

The SHEFFIELD CO-OPERATOR

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CO-OPERATION OR THE CORPORATE STATE

Congress President On Current World Affairs

Mr. J. J. Worley mentioned, at the outset of his Congress presidential address, that seventeen critical years had passed since the Congress last met at Scarborough. So far as concerned the disturbing influence of the period upon social, economic, and cultural life, those years could have no parallel in history.

"At the time of the last Scarborough Congress we still cherished the illusion that having won 'the war to end war' we had made the world safe for democracy, not Fascism."

He alluded to present armaments expenditure, but found hope for the world escaping Armageddon in a virile public opinion and united action taken promptly and courageously.

Striking similarity of procedure, he proceeded, characterised the widespread social convulsions which had occurred in this relatively brief period. One party, making up with brute force what it lacks in electoral support, uses power, suppresses its opponents, and became the State.

Fascism Ends Liberty.

"Worthwhile, the Press is rigorously controlled. Fascists, like it most carefully noted, are more intense allies to the power of the Press than co-operators."

The people were mass-hypnotised by thoroughly unscrupulous propaganda in support of the new regime.

Personal liberty was ruthlessly restricted. Freedom of speech was denied. Even religious persecution re-emerged with all its old intolerance and bestial frenzy.

"These assaults upon liberty, democracy, association, and co-operation are both a portent and a menace. The co-operative movement is liquidated under dictatorships. Fascism accumulates the right of association. A growing menace to the co-operative movement lies in the spread of Fascism and its first cousin, political interference with economic affairs."

"It Can Never Happen Here."

"The narcotic of false security lurks in the prevailing notion that 'it can never happen here.' Our German colleagues held that notion even more firmly; yet it did happen, and largely because they were so confident that it could not happen. Which helps to explain how Adolf Hitler, after being condemned to five years' imprisonment in 1923, actually became dictator ten years later. He just merged the co-operative movement into his scheme for a corporate State. He forecast his Austrian policy by appointing his nominees to pivotal positions. The rest was easy."

"They so violated co-operative principles and perverted co-operative policy that the distinguished German movement we once knew and admired became intelligible to membership of the International Co-operative Alliance."

Let them not delude themselves that, in this country, they were entirely immune from the infection of Fascism.

The New Despotism.

The Lord Chief Justice himself has warned us that: "There is in existence a well-contrived system intended to produce, and in practice producing, a despotic power, which at one and the same time places Government Departments above the sovereignty of Parliament, and beyond the jurisdiction of the Courts."

"The method adopted to entrench this 'new despotism' are: (1) Press legislation in skeleton form; (2) fill up the gaps with departmental rules, orders, and regulations; (3) secure for them the force of Statute; (4) make it difficult for Parliament to check the said orders, &c.; (5) make the Minister's decision final; (6) arrange that the fact of his decision shall be conclusive proof of its legality; (7) take power to modify the provisions of the statute and prevent any sort of an appeal to a court of law. A classic example of this pernicious type of legislation is the Industrial Reorganisation (Enabling) Bill—known to them as the Melchett Bill.

"It snags for the co-operative movement by not so much in its skeleton of a Bill itself as in the schemes it enables, if and when it becomes an Act."

Concrete examples were the Agricultural Marketing Acts, which were more akin to the spirit of a corporate than a democratic State.

Planned Economy.

No one, of course, would dismiss off-hand serious suggestions for a planned economy.

"In fact, an international co-operative planned economy is the economic hope of the world."

But what had they got already from tentative tinkering with national capitalist planned economy? A people lacerated by artificially high prices. Food prices rose more between 1926 and 1937 than in the two previous years combined. The present index figure revealed an increase of nearly 50 per cent. in the post-war years.

Since 1930-1 taxation upon commodities and food had increased by nearly £100,000,000 a year. Furthermore, these schemes tended to confine

the trade of the co-operative movement to its existing ratio to the general trade of the country.

"This is an intolerable position for a steadily expanding movement which is the consumers' only bulwark against exploitation."

The evolution of "authoritarian" executive government within the framework of their political democracy was exemplified in the way by which, without mandate, there had been effected a complete break with the Free Trade tradition, through the creation of that "Taxation State Chamber," the Import Duties Advisory Committee, the "Secret Council of Three."

Private enterprise looks to Parliament not only for tariffs, quotas, subsidies, and the like, but for legislation designed to obstruct the mobilisation of co-operative effort.

"This motivated, trade rivals persuaded Mr. Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his 1933 Finance Act to obliterate legal recognition of mutual trading, thus making co-operative societies liable for what co-operators continued to regard as joint taxation, demanding repeal; an injustice aggravated by the incidence on their societies of the new National Defence Contribution.

"We regard with suspicion the proposals for the rationalisation of distribution, such as the registration and licensing of shops, the block delivery of bread, &c. By such plausible procedure the foundations of a corporate State would be laid in Great Britain."

It was quite conceivable that the co-operative movement might find itself gradually merged in spurious schemes of industrial and distributive reorganisation, with corresponding loss of identity and autonomy.

The collectivist proposal for municipal trading in bread, milk, coal, &c., was not as socially desirable as a co-operative food supply from field and factory to the house.

"A co-operative food supply which is already in being for one-fourth of the nation's supplies in certain feedstuffs is more practicable than municipalisation."

"THE State should be the servant of the citizens, not their master. It should have no power to interfere with the consumers' right to co-operate for mutual self-supply, and no conditions should be imposed to prevent the co-operative movement from expanding to meet the needs of its growing membership."—Congress President.

As if they had their divided loyalties. The first loyalty of some was State Socialism or Collectivism, or others, Communism. In this matter they must not continue to drift without direction and decision.

The relation of the co-operative movement to the State in this rapidly changing world awaited authoritative definition. The political machine was neither designed nor constructed for commercial and industrial functions.

Trade Without Private Profit.

The organization of trade without the incentive of private profit had fundamental social significance. Were they not suffering from "the sickness of an acquisitive society?"

"Consequently, a Government which penalises, restricts, or even fails to encourage such a beneficent movement fails to function in the public interest."

Whilst fully recognising that communal life involved compromise, and whilst being prepared to go far to secure united action for an immediate and vital objective, yet, it needs be, they must not co-operate against any politico-economic creed or "ism."

Co-operation's Achievements.

"Our achievements confound our detractors. We ourselves, though grateful, can never be satisfied until our membership is co-extensive with the State, and all our members convinced conscious co-operators, for there are varying degrees of co-operative consciousness." Some regarded the movement as unorthodox retail trading—supply that and nothing more. Others, as the path to the Co-operative Commonwealth, or the means of evolving a functional non-acquisitive society. Some deemed co-operation a spirit re-vealed itself in their march towards the adjustment of human relationships in accord with co-operative principles, which constituted an all-sufficient social philosophy applicable to every department of corporate life, national and international.

A New Social Order.

Co-operation, with its economic base, was something greater than that usual trading partnership.

"As a matter of fact, it is by and through our unique method of trading that we are unconsciously evolving a new social order animated by the ideal, 'Each for All and All for Each.' From each according to his capacity; to each according to his needs."



Mr. A. V. Alexander chatting with friends at the Co-operative Congress.



WOMEN'S NOTES
BY THE WOMAN WITH THE BASKET

"EACH FOR ALL, AND ALL FOR EACH"
HOLIDAYS WITH PAY

Thanks to the work of, and the pressure brought to bear upon the Government by, the T.U.C., the Co-operative, and Labour Parties, holidays with pay are soon to become an established fact rather than a prospect to be realised in a dim and distant future. Legislation to this effect will be considered in the coming Parliamentary session and no one doubts that the Bill will soon become law.

Regulating Holiday Period

Some wage earners have already been granted holidays with pay but their number in relation to the general mass of workers is immeasurably small—another example of the fact that the proportion of employers who will alleviate the lot

of the workers without legislative pressure is minute. When, however, holidays with pay become the legal right of the workers the problem of accommodation will have to be faced. All the summer holidays cannot be crowded into the month of August. If they were, it would not be a holiday but a fight for travelling and housing accommodation.

School terms and examinations will have to be re-arranged so as to spread the holiday vacations over the whole summer. Despite the fact that some teachers did not favour this reform on the ground that it is not good for children to be at school during the August heat waves, the Board of Education evidently realises that heat waves are not confined to that particular month. It is

considering the alteration of examination times from July to December. No doubt the Board will encounter opposition from those people who think that just because something has been done for years it must needs continue for ever.

For the workers themselves, a week "off" with pay means all the difference between "laying off" work and a real holiday. No longer will they have to worry over the problem of making one's wage pay for two weeks' rent and board—a task which I have short" for months afterwards. I have never been able to understand why a should who works with a collar on should be laid off a holiday while the man who works with his collar off should have to do without it. It has always been an unfair discrimination.

Let us hope that, in addition to this overdue benefit of holidays with pay, the weather will be kind to those who, for the first time in their lives, can take a holiday a little more free from worry.

THE DAILY ROUND

Have you ever considered the number of miles you travel performing household duties? It has been estimated that a housewife walks at least a couple of miles daily within her four walls. Each year, we are told, the average woman about 3,200,000 steps and in ten years she covers over 7,000 miles. The preparation of meals is the most important factor in her long march, the total at the end of the year being placed at 120 miles; the process of clearing away and washing dishes being reckoned at covering 120 miles. Sweeping and dusting is fixed at sixty-five miles yearly, while 100,000 steps or 3 per cent. of the year's march is round bed. Another 3 per cent. goes in answering the door bell. It is also pointed out that the care of children adds considerably to the mileage. Who said a housewife doesn't get any exercise? I think she needs a holiday and a good rest at the end of the year. Don't you?

FASHION NOTES

There is one thing about the English climate of which one can be reasonably sure—if there is a dry spell, a wet one is certain to follow. No matter what weather there are coats of nipped silk which can be bought for the price of an ordinary mackintosh. The colours are red, yellow, navy, grey, dark brown, and orange, while triangular kerchiefs are also being shown matching in material and tone. These take the place of hats and umbrellas, though these too can be bought to match. This idea of the kerchief has caught on tremendously and promises to be popular whatever the weather may be. Holiday-makers, hikers, cyclists have been tying the gayest of scarves round their heads, some taking triangular form, while others have been folded and stitched to make bunnets with a peak at the back, the ends tying under the chin or wrapping round the throat. If you are handy with the needle, try the latter way.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Knives that have become dirty or stained can be easily cleaned by using a mixture of powdered bath-brick and methylated spirit and applying with a piece of felt or flannel. If an enamelled cut-crane gets burned, add a tablespoonful of salt water to the water with which you fill it and leave overnight. Bring this mixture to the boil and allow to cool, when you will find the pan perfectly clean. This is much better than using soda which makes it liable to burn again. Enamels of cut-crane men now should be soaked in cold water for twenty-four hours to ensure against chipping. Before using a new clothes line, rub it well with a little beeswax previously warmed slightly. This will protect it from the weather and make the line last much longer. When a child's hands have to be washed, it is a good plan to gently wipe round the eyes with a little olive oil. This will prevent any possibility of soapy water getting into the eyes (and possibly save tears which so often run during the process). Before washing silk stockings, stretch different coloured threads at the top of each pair. They can then be easily paired after the wash.

ANOTHER INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT
LAST MONTH'S TOTAL 382,000 MORE THAN A YEAR AGO

In the House of Commons on May 24, the Labour Party drew the Government's attention to the serious state of affairs in the basic industries, and Labour speakers pointed out that in spite of the rearmament activity the country was on the verge of another trade depression.

The usual reply was given by Government spokesmen which, in effect, was that the Government would continue its policy of "adaptation" and its "adjustment." No indication was given of any plans for preventing depression.

The latest figures of employment and unemployment, mostly Labour's repeated warnings against complacency.

On May 16th, 1938, the number of insured persons aged sixteen to sixty-four in employment was 3,614,000 (exclusive of persons within the Agricultural scheme) was approximately 11,325 unemployed. This was 15,000 less than the total for April 1938, and 148,000 less than the total for May 24th, 1937. The decline in employment was mainly in coal mining, agriculture, cotton, iron and steel, tinsplate, and motor vehicles.

1,778,865 Unemployed.

The numbers of unemployed on the registers in Great Britain on May 16th were 2,341,418 wholly unemployed, 597,520 temporarily stopped, and 67,158 normally in casual employment, making a total of 1,778,865.

This was 31,017 more than on April 16th, 1938, and 282,000 more than on May 24th, 1937.

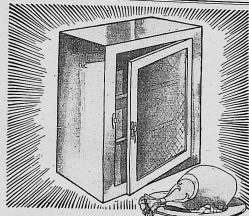
The total on May 16th, 1938, included 1,395,632 men, 270,012 women, 48,072 boys, and 55,148 girls.

Of this total 270,000 had been unemployed for twelve months or more; 1,194,000 less than six months; 485,000 less than three months; and 759,000 less than six weeks.

The following increases in unemployment in the industries mentioned were recorded on May 16th, 1938, as compared with May 24th, 1937:—

Cotton, 77,750; metal goods, 27,800; woollen and worsted, 27,600; engineering, &c., 18,070; distributive trades, 18,040; iron and steel, 17,710; hotels and boarding houses, 14,460; building, 14,100; motor vehicles, cycles, and aircraft, 11,850. Compared with April 16th, 1938, the May figures show that unemployment increased in coal mining by 24,991; in cotton by 10,000; in iron and steel by 7,070; and in agriculture by 6,700. Motor vehicles, engineering, and tinsplate recorded smaller increases.

These figures indicate a serious industrial situation which needs grappling with on a bold, national scale. But the Government appears to be content to muddle along in the vain hope that the problem will solve itself.



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FEED THE CHILDREN

During the debate on the Board of Education vote, on June 20th, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board referred to the increase in the number of school children receiving free milk or meals during the past year. The figures for 1936-7 show that the number had increased from 479,000 to 535,000 and the Parliamentary Secretary rightly claimed that the increased expenditure on provision of milk and meals was justified by the increased physical fitness of the children.

But, as Labour speakers pointed out, the provision of milk and meals to children is a matter of national concern and requires a national policy to ensure its effectiveness.

The latest report of the Board of Education showed that in a year's inspection by medical officers 104,000 children were found to be suffering from malnutrition. Obviously that number does not represent the full extent of the evil. Sir John Orr has placed it on record that more than 25 per cent. of the nation's children are going short of proper food.

Mr. Lees-Smith told the Government plainly that fitness campaigns and the provision of amenities must always be secondary to the provision of adequate food. The Government claims that its present policy is meeting the need, but expert evidence does not justify that claim. It is not enough to say that a child shall be fed if and when the school medical officer or other officials pick it out as suffering from malnutrition. The Labour Party holds the view, which is supported by the greatest authorities on nutrition, that children may and do

suffer from malnutrition before the outward signs become observable to a teacher or a medical officer.

The Labour Party's solution of the problem is to calculate the actual quantity of food required for the proper development of a child, and the income on which families can afford to buy the necessary food, and then feed all children coming from families below that income. That is a commonsense method which could and should be applied. It may be that some of the children in such families would not be under-nourished, but if that were so it would probably be because the mother was going short of food in order to feed her children.

It is useless for the Board of Education to continue its present policy of clinical assessment and try to hide the facts about the real extent of malnutrition. The Board's official figures deceive nobody who is in close touch with the problem. The discrepancy between 10.5 per cent. of malnutrition as discovered by the Board's method and 25 to 30 per cent. as discovered by the investigations conducted by the British Medical Association and other independent experts is too glaring to be ignored or explained away.

This matter is one of real concern to the nation. Instead of trifling with it, and before embarking on a spectacular "Keep Fit" campaign, the Government should see to it that a plentiful supply of good food is made available to all; and the provision of free meals and milk to children on an adequate scale is the first obvious step in that direction.

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR ALL

BY W. J. JORDAN
(High Commissioner for New Zealand)

"I can promise the people this—that before very long they will have reached a condition of social security which is enjoyed in any country in the world."—*Prime Minister of New Zealand.*

The next few weeks will see the completion of the New Zealand Government's long-expected social legislation. There will be introduced into the House of Representatives legislation to permit a vastly extended and a free State national superannuation and a free State medical, hospital, and maternity service which will recognise no distinction of class or status.

In many ways the social reform in the New Zealand Government represents a great advance on anything which has been attempted by any Government of other countries; yet it cannot be said to be a complete one. It is inevitable to complain that it is inequitable in its benefits or unfair in its cost upon workers and employers in certain industries, but will be spread evenly and fairly over the whole community by means of a special tax levied without distinction upon all salaries, wages, and other incomes. This tax is to be supplemented by a pound-for-pound subsidy from the national exchequer. There is no need to complain that this method of the funding of out-of-work benefits since it is obvious that large-scale unemployment in any given trade must have its repercussions throughout the body politic. So, too, must unprovided invalidity and indigent old age.

The New Zealand Unemployment Scheme was formerly supported by a wages and income tax of 1s. in the pound, but improved conditions enabled the Government to reduce this tax to 8d. Thus the way has been cleared for the introduction of the various planned corollaries to unemployment insurance, namely, the substitution of a generous scheme of NATIONAL SUPERANNUATION for existing Old Age Pensions, coupled with free national health services on an unprecedented scale, the whole to be administered by a Department of Social Security.

For the financing of these schemes it has become necessary to revert to the 13s. tax on salaries, wages, and other income, and to substitute it pound for pound from the national exchequer. The main features of our plan, which will operate, if approved, as from April next, are—

GENERAL SUPERANNUATION: £1 10s. a week per person on reaching the age of sixty, unaffected by income from other sources up to £1 a week. (Thus a married couple over sixty with an income of £1 will be in receipt of £1 a week, and a single person with a similar income, £1 10s. a week.)

OTHER PENSIONS: Permanently invalid workers and families: £1 10s. to £4 a week, according to their income up to £1 10s. (married), £1 (single).

Widows with children: 35s. per week, plus 10s. per week for each child up to the age of sixteen.

Childless widows (over 50): 20s. per week.

Orphans: 15s. (paid to relatives or guardians).

Miners' disability: 30s.

War veterans and families: 25s. to £3 10s.

FAMILY ALLOWANCES: For all families whose income does not exceed £5 a week, 4s. a week for each child after the second.

MEDICAL SERVICES: Universal general practitioner services to everybody requiring medical attention; universal free hospital or

sanatorium treatment; free maternity treatment and maternity home maintenance; other free services (e.g., specialist, radiology, anaesthetics, etc.) as and when practicable.

The essence of the scheme is that there should be no deterrent to thrift and personal industry and no onerous burden on any class of the community. This great scheme has been preceded by rational alterations in the status, conditions, and earning power of the workers, including the establishment of a forty-hour week, and a start on the stabilisation of the marketing of primary produce and the incomes of those who live by the land. The creation of the Government Dairy Sales Division ensures the marketing of the produce on our great dairying industry under conditions which guarantee, on a self-supporting and contributory basis, the prices paid to the farmer.

Ultimate effects of this far-reaching working scheme have yet to be seen; but I forecast that when it all falls put and its influence upon the stabilisation of our living standards and incomes are perceived by the people of this country, it will give the truest sense of security to all who have invested money in New Zealand development loans.

The world is, I venture to think, watching with acute interest this experiment of a free democratic community whose loyalty to the British Empire and its ideals is unquestionable. The scheme will have many well-wishers; it will, doubtless, have some detractors.

Certain trading interests have been quick to see, in the cost of improved hours and conditions in New Zealand, an opportunity for intensive competition with our secondary industries.

Nevertheless, it will be appreciated that a doubling of imports in one line, in a space of two years, inevitably causes such dislocation that steps must be taken to prevent our workers being thrown out of employment.

When the New Zealand Government imposed an adjusting tariff to check this short-sighted policy, there was an attempt to enlist the support of British workers for a proposed boycott of New Zealand products. New Zealand is grateful for the prompt refusal with which this suggestion was disposed of by the national Union of the workers in the industry concerned.

Trade Unions in this country appreciate that they have much at stake in the success of the New Zealand social security, labour, and agricultural marketing plans.

They doubtless realise that the continuation and development of reciprocal trade between the Dominion and the Homeland is essential to this success. They can, and I feel sure will, increase their demand for New Zealand lamb, butter, cheese, and apples, by buying these commodities in preference to those of foreign countries; for upon the progress and purchasing power of the people of New Zealand will depend the future expansion of the Dominion market for products of British labour.

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SHEFFIELD AND ECCLESAL REPORTS FURTHER TRADE INCREASES

The Sheffield and Ecclesal Society's quarterly report for the quarter ended April 30th shows an increase in sales of £5,027 over the corresponding period last year, or approximately £3,000 per week. The year's sales show an increase of £125,274, and have enabled the society to register a new record annual business figure exceeding one-and-a-half millions pounds.

There is an increase in membership also, which makes the total now 56,283. Developments in the quarter include the converting of the former No. 1 branch, opened more than forty-five years ago, the reconstruction of which was produced in a modern store in keeping with the society's newer branches. The rebuilding of the branch at Dredfield is

also well in hand. It is expected that the butchery, fish, fruit and grocery, and flower departments of the store will be opened in a few weeks' time.

The result of the election of officers held on Saturday, June 15th, was Alderman J. A. Longdon re-elected—unopposed; committee of management of the five retiring members—Messrs. W. Richardson, A. Bridson, T. Cobley, H. Richardson, and G. W. Davison—were re-elected; education committee, the retiring member, Mr. H. Ward, was re-elected, along with Messrs. E. Pearson and H. R. Smith; auditor, Mr. W. Bashforth, F.C.A., re-elected—unopposed.

SHEFFIELD WOMEN'S WELFARE CLINIC

The Sheffield Women's Welfare Clinic have just issued their annual report. The Secretary states that "the fifth year's work is ended, and while we can look back and feel that progress has been made, our greater knowledge of families and their living conditions makes us realise how stupendous the problems are that we have to face. Ignorance, superstition, and wrong Clinic has often to act as a sex education centre and a marriage advisory bureau before it can fulfil its aim."

The Clinic, it is stated in the report, is a place where lectures to groups of men or women by whom courses can be arranged, and where a cup of tea and a biscuit help to dispel any nervousness a patient may feel, so that she returns some other week bringing her friend.

The subscription list is not growing as it should, and the Secretary makes an appeal to help them to extend the work of this educative health service. She will be pleased to supply the report on request. Address: Mrs. Eliza G. Cunningham, "Ashfield Grove," Westbourne-road, Sheffield, 10.

(Down our street—No. 1)

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First Prize
for Vegetables

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A FREE BREAKFAST TABLE

MR. ALEXANDER'S PROTEST AGAINST £44,000,000 TAXES ON FOOD

Mr. Alexander has persistently advocated a free breakfast table, involving, of course, the removal of all taxation on food. With the object of securing this, he moved a new clause to the Finance Bill in the House of Commons on June 25th, which reads:—

"As from the first day of September, 1935, customs duties chargeable upon foodstuffs imported for human consumption under the provisions of the Import Duties Act, 1932, or the Ottawa Agreements Act, 1932, shall cease to be chargeable, and the provisions of the first-mentioned Act shall be deemed not to authorise the imposition of customs duties upon such foodstuffs."

£5,000,000 Tax on Meat.

After dealing with the necessity of freeing consumers from the shameful restriction as present upon the purchasing power, Mr. Alexander said:

"Since 1931 the House of Commons has witnessed a great revolution in regard to taxation on food. I do not know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer is likely to answer the case which is put in this clause, but if he does I shall be very interested to hear how he reconciles the present position of himself, as the principal holder of the keys to impose food taxation, with all his lifelong work for the free breakfast table for the people."

The fact is that as a result of this revolution we are labouring to-day under the effect of duties imposed under the Ottawa Agreements not upon wheat, butter, eggs, condensed milk, fruit, and other things, and under the Import Duties Act we are being taxed in respect of potatoes, tomatoes, fruit, poultry, vegetables, &c."

"I am unable to make any specific comment upon another important duty which is operating today, because it was passed under a separate Act. I refer to the duty on meat. I shall not be able to argue about that particular duty. All that I can say is that all the duties I have mentioned are in addition to £5,000,000 on the people's meat."

Lowering the Standard of Living.

Passing on to the question of the present standard of living, Mr. Alexander continued:

"Recently the President of the Board of Trade gave a most gloomy view of the trade outlook. If he is found to be a true prophet, we must expect a continued increase in unemployment and a consequent decline in our national standard of living unless the Government take some effective steps to check that tendency. It is imperative, therefore, in our view, that some steps should be taken to reduce the cost of living of the people. In 1933, as we have often reminded the House, the British Medical Association came to the conclusion that a family of five, consisting of the parents and three children aged, say, from six to fourteen, would cost £12 to maintain on the British Medical Association minimum diet 23s. 6d. a week. A publication issued by the British Medical Association only last week showed that there has been an actual rise, according to the Association, in the cost of that diet of 4s. in the pound since that original statement was made. Therefore, the actual cost to-day of that minimum diet—which all of us on this side agreed at the time was inadequate, really as a proper standard—has gone up to 27s. 6d."

"This rise has been due to the heavy import duties on foodstuffs. It was evident at the time that the British Medical Association diet provided the bare minimum necessary to maintain life."

A Tax on Health.

Drawing attention to "A Report on Socialism and the Standard of Living" by the Labour Party, Mr. Alexander declared that "in the light of the situation we consider so ominous that the total yield of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of these taxes on the stomach and health should have amounted to no less than £40,750,000 last year, and, with the addition of the increased Tea Duty, and probably a rather larger import of one or two commodities, you can reckon that the receipts

of the Chancellor will get from food taxes alone in the current year will be not less than £44,000,000. A very great part of that money goes into the Chancellor's pocket as is the expense of the stomachs and the health of the poorest people of the country."

"If you take the comparison between the financial year 1930-31 and the current financial year, our Customs income from food, including the taxes on food, have risen by something like £16,000,000."

National Fitness.

Referring to the general demand for physical fitness in the nation, the Member for Hillsborough asserted, "I believe the Chancellor will have the matter put to him before, and I earnestly trust some of my hon. Friends will refer in detail again to the very crucial, and I consider somewhat serious, matter which has made in the past a very real necessity if we are to have a fit nation."

"Do not think anybody is more interested than I am in this, however much you may promote the standards of physical training to secure national fitness, if you cannot have a dietary which will reach of the common people you will not have an fit nation to face which will criss the nation comes up against."

"In the last depression it may be said that while wages fell, they did not fall as the rate as retail prices fell, so that unemployment was not so serious. But employment increased, and the standard of life of many sections of the workers was brought back to what it has been a constant struggle for the organised worker, through his trade union, to try and recover the position which he had before the depression, and it is very difficult for any time to recover that position if every time necessities one has to purchase his weekly necessities one has to face this very high and, under this Government, increasing burden of taxation. We are, therefore, only pleading in this case for justice to the organised worker of the country."

M. van Zeeland Report.

In a reference to the M. van Zeeland report, which was asking for a system of free trade between the United Kingdom and the United States should be preceded with, "I understand," he said, "that at the present time the discussions with the United States for a trade agreement appear to be hanging fire, because certain articles, I am told—I make this statement on information given and not from my own knowledge—partly by the National Farmers' Union and partly by the Federation of British Industries. Why do not the Government, in response to our request to-day, help the negotiations by reducing the Ottawa duties upon American products such as wheat, fruit, &c., in return for substantial reductions, which I believe they would be able to negotiate with the United States upon our industrial manufactures from this country entering the United States? This principle of free trade with other friendly, democratic countries might be extended to the Scandinavian countries."

Alexander wound up an interesting speech by a statement that "the Government to-day do not adopt the policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lord Rothermere as in 1931, when they first entered the National Government, that they would not stand for the taxation of food. They take care to themselves that this taxation of food is a deliberate result of their policy, and they claim that it has been so."

"We submit, on the other hand, that in the long run it is an injury to the trade taken in the bulk, and that it is a well-earned punishment upon the standard of life of the masses of the workers of the country, and that, in the interests both of those workers and of the development of world trade, and therefore of employment and an increased standard of life, this clause ought to be accepted."

LABOUR'S NEXT STEP

Herbert Morrison on Immediate Programme

MR. HERBERT MORRISON, speaking at a Labour conference, said the most important and most urgent items in Labour's plans were in the Immediate Programme recently issued in a pamphlet form. This programme was to form a basis of a campaign conducted throughout the country.

He decided to impress upon the party everywhere the magnitude, significance, and importance of this campaign upon which they were embarking, and to recognise that he or she had an individual responsibility in achieving that success which was open to them.

This was a campaign to last not a few weeks or a few months but up to the time of the General Election. It was necessary to educate the electors beforehand.

There were limitations to the social reforms that could be effected under the capitalist system, which was condemned because of its inability to supply all the people with an adequate service of food and other necessities.

Another disgraceful feature of capitalism was that it could only provide temporary work for the unemployed by rearmament at the expense of the social services.

Labour in office would be occupied with measures of both socialisation and of social reform. But the former was

the more important, and the future of a Labour Government would largely depend on the amount of social ownership and control it could put through.

Neither a Labour Government nor a Labour Municipality must get into a rut by merely dealing with social reforms.

It was therefore necessary to be clear as to what was to be done. Sluggishness was the enemy of the Labour Party. They could succeed only to the extent they planned beforehand. For unless the party's programme was to be interrupted they must aim at a succession of Labour Governments and not merely one administration.

Mr. Morrison outlined the four vital measures of reconstruction proposed in the Immediate Programme. They were as follows:—

(1) **Finance**.—A nationalised Bank of England, a national investment board, stability of trade and employment without a return to the Gold Standard, an amended company law, more equitable taxation and encouragement of scientific research.

(2) **Land**.—National control, compulsory acquisition, protection for the tenant and the abolition of the tied cottage system.

(3) **Transport**.—A national board to co-ordinate all traffic by road, rail, air, and coastal shipping.

(4) **Coal and Power**.—Public ownership, under which mining, coal treatment and marketing would be unified.

Four great benefits which Labour's policy would bring to the people would be abundant food, good wages, leisure, and security.

Dealing with the work to be accomplished by the party, the Speaker said that, while the numbers and quality of individual membership was a factor, he believed that the more important factor was the importance of quality and knowledge in their ranks. The quality and knowledge of their propaganda, the attractiveness and appeal of the printed word, and the sense of confidence and respectiveness of the public—all these were vital factors in success or failure. These things, in addition to the efficiency of our electoral organisation, they must be given attention. They were being carefully borne in mind by leading officers. It was equally important that they should be borne in mind in the constituencies.

Nothing was more important than to spread an understanding among the people of Socialism and its implications. And Socialism must be urged as the business-like economic system of the nation and of the world, rather than making it appear that its prime purpose was to hit or hurt somebody or other.

Socialism could not burden the indefinite competence of an idle rich class whose riches were a torture upon the productive labour of the workers by hand and by brain. But remember always that

Socialism comes not to destroy, but to create, not to drag down but to build up. The spirit of Socialism was fellowship, not spite, for fellowship was life and lack of fellowship was death.

Our Socialist propaganda, therefore, must be characterised both by idealism and a courageous grasp of the practical problems of business affairs from the point of view of public interest.

The Labour Party in recent years had been living through difficult times. They had to handle complicated issues of policy and they had experienced distractions from the main purpose for which the party existed.

He appealed to everybody, whether their tendencies in policy were rightward or leftward—and there was much illusion about Left and Right—now to concentrate on active work for the party, which alone could bring and deserve the victory that must be theirs in the interests of Britain and of the world.

Less introspection, more work. Less internal dissipation and criticism; more exposition of the glorious faith that we share.

Let each one of them be a campaigner, a pioneer, and a fighter for a better social order in Britain and an enduring peace between the nations of the world.

TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND CO-OPERATIVE SHOPS

An economic survey of co-operative shopping made by the Co-operative Union Limited was one of the matters discussed by the Scarborough Congress.

According to the survey, there are 24,000 co-operative shops in the British Isles, actually twice as many as previously estimated. In addition, there are 28,704 sales delivery vehicles operated by co-operative societies, and altogether a total of about 100,000 "selling points." One in thirty shops is owned by a co-operative society. While the average turnover for all classes of shops is £3,333, the turnover of each co-operative shop is £20,762. In 1936, the annual value of purchases of co-operative members was nearly £20, when the total membership of societies amounted to 7,807,642. Co-operative retail trade last year was estimated as being over £539,000,000.

MORE MILK FOR SPAIN

A new slogan must find its place everywhere that co-operators meet. It is no longer "Milk for Spain." It is "More Milk for Spain"—more to the extent of thousands of pounds.

One in every three Spanish refugee children behind the Government lines has been seized by tuberculosis. Are the other two to fall victims? British co-operators can answer "No" by quickly meeting the Milk for Spain appeal of the Co-operative Union.

We can answer Franco's boasts with tins of milk. We can show our contempt for Mr. Chamberlain with tins of milk. Above all, we can save the lives of thousands of children with milk. Spanish co-operators are giving their lives to save democracy and build a co-operative State. We are asked only for milk. It is a request that should meet with a speedy and overwhelming response from co-operators of the richest movement in the world.

At the quarterly meeting of members of the Brighton and Carbrook Co-operative Society a further grant of £50 was made to the Milk for Spain Fund.

LABOUR'S STRONG MAN

"One of the strongest men on the Opposition side in the House of Commons, and one with possibly the biggest future, is undoubtedly Mr. A. V. Alexander. He is a man of vast organising experience, and occupies a position that gives him plenty of scope for his abilities. He can be, and in fact was, in the debate last week, very devastating. With well-chosen words, he shatters an argument mercilessly, and although a person may not agree with him in all he says, there is never any doubt about his logic and sincerity." Extract from the "Glasgow Observer," June 4th.

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GOVERNMENT DEFEATS TAX JUSTICE MOVE

Co-operative Members of Parliament made another big effort to secure exemption from payment of National Defence Contribution for co-operative societies on Tuesday, June 28th, when the Finance Bill was passing through its final reading in the House of Commons.

So strong was the case they advanced and so feeble the one they met with that Sir John Simon, who introduced the amendment moved by Mr. Alfred Barnes was only negatived by a majority of 61, the actual voting being: for the amendment, 149; against the amendment, 210.

The drop in the Government majority is convincing proof that the pressure brought by co-operative societies throughout the country on their Parliamentary representatives had caused many Tory M.P.s to abstain from voting.

Mr. Barnes moved the addition to the Finance Bill of a new clause intended to ensure that N.D.C. should not apply to any trade or business carried on in a society registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893, unless such trade or business was carried on by a society primarily for the purpose of earning and distributing profits on its capital.

Mr. Barnes pointed out that special provision had already been made for exempting public utility corporations

and small business undertakings whose profits are under £2,000, that companies year come under £10,000 per that a special arrangement had been made for building societies.

As regards co-operative societies, Mr. Barnes continued, many were in fact compelled to pay more than one-fifth of the sum they now paid in income tax, and so were subject to the incidence of N.D.C. in a much more severe form than the Chancellor himself led the House to believe would be the case.

Below Tax Limit.

That being so, he added, it was clear that the incidence on co-operative societies differed from general experience, first because the incomes of 80 per cent. of their members were below income tax assessment limit; and secondly, because practically the whole of their trading surpluses could not be regarded as profit for taxation purposes.

Mr. Barnes reminded the House that Sir John Simon himself had on previous occasions declared that the law did not regard co-operative surpluses as taxable profit, and that Parliament had in the case of N.D.C. altered the law to make it applicable to those societies.

He claimed that co-operative societies, which had eight million total benefits on the greater than

the building societies, which had two million shareholders, and declared that application of N.D.C. to co-operative societies was grossly unfair.

Now that the Chancellor had given exemption to public utility organizations, and had modified N.D.C. in its application to building societies, he had no grounds whatever for refusing exemption to co-operative societies.

The profits of companies usually classified as public utilities ranged from 7 per cent. to 20 per cent., and distribution of capital bonuses, and how could the Chancellor exempt these companies and the whole category of smaller traders and yet charge N.D.C. on co-operative societies?

"If the Chancellor can justify exemption of building societies in order to enable people to buy their own houses," asked Mr. Barnes, "why is he so averse in regard to co-operative societies which assist people to buy their own food, clothing, and furniture to make their homes a little more comfortable to live in?"

Sir John Simon's reply to Mr. Barnes was a purely legal argument. Even while he declared that the information he gave some years ago in relation to the taxability of co-operative societies was perfectly fair, he put the onus of the present charge of N.D.C. on the position created by the Finance Act of 1935.

"Then," he said, "Parliament laid down that the surpluses of co-operative societies fell within the section of profits."

Gogent rejoinder to this piece of sophistry was promptly made by Mr. A. V. Alexander, who declared that Sir John Simon had thrown overboard the great judgment he gave in 1928 in order to assist the Government to put an increasing imposition upon millions of working-class members of co-operative societies.

"Gone Out of Their Way."

Mr. Alexander reiterated that the Government had deliberately gone out of their way to scale down the N.D.C. in respect of building societies, but gave no such kindly treatment to the 8,000,000 small shareholders of industrial and provident societies. "I hope," Mr. Alexander ended, "that my fellow-members throughout the country will stick to this job until we defeat this injustice."

Followed a very helpful and closely-reasoned argument from Mr. Ridley (Labour member for Clay Cross), who completely ridiculed Sir John Simon's tortuous arguments; and another supporter of the co-operative demand for justice was Mr. W. Gallacher, the only Communist member of the House.

Included in the minority of 149 who voted for Mr. Barnes' proposal were ten Liberals, three National Liberals, and two Independents.

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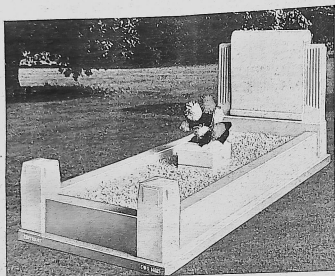
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