

JUNE, 1937.

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I ACCUSE MISTER BALDWIN

By HAMILTON FYFE

PRIME MINISTER BALDWIN is retiring amid a shower of bouquets. Even those who threw bricks at him not long since now prate about his "sterling services," his "sterling character." Yet the flowers seem artificial, the praise perfunctory.

Since the bulk of our Press fell under the control of men who take a purely commercial view of it, and prefer working up mass hysteria to creating sound public opinion, it overdoes everything. Its flattery of Baldwin is insincere. Into no newspaper office could you go without hearing from men who have closely followed his career and studied him personally the view that he is probably the feeblest Prime Minister Britain ever had.

These critics would add, probably: "But he's a decent chap and means well." And that would put the finishing touch to their portrait of a failure. The severest judgment Dante passed on any of the wretches punished in his Inferno was contained in those terrible lines:

"Heaven will have none of them, and even Hell itself spews them forth, for the wicked would glory over them."

They had been neither one thing nor the other. They had taken no side openly and firmly. They had meant well, but were without the courage and determination to do well. They were, in fact, Baldwins.

BROKEN PROMISES.

Let me justify this grave charge. (1) Six years ago I heard him in the Albert Hall, London, speak on the League of Nations. Macdonald, then Prime Minister, and Lloyd George spoke also. Baldwin's speech sounded the most genuine of the three.

Yet Baldwin broke up the League of Nations. Not only refused to allow it to be used, as its author intended—for the protection of the weak; but flouted it by making a naval agreement with Germany outside its provisions, by letting his Foreign Minister throw mud in its face when he proposed to buy off the Italian thief whom the League had been threatening, and by declaring that no system of collective security could, in his opinion, work.

(2) In May, 1935, he told the House of Commons he was resolutely determined that in the projected expansion of the Air Force no scope should be given for profiteering. Yet nothing was done. Aviation company shares continued to rise.

He made the same promise when the League scheme of disarmament was brought forward. That promise was broken like the first.

(3) He undertook in 1929, when the Labour Government accepted office, that he should be no factious opposition. But, says Lord Snell, who was in Parliament at the time, "while a few of the Tory Front Bench occupants deserted, backed by the press, interviews were encouraged perpetually to snarl and snarl at the Government's heels." Encouraged, mark you!

(4) In May, 1926, at the end of the General Strike, he said on the radio: "Can't you trust me to give the miners a straight deal?" He also gave an undertaking that there should be no victimisation.

He let the miners down shamefully, and many employers treated



Photo: "Reynolds News."

his pledge to the workers with contempt.

(5) In 1924 the Federation of British Industries wanted him through the Cunliffe Commission that a return to the Gold Standard would raise the value of the pound sterling by 10 per cent, cause a fall in prices and Labour troubles through lowering of wages, increase the burden of debt. Yet in 1925 Baldwin agreed to the Gold Standard being restored.

All the consequences which had been predicted followed. The rich were made richer, the poor poorer by what Keynes, the economist, called "rapid and cold-blooded deflation." Although he was an industrialist himself, by descent, at any rate, he took the side of the Money Kings because he knew their power—and did not dare to stand their power—and do up to them.

(6) In May one year he said in the House of Commons that he knew

"the Labour Party stood in their heart of hearts for our Constitution and our free Parliament. . . . The Labour Party as a whole have helped to keep the flag of Parliamentary government flying in the world through the difficult periods through which we have passed."

In December of the same year he wrote:

"The Labour Party remains a party which would attack our social system at the roots, destroy the fabric of the Constitution, and seek to bring

the country to a ruthless Socialism through crisis and chaos."

DECEIVING ELECTORATE.

Examples of his saying one thing and doing another, or saying one thing to-day and the opposite to-morrow, could be multiplied far beyond the limits of space allowed for this article. I have given enough to prove that on Mr. Baldwin's word, no man can rely.

He is, as a politician, exceedingly clever and entirely unscrupulous. No politician has ever before confessed to having deliberately deceived the electorate, as he confessed in the House of Commons that, during the elections of 1935, he carefully avoided mentioning his intention to introduce a huge scheme of rearmament, because he knew the electors were in no temper to support it.

He therefore confessed also that his diatribes about democracy were no better than hot air. He was returned to power on the understanding that he would seek peace and ease it. The League of Nations Union ballot had shown that the very nation wished him to stop on the way of collective security, support of the League, defence of weak countries against brutal aggression.

But as soon as he was in power again he threw over the League, he abandoned Abyssinia, he announced the spending of £1,500,000,000 on preparation for war. No boxer betrayal of democracy could be imagined.

Do not suppose, however, that I charge Mr. Baldwin with calculated bad faith. He would have been far better to meet us on a quemy if that would have been alleged against him. What makes him at once so slippery and so self-righteous is that he never in his life calculated anything.

Even when he made his very large contribution to national funds as a thank-offering for having escaped lightly during the war, he failed to reckon with the ship which it was certain Lloyd George's Government would cause—and he was a member of that Government. In a few years he was—for a man who had always been rich—very hard up.

In all the six examples of his double dealing which I have given, he was, I do not doubt, flabbiy desirous of supporting the League of Nations; putting a check on war material producers; giving the Labour Government a chance; giving the miners a straight deal; sparing our industries a heavy blow; telling the truth about the Labour Party.

But every time—and countless other times—his weak character collapsed under the strain of standing up to men of stronger will.

A TREASON WITH THE NAZIS.

The handling of our foreign affairs, which he made it impossible to say what British policy was and has gained credit for, is not the distrust only, but the evasion of other nations, but even the contempt of a narrow-minded, but obstinate, bureaucrat. Little as Mr. Baldwin likes Fascism, either in Italy or Hitlerism, he has gone to do his duty as the Prime Minister who made a

treaty with the Nazis, a gentleman's agreement with Mussolini, and even lent the murderers' mansion Franco support against the constitutional Spanish State.

DOES NOTHING.

Ask the man what they think of Baldwin, the man who said they could not stand up to the wops. Ask even the publicans, these faithful supporters of Toryism; their Defence League is no use for him. Ask Tories in Parliament, they welcome his departure, but bring more conspicuously a large "No" for any positive defect, but because he does nothing.

Burke said that "England expected a Government to govern." That is where Baldwin failed. He could not govern. He can preach all right. He can talk about the "forces of Satan being more conspicuously at large," and baw for "peace in our time." But he makes terms with Satan, and, as in his terrific cartoon, he strikes peace to the ground.

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WHO PAYS THE MOST TAXES?

Tories say the Rich, but actually You do!

That old fallacy that the rich carry all the burden of taxation dies hard.

It is the general idea, even among many housewives, who ought to know better, that those who pay income tax are doing all the paying for defence, social services, and Government.

Nothing of the kind!

On the contrary, the working people—the wage-earners—are the most heavily taxed section of the community.

You can prove it for yourself if you look at the facts.

Take the whole Budget remedy. Nearly half of those who pay income taxation—that is, the taxes the worker and his wife pay on sugar, tea, tobacco, beer, &c.

TAXED TO THE HILT.

Every pound of sugar, every quarter of corn, every pocket of Woodbines, and every half-packet of mild, as taxed as every one of those who pay income tax. Every pound of bacon, beef, and mutton weekly visit to the pictures—in fact nearly all the necessities and the few luxuries—the wage-earners can afford, are taxed, and taxed to the hilt.

Workers, too, are not all exempt from paying income tax. Since the late war—barring a large number of workers—especially single young men—pay a substantial proportion of their wages for income tax.

It has been estimated by experts that on the earned income of two men, one getting £100 a year or less than a year, and the other getting £1,000 a year, and nearly £5 a week, the £2 a week man pays 1.0 per cent. of his total income in taxation, while the £10 a week man pays 1 per cent. £50 a week the man on the starvation level pays a higher proportion of his income than the man on £20 a week!

THE PARLIAMENT OF CO-OPERATION UNITED TO BUILD A NEW WORLD

By T. W. MERCER

"The Bath Co-operative Congress meets at a time of world-wide disturbance and perplexity, and not even a bold man would attempt to forecast how and when the present state of flux will stabilise and shape. Was there ever a time when we had such an appalling paradox as the present rapid must expansion of the means of destruction running concurrently with a universal desire for goodwill and peace? The mind reels at the knowledge of nations armed to the teeth; yet the individuals making up those nations intuitively hunger for a sinner and more human relationship."

Extract from President Haskins' Address.

During Whit-Week the authentic voice of 8,000,000 British co-operators, who are building a new world and forging the future of democracy, was heard in the great Congress held at Bath. Spokeners of the co-operating millions were nearly 2,000 delegates drawn from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland.

NEW PEACE POLICY.

These militant delegates faced many stubborn problems in most determined fashion, and again and again declared by overwhelming majorities that no body within or without the co-operative movement will ever be permitted to break the movement's unity or put fetters on its steady progress towards the Co-operative Commonwealth.

The Congress approved the new Peace Policy of the Co-operative Party, manifested its strong will to unity in action with the Labour Party, and unanimously condemned the Government's policy

of increasing the power of private monopolies that take toll from the toiling and consuming millions of the nation.

Beginning with a declaration that the League of Nations must be made a firm bulwark against war and aggression, the policy provides for the promotion of contracts of like-minded nations within the framework of the League.

Such contracts will bind contracting nations to submit all disputes that may arise to be settled by peaceful means, while our own Government will be pressed to abolish private profit from the trade in armaments and not allow vested interests to make money gains from wholesale slaughter. This surely is a policy beneficial to all nations and injurious to none.

CO-OPS. AND LABOUR.

Long before then, if men are wise, all still outstanding differences between the Co-operative and Labour

parties will be settled by amicable discussion and adjustment.

Ample room for friendly negotiation is provided by the resolution endorsed by Congress, which, while firmly determined to uphold its own supreme authority, again and again declared its strong will to unity with the national Labour Party.

Congress later decided that ardent youth shall have greater opportunities of rising to high office in the co-operating movement and of formulating its national policy; and demanded closer co-ordination of all the movement's productive agencies.

It pledged itself to increase the power of the Co-operative Press, to enlarge "Reynolds" ever-growing circulation, and to demand trade boards for all the many retail trades.

BOARD AGE-LIMIT.

Outstanding were debates on the proposed age-limit, for members of the Central Board of the Co-operative Union; the co-ordination of co-operative production; the movement's new foreign policy; and the political orientation of co-operation throughout the coming year.

The net results of these discussions is that the age-limit for members of the Central Board of the Co-operative Union is fixed at sixty-eight; that impartial inquiry will be made into the present position and future organisation of all forms of co-operative production; and that the whole movement is pledged to support a realistic peace policy.

INSPIRING MEETINGS.

President E. G. Haskins' opening address was forthright and outspoken, a challenge to complacent co-operators who imagine all is well because their movement is always progressing.

M. Victor Savoy's advocacy of international co-operation, and Canon Stuart Morris' impassioned appeal for complete national and industrial resistance to war, were both cogent and inspiring; and throughout the week the big happenings of the great Congress occurred outside the Congress Hall.

It is not untrue to say that the big meetings of the Congress were the Co-operative Party demonstration, the United Guilds' demonstration, and the propaganda meeting of the Co-operative Press.

These meetings were inspiring. Long queues waited to gain admission, and hundreds stood because all the seats were full.

They expressed the insurgent spirit of co-operation's rank and file, highly resolved that the Commonwealth shall be established in our time.

MOVING LEFTWARD.

My own impression, formed as I sat in the Congress Hall, is that the co-operative movement is moving definitely towards the Left. I do not say, of course, that the Red Flag will soon be hoisted over every co-operative store, but a dozen straws show in what direction the winds of thought are blowing now.

The Leftward movement may be slow, but it is certain, sure, and inescapable.

It is significant that the Congress ranged its millions behind the miners who are fighting for the right to organise at Harworth, and showed its sympathy with the people of Spain by contributing £125 to a collection made on the spot in aid of Spanish relief.

FORWARD, YOUTH!

Young men and women who now

fill the presidential chairs of big co-operative organisations have swayed themselves from Liberalism, and are burning to establish the Co-operative Commonwealth in our time and without undue delay.

They are the men and women who will be the leaders and builders of tomorrow, and their progress along the



Mr. R. A. PALMER
(General Secretary, Co-operative Union Limited.)

path to democratic leadership and power will be accelerated by the decision of Congress that most soon place many veteran leaders on the retired lists of the Central Board.

True it is that Sir Fred Hayward, Mr. Neil Beaton, Mr. Alfred Barnes, Mr. A. V. Alexander, Mr. J. J. Worley, and half-a-dozen other leaders of to-day maintained their mastery, and once again demonstrated their powers of leadership.

Mr. A. W. Cox, of Bristol, Mr. Tom Williams, of the C.W.S., Mr. R. G. Godling, of London, Mr. Harold Taylor, of Kettering, and Mr. H. J. Twigg, of Manchester, in my opinion, are among the movement's coming men. To them can be added a dozen more young men and women who are bound to count more largely in the years to come.

Attacks upon the movement by the Government and its opponents in the world of trade and industry are bound to produce results, and the Bath Congress made it plain that the young generation of co-operators is more than ready to repel assaults.

HAPPY PAGEANTRY.

Bath Congress will linger in my memory because of its debating and decisions, and because it presented to the delighted citizens a beautiful Co-operative Queen, who is sure to have a long series of successors, and a proud co-operative shop assistant who is to-day custodian of the first silver cup award by the Co-operative Wholesale Society to co-operation's most brilliant window-dresser.

These additions to the long Congress programme are not items of small importance.

They are symbols of the movement's increasing power, evidence that co-operation also at last realises the supreme value of youth and juvenescence.

When the most eloquent speech made at the Bath Congress is dead and quite forgotten, Bath itself will glory in its possession.

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HEARD IN THE HOUSE

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

POTATOES.

Mr. T. Henderson asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been drawn to the views expressed by the Food Council in their annual report that the serious reduction of acreage under potatoes in 1926, as against 1931, makes it advisable to £5 per acre on plantings in excess of each producer's basic acreage; and whether he proposes to take any action thereon?

Mr. Morrison: I am aware that the acreage under potatoes in Great Britain in the last three years has declined from the exceptionally high figure of 1931, when producers' prices were very low. The aggregate of the acreage of producers registered under the Potato Marketing Scheme is 646,000 acres, an area more than sufficient, with an average yield of 120 tons per acre, for the production of normal requirements of home-produced potatoes. I have no doubt that the Potato Marketing Board will give due consideration to the views recently expressed by the Food Council in regard to this matter when considering their policy for the current year.

Mr. A. V. Alexander: Is not the Minister aware that included in the present acreage is land which is being used by farmers for other purposes, and will he tell us why, if there is a shortage, other people who are willing to grow potatoes should not be allowed to do so?

Mr. Morrison: I do not admit that there is a shortage. (Hon. Members: "Oh.") I would point out to the House that the yield of potatoes is more important than the acreage. The figures of acreage do not give a proper picture of what is taking place. If the right hon. Gentleman desires, I will send him the acreage and tonnage figures for recent years, and I think he will find that the same acreage has now a very different yield.

Mr. Alexander: Is the Minister not aware that King Edward potatoes are being charged for at £10 per ton, and that many of the poorer classes of people cannot buy potatoes?

BACON (IMPORTS AND PRICES).

Mr. W. Green asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the opinion expressed in the recently-published report of the Food Council that sufficient latitude should be allowed in regulating imports of bacon to prevent sudden or undue rises in prices which could check consumption; and whether, in view of the present high prices, he will take early steps to revise the present basis of the regulation of imports?

Dr. Barrin: My right hon. Friend is aware of the opinion expressed by the Food Council, with which the present arrangements for regulating imports of bacon are not in conflict. As regards the present level of prices, I would refer to the reply I made to the hon. Member for Consett (Mr. David Adams) on February 24th.

HOUSE COAL (PRICE).

Mr. Shinwell asked the Secretary for Mines the average price of household coal for the month of March, 1931, and the comparable figure for March of 1926 and 1925, respectively?

Captain Crookshank: I have not the necessary data to calculate average prices, but the level of the retail price of house coal in Central London was generally 7s. per ton higher in March, 1931, than in March, 1926, when it showed an increase of 1s. per ton over the previous March.

Mr. Shinwell: Is the hon. and gallant Member aware that I am paying 4s. 6d. a ton extra for coal of the same quality since the beginning of this year?

Captain Crookshank: I am very sorry to hear that, but the hon. Member asked for average prices, and average prices include some which are above the average and some which are below.

FOODSTUFFS (RETAIL PRICES).

Mr. Shinwell asked the President of the Board of Trade whether the attention of the Food Council has been directed to the increase in the retail price of foodstuffs; and whether it is proposed to take any action in the matter?

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Mr. Runciman: The retail prices of foodstuffs are under constant observation both by the Food Council and the Government, and, in so far as Government action to safeguard the interests of consumers is at any time necessary and practicable, it will be taken. Mr. Shinwell: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in recent weeks there has been a rapid increase, and does he propose to advise the Food Council to take prompt action in the matter?

Mr. Runciman: The two most important items in the Food Council's returns are wheat and tea, and both of these are subject to world markets, over which we have no control.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE REVENUE.

Mr. E. Smith asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury the estimated amounts in Customs and Excise revenue per head of the population of Great Britain for the year ended March, 1926, in respect of food, drink, and tobacco?

Lieut. Colonel Cavell: The estimated amounts of taxation in Customs and Excise revenue per head of the population of Great Britain for the year ended March 31st, 1926, in respect of food, drink, and tobacco were as follows:—

| | |
|---|---------|
| Food (including tea, coffee, and cocoa) | £ s. d. |
| Drink (alcoholic liquors, table waters, and fruit juices) | 15 6 |
| Tobacco | 2 5 7 |
| | 1 12 3 |

CO-OPERATIVE HELP FOR SPAIN SHEFFIELD'S PART

THE co-operative movement throughout the country, and indeed throughout the world, has responded magnificently to the appeal for assistance for our Spanish comrades. £50,000 has been contributed through the Co-operative Union fund. A further appeal has been issued on behalf of the Basque children, and co-operative societies are again responding by substantial grants. In addition to the official grants, the local Co-operative Parties, guilds, and 'Comrades' Circles in many cases have themselves organised collections of food, clothing, and money.

Sheffield has not been behind in this matter. The two co-operative societies have both made grants. The Co-operative Party has worked in collaboration with the Trades and Labour Council's house-to-house collection, through which, along with donations, £102 17s. was raised.

The Central Co-operative Guild have been particularly active, having not only raised £50 in cash, but also sent substantial supplies of food and clothing to the Youth Fellowship Committee. They are now organising a Spanish exhibition to acquire further funds for the relief of the Spanish people. This exhibition has been held in London for some time, and contains Spanish works of art, relics of the Civil War, &c.



Despatching Co-operative Food to Spain

BRIGHTSIDE AND CARBROOK NEARING THE £2,000,000 TRADE

The Brightside and Carbroom report for the quarter ending April 26th shows that the volume of trade continues to increase. The annual turnover has now reached the stupendous total of £1,825,000.

The structural part of the City Stores extension has been completed, and arrangements are now in hand for the removal of the goods entrance from its present position in Waingate to the rear of the City Stores; this will increase the selling space in the Waingate portion of the premises. A new branch is in course of erection

at Ridgeway, and big developments are taking place at the Broughton-base warehouse in order to accommodate the increase in the society's motor fleet. Plans have been approved for a new branch on the Shirecliffe estate.

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CO-OPERATIVE PARTY NOTES

BRIGHTSIDE.

The Brightside Division held the last meeting of the session on May 24, when a good number of members assembled to hear Councillor H. Wilkinson. After the address a successful social was held. It has been decided to cancel meetings during the summer, and the first meeting of the new session will be held in late August. The membership list, however, is still open, and the secretary (Mrs. F. Ward, 58, Sney-view) will be pleased to register new members.

BURNGRAVE.

The Burngrave Women's Section reports interesting meetings during May. The programme for June: 2nd, Mr. Fisher; 9th, Night with Charles Dickens; 16th, City Council report; 23rd, social; 30th, Mr. A. Beech (Brightside and Carbroom education committee); 30th, Councillor J. Cobley (Brightside and Carbroom board of management).

Meetings held Wednesdays, 7-30 p.m., in the Burngrave Vestry Hall. Secretary: Mrs. E. Velland.

HILLSBOROUGH.

A flannel dance is to be held in the Hillsborough Co-operative Institute on Thursday, June 17th, admission 6d. The committee of the Hillsborough Party have held a meeting to discuss the programme for the new session, and arrangements are in hand for two speakers per month, one social gathering each month, and a monthly dance in the large institute. The socials are to include a "Mock" Cutlers' Feast, "Mock" City Council, "Mock" Parliament, play-readings, and concerts. The speakers, too, will deal with a wide variety of subjects; in fact, the whole programme will be completely varied from previous sessions. A membership recruiting campaign will take place during the summer months, and the committee is looking forward to a most successful session, commencing on September 9th with a visit from Hillsborough's popular Member of Parliament.

Meetings of the Women's Section are held Mondays at 3 p.m., in the large Institute. Speakers for June are: 7th, Mr. E. Green; 14th, Mrs. W. Darvall; 21st, Mrs. Walker; 28th, speaker to be arranged. The annual trip is to take place on July 21st to Rhydy, at a cost of 12s. 6d., inclusive of two meals. Secretary: Mrs. C. Bottom.

NEEPSEND.

The Neepsend secretary reports well-attended meetings. The City Council report was given on May 6th instead of May 12th, on account of the Coronation treat for the old people in which the Co-operative aldermen and councillors were actively interested.

Councillor Fisher gave an extremely interesting address, in which he dealt with matters arising out of the Parks Committee, Transport Committee, Shun

Clearance Schemes, particularly emphasising the Health Committee's keen insistence upon proper living conditions through the erection of inspection sties. A good discussion followed. During the summer visits will be made to the Town Hall, the abattoir, and other municipal institutions.

The Women's Section have arranged a social or visit for June 7th; Councillor H. Slack will speak on the 14th on "The Change Over"; 21st, Mrs. Whitehead will speak with "Enemies of Co-operation"; 28th, Mrs. C. Gavigan, J.P., will deal with "Meetings in the Co-operative Institute, Mansfield street. Secretary: Mrs. E. Watson.

SOUTHEY AND NORWOOD.

The Southey and Norwood Section wound up their session with a good meeting addressed by Councillor T. Eaton, who gave a detailed account of Public Assistance regulations which have caused so much controversy in Sheffield. After questions and discussion, the meeting agreed that Sheffield was treating those unfortunate enough to need Public Assistance more generously than any other municipality. Councillor Fisher gave the May Council report.

The Section gave valuable assistance in the Coronation treat to the old-age pensioners, and officiated at St. Leonard's Church, when 280 of our aged friends enjoyed a substantial tea, followed by an entertainment.

Along with the local Labour Party the Section collected £4 15s. 8d. for the Spanish Relief Fund.

Members are asked to meet at the Institute, Southey-avenue, every Thursday, at 7-30 p.m., to carry on the canvassing of the Shirecliffe estate.

Women's Section meetings held on Wednesdays at 7-30 p.m.

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL.

The Sheffield and Ecclesall Section held the last whist drive of the session on May 21st. A business meeting was held on the 10th.

Meetings will be held on the second Monday of each month only during the summer period, as follows: June 14th, July 12th, August 9th, September 13th.

The Women's Section held a successful social on May 6th, when proceeds were given to the Sheffield Women's Welfare Clinic; 27th, Councillor (Mrs.) Birch gave an interesting address on City Council affairs. Programme for June: 3rd, reports from various delegations; 10th, address on "The School Medical Service," by Alderman W. Bancroft; 17th, social; 24th, Alderman J. A. Longden, J.P. (chairman, Sheffield Co-operative Party), will be the speaker.

Meetings held Thursday afternoons in the Co-operative Institute (Room 2), Napier-street. Secretary: Mrs. E. Williams.

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THE MEMBER FOR HILLSBOROUGH AT THE ART GALLERY AND UNIVERSITY

LABOUR'S SHORT-TERM PROGRAMME

Mr. A. V. Alexander (Co-operative and Labour Member for Hillsborough, Sheffield) was warmly received when he opened the "Airports and Airways" exhibition to be held in the North at the famous Art Gallery, Sheffield, on Monday, May 24th, and later addressed an informal gathering of Sheffield University Socialist Club, the subject of "Labour's Short-Term Programme," proposed to be put into effect on the party's next return to Parliament to be put into

Opening the Air Exhibition, Mr. Alexander expressed the hope that the air-minded British public would never be subjected to the vast the straits he put Labour's policy in a nutshell—"Rebuilding the

As the exhibition, over which Alderman Frank Thraves (deputy Lord Mayor) presided, Mr. Alexander also said he did not propose to enter into the local controversy over whether there should or should not be a certain type of aerodrome, and where, as he believed, the city fathers were quite capable of looking after their own affairs. Alderman Thraves, thanking him made a forecast that, although he was First Lord of the Admiralty in the last Labour Government, Mr. Alexander, known to be very air-minded, might be found not far away from the Air Ministry in the next Government.

FINANCE

Addressing the university students, Mr. Alexander said the short-term programme aimed at carrying out

fundamental social changes in one Parliamentary period while maintaining sound economy, and was psychologically based so as to attract the British people. It was, in fact, a case without stopping traffic.

As a result of six years of "National" Government, if Labour year or two they would find a very serious financial situation at the Exchequer, a very large financial deal would, definite legitimate commitments to meet, and pressure from other people for serious financial reform. The first thing to be dealt with would be the financial administration of the country and the relieving of control over the national credit. In the interim before the establishment of the

completely Socialist State, steps would be taken to protect the working class as well as other investors from being ruined by speculators.

TRANSPORT

In two of the industries which would come under review, coal and transport, complete reorganisation of the important basic industries was obtained, it will always be difficult to ensure standards. In regard to the transport dispute, it was seen that one body was also railways and trams, a sufficient argument in itself for the re-planting think there would be any real solution was public control of the country's transport.

FOOD POLICY

Another leading in the short-term programme was the tackling of the whole of the country's food policy. The nation was suffering from malnutrition to an extent hardly revealed in the public reports, and the Labour proper proposal not only to ensure but to revise the whole basis of the policy. It was ridiculous, for instance, to attempt to deal with the problem of agriculture by raising prices to meet a situation caused by the putting on of tariffs, which was the Government of policy.

Then there were the distressed areas. "There is no doubt at all," he said, "that the question of economic planning of the country must be carried out with much stronger conviction if the way they have been left by the Government. There is a tremendous and rapid growth in the Metropolitan area, where over 8,500,000 people are now living, and where new industries are being taken, making the area very vulnerable on the case of war very concentrated air attack, while, at the same time, the municipal administration of the distressed areas is suffering from lack of sufficient returns to the rates. We propose a national planning whereby we should see we had control of the orientation of industries, and insist that new industries should not be put in other areas until we saw they could be placed in the distressed areas on an economic basis."

FOREIGN POLICY

Around Labour would make an attempt to obtain a reversion to sanity amongst nations. To-day we were without anything like the security in millions less. The attitude of Government in its lack of support of the convictions of the League had been of a contributory cause to the deterioration of the international situation.

There was no cooling-off in Labour's policy of full support for the League Covenant along lines that would enable the League supporting nations to build up codes of law similar to those already built up in civilised countries, included readiness at any time for full discussion of the problems of proper access by certain nations to the world's mineral resources.

In the course of discussion which followed his address, Mr. Alexander said he believed the British co-operation movement, the trades union movement, and the Labour movement were in this country, the trades union movement a sufficiently effective united front without any other help. If a "united front" were formed with the aid of other elements, these other elements would be the first to turn and read the movement and cause serious trouble in the event of Labour getting power. The movement was better without them.

Answering questions on Labour's foreign policy, Mr. Alexander said there were always people ready to say Labour proposed to "give away bits of Empire." This gave rise to false ideas. Obviously the self-governing dominions could not be "given away." Mr. Alexander was heartily thanked for sparing the time to address the students.

CONFESSION

"I HAVE always maintained that we shall never get to a time when there will be no unemployment."—Mr. Neville Chamberlain.
That's a frank confession that so long as capitalism exists poverty and unemployment will remain with us. Socialism will harness the vast natural resources that everywhere are abundant, and utilise them for the common good. Socialism will put an end to unemployment.

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RIISING FOOD PRICES HITTING THE POOR

In the House of Commons on May 4th, Mr. W. H. Green (Labour) drew the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the fact that the wholesale cost of bacon has, since the operation of the bacon quota, increased from 50s. per cwt. to 95s. per cwt., and the selling price from 74s. 8d. per cwt. to 128s. 4d. per cwt., with a consequent increased price to the consumer. As this increase is leading to a considerable decrease in consumption, especially among poorer people, Mr. Green asked Mr. Runciman whether he would take steps to revise the present basis of the regulation of bacon imports.

Mr. Runciman replied that he was aware of the rise in prices since 1922, but he did not indicate that the Government intends to do anything about it. Labour M.P.s have frequently urged the Government to take into consideration the effect of the increasing cost of living on the unemployed, old age pensioners, and others with low, fixed incomes. The usual reply given is that the Ministers concerned see no course for action.

Secretary: "Say, there's a bunch of people outside waiting to see you. One of 'em is a bishop, who says he married you some time ago."

Film Star (meditatively): "Bishop! Bishop! . . . Gee, I'm practically certain I never married a bishop!"

SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESALL REPORTS FURTHER TRADE INCREASES

The Sheffield and Ecclesall Society's quarterly report for quarter ended May 31st shows an increase in sales of £38,224 over the corresponding quarter of last year. The annual sales now amount to £1,376,030, and represent an increase over the previous year of 60.38 per cent. There is an increase in membership also, which makes the total now 53,068.

Further developments at the Arcade have been commenced. The branch store at Myrtle-road is approaching completion, and work has begun for another branch at the corner of Glendless and Ridgeway roads. The election of officers for the board and education committee will take place on Saturday, June 5th, and the quarterly meeting of members will be held on Tuesday, June 8th, at 7.30 p.m., at the Co-operative Institute, Napier-street.

HAVE WAGES RISEN?

ALTHOUGH wage rates have been rising, prices have been rising also. Between the beginning of 1915 and the end of 1926 the Board of Trade index of commodity prices has risen from 88.5 to 102.0, while the Ministry of Labour index of the cost of living has risen from 12 to 151 compared with the pre-war level of 100.

In other words, while wage rates have risen by 5.3 per cent., the cost of living has risen by 6.3 per cent.

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THE CONSUMERS' VOICE AT WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE'S GOOD WORK

Mr. Alexander's Address to Sheffield Co-operators

The Right Hon. A. V. Alexander, M.P., addressed the Council of the Sheffield Co-operative Party at a well-attended meeting held at the Montgomery Hall, Saturday, May 22nd, on "The Work of the Joint Parliamentary Committee," of which Mr. Alexander has been secretary for the past sixteen-and-a-half years.

The work of the committee (which comprises representatives from every section of the co-operative movement) is to watch legislation, administrative actions, and the application of the law in trading matters so far as these apply to co-operators. This work is steadily increasing, especially in regard to the Government's operation of marketing schemes, although the Government, said Mr. Alexander, is gradually being compelled to amend the structure of these schemes. The work of the committee has been amply justified by the appointment of an important Commission in the case of sugar, and the same principle seems inevitable in its application to livestock, milk, and bacon. These are encouraging signs.

A wide range of foodstuffs is embraced in the record of the committee's activities in the past year, and the committee's point of view when Government legislation has been in the making.

It was undoubtedly the action taken by the Co-operative Parliamentary Committee which was responsible for the reduction in wholesale prices of milk from 15s. 6d. to 15s. 3d. per dozen gallons.

PRODUCER CONTROL OPPOSED.

With regard to milk products, the co-operative movement, insistent on retaining its rights as manufacturers,

has opposed amendments to certain clauses relative to marketing, and at the public inquiry into the scheme, Mr. Alexander expressed the movement's opposition to any scheme being controlled solely by producers. Demands were made for special representation on the executive committee to be appointed under the scheme.

The Committee was consulted by the Government on the proposed arrangements for the supply of milk at cheap rates to expectant and nursing mothers and to children under five, and it was shown that the solution must depend upon a proper connection of the purchasing power of the people in wages and reduced prices.

[BACON FACTORY LICENCES

As a result of representations made by the committee, difficulties experienced by a number of societies in connection with the licensing of bacon factories have been substantially eased. It was pointed out that the operation of the quota system had cut down by approximately one-half the imports from C.W.S. bacon factories in Denmark, and eventually the movement's requirements were partially met.

Opposition has been expressed to the powers it was proposed to give to the Sugar Beet Board to control the transport and insurance of sugar beet. There has been no objection to the pressing home the injustice of, but the committee think that societies should note that the only remedy for the present position now appears to be a change of Government. The Livestock Industry Bill is being

closely watched, and strenuous opposition is being expressed to the proposal to restrict and regulate imports and to the payment of a subsidy of £5,000,000 per annum to farmers without statistics being obtained as to the cost of production.

FOREIGN BEEF DUTIES.

The Co-operative Members of the House of Commons resisted at every possible stage the imposition of approximately £3,000,000 import duties on foreign beef and veal. The duty, however, was imposed from December 30th last.

The Co-operative Parliamentary Committee, in conjunction with the Labour Department, have submitted a case for the inclusion of laundry delivery workers in the benefits of improved working hours and conditions of young persons under eighteen engaged in retail distribution.

A case which occupied the attention of the committee was that in which a local education authority in Wales refused a society the use of a local schoolroom. (This type of case, said Mr. Alexander, emphasises the importance of securing co-operative representation on local authorities.)

CORPORATE BODIES.

Every step is being taken by the committee to safeguard the co-operative movement in the proposals which continue to be made for legislation giving what amounts to incorporation and

control by statutory authority of particular industries, such as funeral furnishing and hairdressing.

Preliminary discussions have taken place on the establishment of Trade Boards in the retail trade. Various suggestions have been put forward for "voluntary" action to improve conditions and establish wage-rates, but the Parliamentary Committee has emphasised that such voluntary action cannot provide a satisfactory solution of the problem, and that compulsory powers are essential.

Opposition has been directed against the general principle contained in the Cotton (Spinning Industry) Act of 1929, which provides for the inclusion of the remaining spindles in order to provide compensation. Consumers' representation on the committee to advise the Spindles Board under the Bill was not accepted by the Government.

TITHES AND POTATOES.

The view that the question of tithe rent charges could only be satisfactorily settled as part of a comprehensive plan for the national ownership of the land has been urged by the Co-operative M.P.s, whilst strong opposition to the re-imposition of the impost duty on main crop potatoes was forthcoming. The Parliamentary Committee has taken a vigilant interest in the workings of the Food Council, and in connection with the Shops Act (Libraries) was successful in securing exemption for

co-operative libraries not run for the purposes of financial gain from the early closing provisions.

Co-operative support was given to the Private Members' Bill to prohibit the sale and delivery of meat on Sundays. Co-operative evidence has been submitted expressing the view that the duties be abolished or reduced to a flat rate charge of not more than 2d. in the shilling.

SEA FISH COMMISSION.

The committee have pressed strongly for representation on the proposed central board for the white fish industry.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

The Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee has again had under consideration the question of the allocation of the surplus arising on the Unemployment Fund, and requested that the co-operative movement should again submit evidence. In that evidence it was urged that no further changes should be made in contributions, and that any surplus should be devoted to improving the benefits. It was also suggested that the waiting period for benefit should be reduced to three days, and that the allowance for the first child be increased from 3s. to 4s. weekly. Many other matters have claimed the attention of the committee, said Mr. Alexander, such as Road Traffic and Health Insurance regulations and the Local Government Act.

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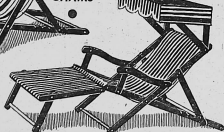


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