-edged trim at neck and tucked skirt. **10/11**

Good Quality Flannel Blazers

right for either boys or girls. Double Breasted. Chromium buttons. In Navy, Brown, Green, Wine, and Scarlet. **2/11 1/2**



SMART ACCESSORIES

Smart Bag in real leather, chromium fittings. Divided inner pocket and outer. **4/11**
New and smart—Two-toned Doublet Crozier in Tulle. **2/11 1/2**
Finest quality Cape Glove with smart garter in beige & black **3/11 1/2**

FOOTWEAR

Ladies' Brown Wilton Calf Toe with Perforated Vamp. Also in Brown Suede & Black Box Calf. Sizes 2 and Half. Sizes 3 to 7. **10/11**

Ladies' Maroon Brown Glace Kid Court Shoes. Fancy Perforated Vamp. 2 1/2" Heel and Half Sizes. 2 to 8. **10/11**

Men's Brown Wilton Oxford Cap. Welled. Plain Stitched Cap. Smart Toe. Sizes and Half. Sizes. 6 to 17. **11/9**

Also in Black Box Calf at **12/11**

Black Box Glace Cap. smart leather soles **6/6**

17 to 17 1/2 8 1/2 to 5 8 1/2. Also with Italian Soles and Heels. Also in Tan, leather sole.

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DEPARTMENT

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MEN'S SPORTS COATS, Plain styles. Choose your very coat from the most varied selection of styles and cloths in Sheffield. Pocket and Patch Pockets and the new Pleated Back Prices from **14/6**
From **17/6**

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MEN'S ART SILK SHIRTS, plain, stripes, or checked. **10/6, 8/11, 7/11, 6/11, 5/11, 4/11, 3/11**
TENNIS SHIRTS **7/11, 6/11, 4/11, 3/11**
WEEK-END SHIRTS, with check **7/11, 6/11, 5/11, 4/11**
MEN'S UNDERWEAR, Smart weight **5/11, 4/11, 3/11, 2/11, 1/11**
BRACH SHIRTS **7/6**
SWIM SUITS **10/6, 8/11, 7/11, 6/6, 4/11, 3/11**
SLIPOVERS **10/6 to 2/11**

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