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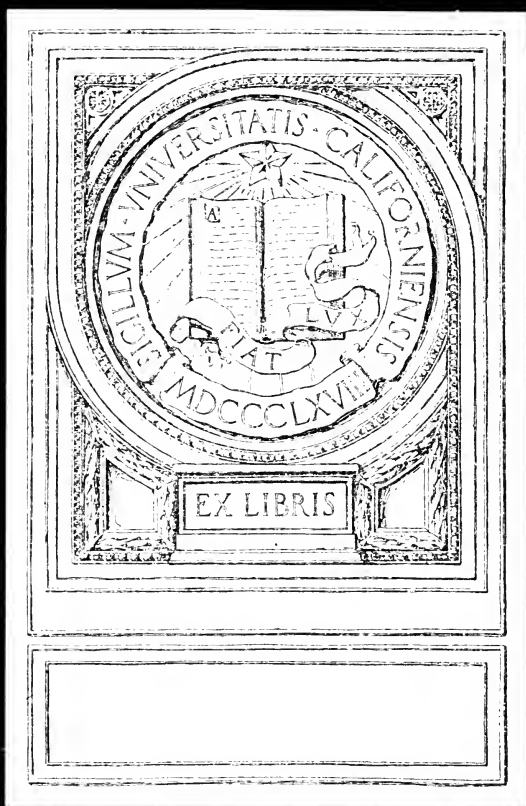
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MUTUAL AID
IN
FOOD PRODUCTION
AND
DISTRIBUTION.

An idea whose time is come."

BEING A PAPER
READ BEFORE LONDON MERCHANTS AND RETAILERS.

Alfred Corner

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MUTUAL AID IN FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK.

Immediately following the publication of "*The End of Male Ascendancy*," early this year, the thoughts now expressed pressed upon me. Moreover, a merchant friend wished to see how these former ideas would work when brought into business.

Accordingly I committed my thoughts to paper, and on October 31st, 1917, I read the contents (now slightly amplified) before a body of London Provision Merchants and Traders. These expressed a desire to consider them in print and at close quarters.

The occasion of their publication is therefore in fulfilment of the wishes and desires of my friends and not in any sense of my personal intention. Nevertheless, as my object in reading the Paper was to be of service to the Trade and through the Trade to the Nation, this is my apology for their publication.

My friends and readers will find herein four main ideas, but not exactly in the order I place them here.

- (1) The extraordinary power of Free Association in Trade for Mutual Aid.
- (2) A practical proposal to combine and thus to practise Mutual Aid in the Wholesale Provision and Grocery Trade, thereby attaining Regional Distribution, and also providing thereby time and opportunity to the management for the development of Productive Distribution.

- (3) A Free Association proposal for the Retail Trade sufficiently extensive to secure the distribution of food in every Town, on the principle of Mutual Aid, which will offer and afford to every food buyer a membership, with all rights to dividends and advantages arising from the same.
- (4) Linking up each Town through its Regional Wholesale Centre to the Wholesale Distributive Combination. These, by Mutual Aid, to devise and working for an ever growing development of the food resources of the British Empire, including Home Production.

My friends and others may feel astonished at these far-reaching proposals, but I feel confident that our trading power as a Democratic Empire people can only be fully attained by the principle of Free Association in trade such as we have experience of in Religion and in Politics all the world over.

By transferring the power of Free Association to Trade, linking up all our home people for the purpose of Mutual Aid in Food Production and Distribution, we obtain a solidarity of movement and a community of action never before attained.

Thus, by assisting in the production and distribution of food values for themselves and reaping thereby the gains, our home people will also be engaged indirectly in helping to feed the world's ever increasing population.

By working at this principle of Free Association in Food Production and Distribution, every person in the Home Land becomes a food trader in virtue of his or her membership of the Town food supply, and indirectly every food consumer becomes a food producer. Such a desirable end for our National activity is fraught with enormous benefit to us as a people, and it is only equalled in significance by the marvellous extent of the British Empire itself.

ALFRED CORNER.

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CHAPTER I.

MUTUAL AID *versus* INDIVIDUALISM.

In the discussion which followed the reading of the original paper, doubts were expressed regarding the superiority of Mutual Aid over Individualism. I want therefore to state as shortly as possible the position as it appears to my mind.

The broad question at issue for humanity is this:—Are we to live in the belief and practice that the war of each against all is the law of our human life? Are we to live in perpetual conflict with one another, becoming thereby less conscious than horses who, “when attacked by a herd of wolves form a ring for their mutual defence”?

Are we not bound to ask ourselves what it is we are struggling and competing for? Is it not true that the higher our thoughts of life, the less liable are we to injure, and the more likely we are to aid our fellows? Is it not also true that if we were struggling for life instead of for a temporary trade existence, we should help one another, as in Free Masonry and the countless philanthropic societies, by every mutual combination that favoured our struggle? But since we have falsely represented to ourselves that we must needs struggle and compete with one another for a temporal trade or physical existence, we have ended in exhaustion. The result is that we have been obliged to put our conflicting energies under the tutelage of the State and to adopt as our motto, “Everyone for himself and the State for us all.”

Of course no really well-informed person wishes to deny the part played by self-assertion or by competition in the evolution of human society. But we have a right to-day to put to all such the question—What is your object? Are you working for yourself or for Society? Are you anxious to secure individual possession of something you crave for your own purpose pure and simple, or for Society, and in a broader sense for the Nation? Are you developing your business in the spirit of a great scientist exploring nature in the service of man, or are you simply asserting yourself for

your own interests and those of your immediate family circle? A man may kill another by trade competition as surely as with a dagger. But a man may rescue another from drowning even at the risk of his own life. The first is self-assertion, and the second self-realisation, and they are wide as the poles asunder. The former asserts self in antagonism to another, and the latter realises self for the benefit of another. Are you of that competitive and self-assertive order which works on the basis that meat and raiment for yourself are more than the vital interests of another? Do you assert that your competitive activity is worth more than that of the other man and therefore you are doing good by destroying *this activity*

If so, in what sense is it better? You buy goods to sell again. The goods you sell are subject to fluctuation in price from week to week. You are a keen man, knowing well the market, and you invariably buy at the right time. You say you give the advantage to your customers, who in turn hand it on to the ultimate consumer. But you do not stop here. You are making a name for cheap selling, and you must maintain it or fall behind. Consequently you go into the market, you force down, if you can, every seller; you gain your point, but the gain is so little that you cannot or do not pass it on. Yet your gain was the seller's loss. In what sense has your gain benefited any person save yourself? Your gain was the producer's loss. All you did was to shift a few pounds from your best friend—the seller—to yourself. I ask, Have you given any equivalent human or national service? Is the world richer and better for your activity? Has it advanced or gone back by your action?

On the other hand, if you are not so self-assertive and competitive, and you recognise that other men, for instance producers, have rights as well as yourself, you would approach the question from another standpoint, that of mutual service. *or cooperation* Let me suppose that your business gifts are even superior to those merely competitive and self-assertive. The seller is in need of your services and you of his. You understand relative costs of production and relative qualities, you know the value of the thing produced, and as you believe in mutual service you arrange your bargain with a reasonable sense of justice as between buyer and seller. You do not seek to earn a fictitious business profit as a pugilist would seek to win a fight by the use of his weight of body and strength of arm. Your competition is above the prize-ring order. You help the seller from

whom you purchase and the buyer to whom you sell. Yours is a just balance, and your scales are not loaded against the seller because you believe that business is not business so long as your business thrives on another man's loss. Over against your interests are those of your country, and your country only thrives as all its people thrive. When the theologian, Harnack, asks himself and the German people "What ends do we put before us?" he answers, "A German common economy," and "All business is to be a branch of German common business." Business is not business in the national sense when it permits a man to overstep another. Our commercial methods have invariably sanctioned this practice. Obligation and mutuality of interests are non-existent. Our ends are personal, anti-social, and anti-national.

What would become of military discipline if, when a regiment marched out, a few sprinters among its soldiers raced ahead in the name of athletic competition? The military order would be broken, and the unbalanced inclination of the rest goaded into activity, until the regiment would be broken up and chaos reigned in the place of order and discipline. The real function of the regiment would be destroyed. Its true existence is for mutual aid and defence of the Nation. It has a common military purpose to save itself and the Nation. What is needed is that trade, too, should have this common purpose, not a limited, individual purpose merely, but surely a comprehensive national purpose.

We are only now learning to see that trade must have this purpose of a common national economy. But this can only be attained on the basis of free association in every trade and industry, and in none is it more important than in the production and distribution of food. Food is the fundamental wealth of the people. It must be freely produced and just as freely distributed, and this result can best be attained "by the people for the people" in Free Associations which aim at the advantage of all.

In business we are not under Military, and we do not desire State control; but no elastic or self-righting plan exists to further our national trading interests in this crisis unless it proceeds from a moral impulse which admits the moral right of all to a share in the established results of the work of all. We shall have to postulate that the final end before us is one British common economy from top to bottom of the social scale.

I see more clearly than ever the necessity for putting a check on the aggressive rule of the individual since my observation and experience on the sub-committee of the late Food Control. With the exception of some half-a-dozen men, the prevailing instinct of the members bore all too heavily on questions of individual profit, while ignoring the common ends of the Nation; indeed, for them, there appeared to be no other ideal for the Nation than the securing of individual profit for its traders.

I refer the reader, for an exhaustive exposition of the place of mutual aid in the evolution of human society, to Kropotkin's little book on "*Mutual Aid*."

CHAPTER II.

DEMOCRACY AND TRADE.

War is the official scavenger removing business waste; moreover it is making us conscious, too, that food to eat and clothes to wear are the country's real wealth. We are getting back to the primal realities. The complex artificial things are dying before our eyes. War makes us shout, "Move on, gentlemen—keep moving."

In August, 1914, I wrote to a farmer giving him a sketch of farming chances as a result of the war. He replied, "Mind your own business, let the farmer mind his." But he recanted. A few days ago he expressed his sorrow because he had not roused his county. I now detect tendencies in our trade, which war in my judgment will make permanent. Producers and consumers will, under the pressure of high prices and low supplies, cut out the merchant's controlling power in distribution. They will seek to reorganise the activities of

distribution to the consumer's advantage. I suggested this to a few friends early in the year. There was then no suspicion of the co-ordinating proposals of the Labour Party. Now we know that each trade-unionist will become a co-operator, and each co-operator a trade-unionist. This development will probably double the co-operative turnover which in 1912 stood at £178,000,000 per annum.

We are so engrossed in business, and in great affairs, that amalgamations such as this pass before our eyes like moving pictures in a picture palace. Yet, in my judgment, it is desirable for the trade to reflect upon such a mighty development, inasmuch as lack of action will affect for good or evil the great mass of which we are a unit. Just consider the new possibilities before the co-operative movement with such an augmentation of forces as this disclosed. Be well assured at any rate that this Labour advance is the greatest menace to self-seeking individualism the world has yet seen.

In the past businesses were founded upon self-interest and profit making. Goods were sold which showed the best profit and were easily distributed. If the quality and profit suited, the origin was not a serious hindrance to trade. Merchants bought and sold without deeper reflection. This was our pre-war trade policy. But, as the war progressed, stock declined and submarine power became more effective, we found ourselves more dependent on Home Production than had been suspected by the many. The weak spot which I had laboured to strengthen was revealed to every man. But the merchant in pursuit of profit had neglected to consider the social and national value of Home Production. Home Production fell, and in the stress of war seriously failed. We now know that the world is rapidly approaching our own perilous national position. The greatest good for the greatest number is the end in view, but it rarely occurs to a man that his real business is to confer good on the world. Yet this must now be considered, for nothing in the nature of a pre-war standard of living is possible for our own, or for any war nation for five, or, more probably, ten years. In the meantime many merchant's businesses, and large numbers of retail businesses, will be short of goods to sell. Pre-war standards in organisation will not be possible. Declining profit will urge forward reorganisation in both wholesale and retail trades. Tendencies, did I say? Gentlemen, these are facts.

Moreover, I point out that Stores, such as Sainsbury's, offer to the public better advantages than those offered by

the cleverest wholesale and retail houses working under dual control. I point out the present wasteful method of separate wholesale and retail establishments in contrast to such enterprises. These thoughts are not peculiar to me. A large part of the nation has also awoke to their consideration.

A new consciousness is arising. The nation is discovering that its food and other traders failed to make adequate provision for Home Production. Home Production stands in the struggle of nations, as a cardinal condition of eventual success in war. Seven years ago I wrote in "*The Drift of Agriculture*,"—"The prosperity of Agriculture is a first condition of the health of our national life, a first consideration in national economic defence. A breakdown here is a breakdown in the valve of the nation's heart." This has now been proved to be only too sadly true. Therefore, the present competitive forms of our trade organisation, which overlook these fundamental things, demand oversight and re-direction in the national interest. A higher sense of duty is demanded from the merchant and the shopkeeper toward the whole community. In the past, as the merchant succeeded in competition he was accounted a good and worthy citizen. We know differently now. This condition must be altered. It is the producer who must now be considered. Competition must be regulated and reorganised in the light of the producer, the consumer, and the national interests. One would have supposed it was the merchant's business to consider national welfare. It is not so. Take the case of Sweden and Holland. Merchants have been so busy making money in feeding the Germans that the population in these countries are now minus the normal supplies. Tea in Sweden is £2 per lb.; paraffin is not to be had, and candles are scarce. The competitive merchant is a proved failure from the national point of view. Therefore our trades must combine, pool their resources under the directive control of selected men of wide intelligence. It will then be possible to sit down to consider the change in our trade conditions which will serve both individual and national interests.

Such an organisation will retain the best ideas of the past, but it will exclude what merely worked for the individual, and was contrary to national interests. In any such organisation, too, common intelligence determines that efficiency in distribution is better attained by the highly qualified trader, than by the simply competitive trader. The highly qualified trader will combine the two processes of wholesale buying

and retail selling. It stands to reason that to have separate operations, wholesale and retail, is waste of labour, time and money. Make them one operation. Reckon up the waste in buying and re-selling by the wholesaler, in buying and re-selling by the retailer—four operations. Count the hundreds and thousands of journeys made by travellers calling on buyers, and *vice versa*. Remember the handling and re-handling of goods, the waste in receipt and postage stamps, telegrams, stationery, clerks, attendants. Discover the waste in suiting individual tastes, in horse-power, motor-power in delivery, the keeping and duplicating of accounts and entries by the tens of thousands in the wholesale and retail ledgers, and we are faced with accumulated hindrances to the efficient management of business, forced on us by unsocial individual competition. It is so simple an operation transferring food from producers to consumers if we can only think it out. When analysed, it is a physical effort. It means shifting so many million tons of produce from producers to consumers. The future organisation will do this with the least physical, mental, and monetary struggle. Analyse from the national point of view the established process before the consumer gets the goods and we should ourselves be astonished at the complexities which competition has produced.

The war has made the nation a little introspective regarding its business methods. The air is thick with talk of reconstruction in all branches of commerce and industry. As living creatures needing food, I consider we can best be fed by a reasoned co-ordination of means to ends. Here it is:—Producers—Consumers. I believe no possible chance now exists for a trade which merely marks time waiting for the return of the competitive order, which can never again come back. Producers are not going to have it; consumers are not going to have it; the nation is not going to have it.

I had written this when I came across a startling confirmation from no less an authority on tendencies than President Wilson. Listen to the American President.

“War is bringing to the minds of our people a new appreciation of the problems of national life and a deeper understanding of the meaning and aims of democracy. Matters which heretofore have seemed commonplace and trivial are now seen in a truer light. The urgent demand for the production and proper distribution of food and other national resources has made us aware of the close dependence of the individual on individual and nation on nation. The

effort to keep up social and industrial organisation, in spite of the withdrawal of men for the army, has revealed the extent to which modern life has become complex and specialised. These and other lessons of the war must be learned quickly if we are intelligently and successfully to defend our institutions.

“When the war is over we must apply the wisdom which we have acquired in purging and ennobling the life of the world. In these vital tasks of acquiring a broader view of our human possibilities the common school must have a large part. I urge that teachers and other school officers increase materially the time and attention devoted to instruction bearing directly on the problems of the community and of national life.

“In order that there may be a definite material at hand, with which the schools may at once expand their teaching, I have asked Mr. Hoover, the Food Controller, and Commissioner Claxton, to organise proper Agencies for the preparation and distribution of suitable lessons.”

It is necessary to stress this utterance. It means much and will indeed go far. “War,” he says, “is bringing us to a deeper understanding of the meaning and aims of democracy.” Let us bear in mind that democracy means the free association of men in trade and State. “To these vital tasks of acquiring a broader view of human possibilities the common school must have a large part.” Note, Mr. Hoover, the Food Controller, is to supply the material. Well, Mr. Hoover is to show the power of co-ordinating the little and big individualistic and capitalistic productive and distributive businesses in America under a forced co-operative control. This is to be taught in the schools, because it is democracy in action, and it is the way to enable us to understand our human possibilities now. Contrast this open teaching in schools with the petty secretive littleness of so-called business men working for individual profit! Further, and in company with the President, a recent writer, writing in a book, “*The Doom of Youth*,” on the past and future influence of schools on trade, and speaking of the public school boy, says, “One hundred years since the old trinity of school, ’varsity and Church, won the European war, when England stood with its back to the wall against a tyrant. The last gleams of this particular chivalry and of the grim old square chins, who fought in the Crimea and at Lucknow, have well nigh passed. It cannot unassisted save the Allies of 1917, though it has fought as bravely and as unreservedly as of

old. But success had sapped the vitals of its old perfect self-confidence, and we must now have a new worship, new ideals, a more imaginative and communistic form of society." Again, Sir George Newman, the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, says:—"No reconstruction of the State can wisely ignore the claims of the children. It would be difficult to over-estimate the volume of national inefficiency, of unfitness and suffering, of unnecessary expenditure and of industrial unrest and unemployment, to which this country consents because of its relative failure to rear and to educate a healthy, virile, and well-equipped race of young people." Thus it may be said that the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, see in common what is to be and what must be done, to save our trade and democracy—which for good or for evil is in our midst—through whom we shall be governed. "You cannot be too audacious in your reconstructive demands," says the Premier to the working man.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT DEMOCRATIC CONTROL MEANS!

Let me state at this stage what I think Democratic Control means in trade.

Democratic control by free association is the result of the movement of religious and political thought. That it is now to be grafted into the hitherto isolated compartment of what we call "business" is an evidence that, when thought is germinal, it has no stopping place, but will propagate itself anywhere and everywhere.

Undoubtedly the ultimate consequence of the political vote was sure to affect sooner or later the production and

distribution of wealth. There is no "safe deposit" for securities which the power of the vote cannot unlock, for the use and purposes of an enlightened Society.

Inter-relations in the social organism have become so much the rule owing to war conditions, that wealth production and distribution can no longer be carried on apart from the free association of the people in all the parts making up the whole.

As a consequence of entrusting men and women with the vote, you have, as it were, entrusted them with your bank pass book and your cheque book. By the force of social gravitation, thoughts and ideas, which 100 years ago were the property of the few in business and in politics, have now become the property of the many. It is therefore as clear as daylight that when ideas are common to Jack and his master, they are both placed on an equality. The only difference is technical, the method of working out the process as between Jack and his master.

Because of this conceded vote, and unless superiority is shown in the management of trade by present and future traders, it will be impossible to repeat the wealth-producing conditions of 120 years ago; for that period, as we are now discovering, has outlived its generation.

We are going to arrive at something new as regards how we live and what we live for in government, in business, in society. All this I feel sure is bound up in democratic control in the State and in trade.

As an illustration of what is taking place. In the early stages of banking only men of outstanding integrity and business ability could draw the savings of others. But the world has moved since then, until as it is to-day you can entrust quite ordinary men with your money at the branch bank. So it is in every trade and industry. The difference in men is becoming less and less, and as a consequence the outstanding business individual is becoming less and less necessary.

I see no reason why joint stock banking companies should not be compelled by social gravitation to submit to my main principle of free association as herein proposed for the food trades. I prefer the many and not the few to trade in food and in money. Each town to have its own bank and its own food palaces, as we shall see later.

The late Prime Minister, after drawing a picture of the vast political changes the war will have occasioned, said: "With them will come profound modification not only in the

external relations of States, but in the internal structure and working of the societies of which they are composed. It is impossible to believe that this universal upheaval will not leave abiding traces in the industrial and economic worlds."

In connection with these forecasts from America and from our own writers and leaders, it is necessary to recall the fact that we have set up since 1914 no less than 267 commissions and committees to deal with trade arising out of the war, and that we see with our own eyes a silent governmental revolution taking place in the administration of national affairs. The great industries of every country represented in western civilisation are under State control. Food production and distribution, munitions, shipping, railways, mines, boot manufacture, the iron and chemical industries, are more or less directly controlled by the State, and exist only to serve the purposes of the State. We have in our food control the effort—a maiden effort—of the State to control prices in England and America. In England and America, where individualistic and capitalistic methods stood out as the last word and the greatest achievement (so it was thought) of the use of free-will in free competition, these have now fallen into an abyss, and they will never emerge. We have everywhere a State control which looks down in despicable contempt upon what Chicago could do in wheat corners and meat trusts. I predict that the awakened mind of wage earners will not easily release this creaky machinery which Governments have set up to defend the State. They will better it and use it for their own interests in every civilised country. Moreover, the controls set up in the countries at war will last considerably longer than the war, because poverty and scarcity will be long and severe. To cure poverty they will seek to use the war machinery. Moreover, they will seek to make it permanent, unless you can show a better and more excellent way.

In this connection we have also to remember the consequences which will follow from that minor revolution, the admission of women to the franchise.

As I revise this Paper the Women's Party have just issued their programme. They demand food rations, communal kitchens, and co-operative house-keeping. They say, "all action in the industrial sphere is to be based upon the principle that the interest of the community as a whole transcends that of the employer on the one hand and the employed on the other," and that Parliament should have the last word in all questions affecting capital and labour.

“Increased production of wealth is to be made a primary object by all engaged in industry in whatever capacity . . . the output of the bare necessities of life has not been sufficient to ensure even adequate housing, food, and clothing to the mass of the people.”

“The community is to guarantee, where necessary, to the expectant and nursing mother, the food and other conditions required to enable the bearing and rearing of healthy children. . . . Every child must be guaranteed by the community from birth until it becomes a fully-grown and self-supporting member of society,” etc.

These, then, are the tendencies—at least some of the tendencies—which the avalanche of war has released from the human mind, into the theatre of human life. But, again, the present industrial and commercial system is based upon the force of accumulated capital, just as the State is based upon the force of arms. Yet the civilised States of the world now acclaim the idea of “A League of Peace.” On the day I read this paper the Norwegian Parliament passed a Bill by 87 to 37 votes to the effect that the Norwegian Army and Navy shall in future be exclusively used to defend the country. The King will not have the right to declare war on any foreign State. This is an open confession that the State, in its relation to other States, has found that the idea of force which underpinned and supported its activities in the world outside, is based upon false premises. Ostensibly, force of arms in the State is used for the protection of its subjects, but in practice it is used to conquer neighbouring States, and it is exactly the same with capital. Capital is used to defend the individual—to support him; but as any man may read in that extraordinary book, “*The Town Labourer*,” capital was and is used towards the individual as the State used armed force.

Under the struggle of war, States seem to have arrived at a disposition of mind which will make short work of the present foundations. For if States are to live in peace, and if the causes of war are to be removed, States must offer to humanity the heritage of God and not that of man. So too regarding capital. If the State abjures war, and if, as history proves, capital has been used by the individual to beat down his neighbour, and particularly the wage earner, will the individual be permitted in an age of peace any longer to exploit capital apart from the State, when the State has abjured force of arms? It thus appears that a readjustment in the use of capital is absolutely inevitable. Capital will then be primarily for the State, but with the strongest pro-

vision for use in social and industrial enterprises. Let us remember what President Wilson orders to be taught in the schools. If we put together this and the aim of external peace we have that old social idea, "Each for all, all for each." We shall get something approximating to the abolition of external military State competition as in the preceding centuries, together with the death of trade competition such as we have known it in the rise of the industrial and commercial era of 120 years ago. This is no Utopia. We have merely to turn the pages of the Whitley Report on industrial reconstruction, now accepted by the Government, to discover that the wedge is driven deeply into the joints of the capitalistic struggle. But, consider the bearing upon industry and trade of such a momentous idea as "A League of Peace." When this is realised you will be unable to regiment the workers, or rally them under the specious plea that the State is in danger from external enemies. The State will then not be able to tax for warlike purposes. The energy of the people will be relaxed from the pressure of external foes. The order of political thought will undergo a radical change from external, to a search for internal enemies. Mark that. Money now wasted in war will be available for peace; the world will be in a ferment of social, industrial and commercial reconstruction and aspiration. The lessons of war will be driven home. The money saved from the necessity of preparing for it will be used in mighty schemes of human advancement. We cannot picture this august future, for our minds fail us. The world will be changed. No man can picture the future demands of a democracy coming into such a birthright. The war will have taught that co-ordinated labour and directed, reasoned, and regulated activity, are the foundation of all good things social and industrial. Great will be the cry for this new life, "A six-hour day, stop work at 50 years." The bearing of these outlined democratic tendencies upon our trade is real. The working classes who will come into possession will demand good service.

I predict that nothing less than great stores beautifully furnished and tastefully displaying comestibles, will survive under the order of life that a full-grown and vigorous democracy will demand. The mean, dirty, ill-ventilated, badly-constructed premises, offering casual goods for sale, will stand no chance against the trained intelligence of the capable trader who will construct and embellish his stores and set out to offer the best that money can purchase, and display it in a way to command universal approval. I believe

our democratic purchasers will within twenty years or less become the proudest and strongest democracy the world has seen. It is our duty as men of intelligence to lead the way, not merely in the distribution of food, but in its scientific preparation and production.

Along these lines we can develop. The future is great.

I want again to refer to the Whitley Reconstruction Committee. A sub-committee writing for suggestions from employers and employed observed :—

“We are convinced that a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and employed, must be founded on something other than a cash basis.”

This observation I think presupposes that in the relations of capital and labour, the whole life of the worker must be taken into consideration. This is a new note, a reaction from capital's doctrine, of a free and open competition for labour. The future relations of labour and capital shall be that of a free association between the employer and employed, and more or less for their joint benefit. This attitude of labour in industry is bound to react on trades ministering to domestic needs. What will its bearing be on the worker as a purchaser of food ?

Where are we to look in our trades for “something other than a cash basis?” If we go back before the rise of “company shops,” there existed “something other than a cash basis” between the respectable grocer and his customers. The local cheesemonger and grocer was a personality. He and his goods built up the business. His tea canisters and coffee berries were mysteries, but his customers preferred his mysteries. His shop was a meeting-place for the ladies, and people of position considered it derogatory to shop elsewhere. He rose to fame as the middle and manufacturing classes rose. There was “something more than a cash basis” to account for his success.

But a new order came, and the change was at first undetected. It was marked by a cash basis, a free, cut-throat competition and company shops. It was the shrewd answer of capital to the need of working men who earned wages by free competition among themselves. Wholesale buying and retail selling was the way to success. A large class of workers needed the greatest quantity of food at the lowest price. The old-established retail grocer could not meet the demand. If I read the economic movement aright, I must express my doubts as to the permanence of these shops under future conditions. As they subtracted from the business of

the local tradesman, they will in turn suffer by a superior form of competition, "Free Association."

Again, about the middle period of our industrial era in the northern counties, workmen, faced with low wages and high food prices, set out to cater for themselves in what is now the great co-operative movement. Besides cheap food, educational and other social values were desired. For many years efforts were made to obtain them. But ultimately the spirit of gain and the advance of a national education policy, left this great human movement for educational and social betterment high and dry in a scramble for dividends. Nevertheless, there still remained a social connection, a free association, "something more than a cash basis," between the store and its members. It functions as the old tradesman functioned to his customers. But it is more than this. The idea of a social connection grows, and the power of free association increases. This is the "something more than a cash basis." It is this problem which is grave for the wholesale dealer, small shops, and company shops. For if the present calculations hold, this co-operative movement joined to trade unions will represent 16,000,000 mouths. What is looming up is a period wherein, as the late Premier says, "vast internal changes are bound to take place." It is the rising to power of democracy, the prevailing power of numbers, inspired to struggle for "something more than a cash basis." They have as clear a conception of the value of nice things as any middle-class people. They will struggle for them.

If our civilization is to go forward, it will be when the workers become still further conscious through free association of their indispensable labour in the national life. This labour must be rewarded by a condition of living greatly in advance (from the social standpoint) of anything that free competition could give. Something beyond middle-class competition and economics must be offered, something which free association and mutual aid can alone supply and realise.

Free association, mutual aid for common benefits on a large scale, will produce in the workers larger ideas than those that capital would care to formulate. Capital apart from free association is shy, and would have no assurance that the great thing would come off or work well. But this assurance is already given by the use of free association in the co-operative movement in our trade and in the recommendations of the Whitley Report as to the great industries.

No stop-gap expediences of the merely clever commercial

mind can, in my judgment, stop the process of decay now setting in through lack of goods to sell, and from the closing down of small shops through the death of their owners, and by the extraordinary attractive power of free association in trade for mutual benefit.

The government of men in trades, occupations, or in nations, requires this motive power. A new era is upon us! Commercialism, industrialism, capitalism, mean exclusivism. They are not the last word in human life. First steam pushed wheels, then oil pushed wheels. We found light by wick, now by electricity. So with men in trades and in States. One advance leads to another. The gulf between the governed and the governors in trades, industries and politics, will be bridged by free association. Wealth, and what wealth can buy, will no longer be reserved for the few. Wealth as it was known, will surely become common wealth. There will be no room in free association in trade and industry for the business pugilist, or business contortionist. The room will be occupied by the business artist, or more correctly the business architect. Such men will be known as business statesmen. When trades are managed on the principle of "something more than a cash basis," and they are linked up in guilds, councils and unions, the men directing them will be as truly Prime Ministers as the Prime Minister of Denmark, for will they not represent in this country a larger population in such industries as coal, iron, cotton?

In the food trade they will represent the greater part of the nation. Here, then, is a tremendously large situation vacant in our trade for the display of the new motive of "something more than a cash basis." What shall be that something more, which you can offer?

There remains a grave moral question behind the war. Millions of our fellows have faced death at 1/- per day. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have made fortunes without risking their lives. Will not the men returning have placed in their hands a weapon of offence against our existing competition, if we are not preparing for them a better world than the one they left?

Let us remember the world will then be short of food and clothing values. What do you propose to do in our trade to lessen the troubles? Living will maintain its present cost, most probably it will be higher. But we must add to the increased cost of living, increased taxation, to pay the cost of war loans, not to speak of a sinking fund. It means a tax of 9/- in the £ if, as Lord Leverhulme says, we shall probably

need a budget of eleven hundred millions. Our affairs will stand thus:—diminished means of profit, joined at the same time to increased taxation.

Will 50 per cent of the present shops survive the first three years of peace? Will 50 per cent of the wholesale houses survive? Many will argue from a selfish standpoint it will be good for the remainder. But will it? Not if the tendencies spoken of hold true, or even approximately true. We must supply a new motive, “a something more than a cash basis.” The co-operative societies are adding to their existing “something more” their own Parliamentary representatives. As this idea gets home, I predict a silent economic revolution. Trade unionism and co-operation will hold the field against a competition basis. Co-operative traders will use the funds of trade unions for trading purposes, productive and distributive purposes; purposes of adventure will steal into every food trade problem, beyond any of our present conceptions. Here, then, is to be the new motive, inspiration, and enterprise which working men will use as they gradually emerge and become trade statesmen. I ask what new motive and trade adventure exists among wholesale merchants to meet this situation?

To be frank, I do not think merchants have any motive beside competition. It is possible some may contemplate retiring, especially if they happen to picture the coming days even approximately, as I see them. But that would not be an act equal to those of the least heroic of our 1/- a-day soldiers. If merchants have profited by the war, have they any right to run away in peace, just when the peace battle—the real battle, as it concerns the nation—is about to begin?

Those I know best will remain and play a good sportsman’s part in the coming fight.

“ Down the furrow strides the sower,
From his hand the live seed leaps;
In his heart the hope of harvest,
Little knowing who will reap.

“ So through life if I am sowing,
What to me the toil and pain?
If my brothers reap the harvest
I shall not have toiled in vain.”

CHAPTER IV.

FOOD TRADE REORGANISATION.

Having now cleared the ground by a survey of general democratic tendencies, I come to the concrete problems of provision and grocery trade reorganisation.

I am speaking to merchants accustomed to big figures, and, to illustrate the power of accumulating social forces, I cannot begin better than by quoting a few figures of returned expenditure, noting the tendency to rise as the war advances. Social tendencies are not arithmetical but dynamic, and in a real way are much more powerful than figures.

In the early days of the war we spent about a million and a half a day. When that sum was doubled all the superlatives of astonishment were exhausted. To-day most people can only stare blankly at the figures and wonder vacantly what they really portend for the future.

It is possible to trace period by period the growth of expenditure. Here is the barometer of our daily financial burden :—

Aug. 1914, to March 30, 1915	...	...	1,500,000
Nov. 7, to Feb. 19, 1916	...	...	4,400,000
Feb. 11, to March 31, 1917	...	...	7,260,000

These figures illustrate the vicious tendencies war sets up once it is started. But social tendencies are of a different nature. They come unnoticed save by the few, who are generally derided and despised.

Take competition as commonly understood, and we can quickly discover that it sets up vicious tendencies just as war does. Indeed, the natural termination of competition is war. On the other side, consider the lowly origin of the Rochdale pioneers. Twenty-eight poor men started to trade in free association with £28. They saw in a social sense the vast proportions the movement could attain, but not in figures amounting to 179 million turnover, or in banking deposits of

79 millions. They saw a social trading movement. It was a revolution from the chaos of individualism. Thus they could see immensely beyond figures. This sense and power of a social trading vision, together with their material need, formed the driving force of the movement. The few gathered together until the many were encircled by the same ideals. Contrast this free social trading movement with individualism. A great personality can influence many; but many small personalities can influence many more. Theirs was the grain of human mustard seed growing into a big mutual aid tree. My belief is that the results of co-operation for the many, are superior in every way to the results of competition for the few, and as great personalities are few, but the world is full of little ones, if we are to succeed as a race it can only be attained by linking up little and big through free association and free co-operative competition. Ideal against ideal, and not man against man, but man linked up to man for the ideal.

Therefore the way to conserve our trade position is by mutual aid. "Don't compete! competition is always injurious to the species, and you have plenty of resources to avoid it. That is the tendency of nature, not always realised in full, but always present. That is the watchword which comes to us from the bush, the forest, the river, the ocean. Therefore combine and practice mutual aid." Thus speaks a great human.

We have entered upon a time of social flux for individual enterprises, and of stability for free associations practising mutual aid in trade, industry and commerce.

Plato pointed out more than 2000 years ago a condition of flux in things physical, and human history from the start has not been a static, but a fluctuating state. We are certain to be entering upon unusual and most violent trade fluctuations if we leave out the practice of mutual aid. God helping us, why should we leave out mutual aid? We have it in the family, it must come into the world.

I have shown how a large number have and still are combining more and more for mutual aid. I see no possible escape for our trades from this process of getting together for mutual protection, because numbers linked up to moral and material ends will, indisputably, become the rulers in trades and industries, in the State itself.

It is so childish to argue that mutual aid cannot achieve the higher results. Every thing men do in machinery, in organisation, in games, is done on this principle. Each part

of a machine helps the other parts. Each part of the organisation helps the other parts. Each player in a game does the same for his side. But humanity is one, and in reality it can have but one aim.

Equally stupid is it to argue "Common men cannot manage business." Then why is it States have been compelled to seek their aid? Common men are returned to Parliament to manage the business of the State. How can men argue these same men cannot manage common business? We might as well argue you may send common men to Parliament but when they get there they must not vote, must "wait and see" what the wise and the cultured do. These are the men to manage the State and none else need apply. History gives the contradiction to all such foolish ideas.

Knowledge is becoming universal. So is capital. Capital can purchase talent. Working men co-operating can purchase talent from their funds equally with the individual or corporate joint stock holders of capital. With their numbers increased by brain workers, with a "something more than the cash basis" to offer, they will in the struggle with individual firms win universal support.

Can we do as well? I believe we can if we are prepared to act at once. But in my judgment the first consideration of any such action must be a willingness to put national and social considerations first.

During a brief stay in the country I conversed with many farmers on the regulation price of meat. One and all complained. To one I put this question:—Would you rather that the nation perished to enable you to make a larger profit, or, would you rather perish than the nation? Three times I asked the question, and at last got the reply, "I would rather perish." I replied, "Then go ahead breed and feed cattle. If you would rather perish, why allow this fattening grass land which God and nature has provided, to waste away when cattle could be fed and the nation served?"

So it is with your money capital; what are you going to do with it? Already I hear of some preparing to use capital in other directions. What short-sightedness, what foolhardiness is this? The first thing is food. Food to enable us to live and work.

I suggest you should pool your business resources. Shut up concerns which overlap, which create competition, business waste and worry. Practise mutual aid. Your capital is like the farmer's grass and arable land, and should be used for the common food supply.

Therefore I plump for a combination of merchants with all their present business resources, lock, stock and barrel. I plump for new creational values and for productive distribution.

You can succeed in finding the basis of combination on a pre-war period of three years' profit. On the balance sheets you can capitalize your combination similar to the milk combine.

Next consider the businesses which overlap and which can conveniently be closed down. Commence to conserve your resources, firstly, in the interests of the national life, and secondly, with a view of making your combination effective and efficient.

In the meantime the management of those remaining is continued as before. Salaries and emoluments are reviewed in the several interests of the combination. The older and less active men retire and will receive a standard rate of pay according to the balance sheets, whether their particular business is open or closed.

Presuming you have effective possession and the business is working satisfactorily under the combination plans, you should investigate the figures with a view to further economies, fresh displacements, and dispositions of means to ends to serve the national life. Such businesses which have specialized in any lines worth consideration, which indicate something more than personal specialization, you proceed to gather together for enlargement.

Little by little, as the combination works on a plan of strategic, or regional distribution, you will come to the conclusion that overlapping is still in play. You will ultimately evolve a plan similar to that of the present coal production and distribution order. From the combined figures of the various firms amalgamated, you will arrive at the prospective consumptive need of any given regional area. For this area you will find a strategic trade basis for distribution; it will be your final word in joint management and efficiency in wholesale distribution.

Up to this point I have merely indicated a policy of conservation in receiving and dispatching goods.

There remains the more important consideration, the getting of orders. This is a heavy cost in running a competitive business, and it is not unimportant in waste of human material and energy. We ought to remember the male population will be at a premium after the war. Probably every million turnover under present competition demands twenty travellers.

It will be an economy of men and money to get this turnover largely effected through the post. Travellers will be necessary, but only as specialists and aids to retail amalgamation. They will only specialize in the routine and method of the new order of things. Free individual competition will be at an end, for all that is now required is free intercourse, and that can be obtained by eliminating competition. Put the cost of each traveller at £400 to £500 per annum and you can save eight to ten thousand per annum on each million turnover. With the closing down of half the wholesale and semi-wholesale businesses, with the withdrawal of the labour and commercial help involved, you are on the way by organisation to add 5 per cent interest on the joint capital. Nor need we forget the general expenses saved in a business where competition gives place to free association.

Let me presume that this aspect of the matter is like "good wine, it needs no bush." There is a deeper reason. Our object is to be of service to the community, to add "a something more than a cash basis." We are to be concerned fundamentally in giving the best direct to the consumer.

The position of retail shopkeepers is or will be very critical. They have not the capital resources to stand against the time of scarcity. We ought—that is those who can think and take action in the matter—to be very solicitous for their welfare. Even in pre-war times the great bulk of them could but barely earn a living, and we ought in their interests to consider them in every way.

But the national interests cannot be adequately served by say a dozen struggling tradesmen in a given area plying their trade one against the other, when their combined income tax is less than each ought to pay for the labour, anxiety, and service rendered.

In other words, we cannot, in the light of present and future conditions, any longer maintain the freedom of the subject to do as he pleases apart from national economy, which is now the enlarged object and end of all labour. War conditions force us to work on the basis—we must "Sink or swim together."

Large numbers of retail shops will disappear, probably a larger number will be in continual monetary difficulties. But the old policy of competition, which kept alive such businesses, is dead. The new order is to be a policy of combination for better service. We proceed to set up in all suitable areas, as old businesses decline, strategic retail stores, and up-to-date food store palaces—something which

will appeal to the pocket by way of cash, and something which ministers to the artistic instincts. The citizen's wife rejoices. How are we to make the citizen's wife rejoice?

The War has produced many ills and many novelties, and none more novel than the local food control committees. These committees will educate and agitate each locality and possibly each man's wife as nothing else can. Turn every retail shopkeeper in every town in which your combination operates into a local microcosm of your own combination. The local shopkeepers should combine in the retail as you have in the wholesale. Start your retail food palaces on the bed rock of mutual aid. Every customer of the retail palace to be a member and associate of the town food supply, with money invested, dividends earned on purchases, and with all membership rights. Do this in every town in which your combination operates.

This is a concrete example of what I term free co-operative competition. The object is to serve the best in the best possible way. Not competition to cause to perish, but co-operation to cause to flourish. In my judgment this is the only way you will be able to meet the menace to individual trading which democracy carries with it in its rise to power in trade and in the State.

I now come to the ultimate suggestion which is fundamental to my sketch of business possibilities.

I have drawn attention to the want of insight displayed by merchants in neglecting the opportunity of developing home produce. I now suggest that future trade must be based on productive distribution, not simple distribution.

Merchants must consider the food production powers of the British Empire. They must take into account the development of our resources, and take an active part in realising the enormous powers of the Empire, together with their own and the Nation's interests, in the chain of production and distribution.

Under the working principle of free competition it is said "The price of living is eternal vigilance." Under this system 50 per cent of our body and mind energy is devoted to holding our place in trade. "The other fellow is after us." We must cut the price, offer better terms. To do this we develop the most cunning and pugilistic business practices in beating down the price of a weak holder of stock, preventing the producer getting an honest living, thereby tending to lessen the supply of goods.

This is pernicious activity in the social life of the com-

munity. It is competition. It is war. It is not free association, nor mutual aid, and it is certainly not co-operation. It is the spirit of reprisal, of dominance, of brute force. It is the spirit of Germany, and not of free and enlightened men.

X Save your minds and bodies by amalgamation, by free association, by co-operation. Save your mind power for conducting and furthering the greater business enterprises of the Empire, by cutting out strife. Save it for creative activities to which I now call you, and to which you will be called after the war. Save your mind power for schemes of conquest to serve in an enlightened way the material needs of the world.

Earmark portions of the joint capital for developing the resources of our native land, of the colonies, of our dependencies, and for exploiting in the interests of the race science and art in food production. Why should Holland exploit and Germany exploit the products of our possessions? Because we have no merchant adventurers, because our merchants have considered buying and selling, leaving the greater work of production to chance, to the humours of the passing day.

It will be found in the last analysis that "the something more than a cash basis" can only be added to the body politic by a change of view, by a development in our sense of individual responsibility to the community. We can no longer stand still, or wait for the coming of ships from Denmark, Greece, Spain, Holland, America and our Colonies bringing the goods to sell—the goods will not be there. You must help to create them. Productive and distributive labour in the world's life is that to which we are called. Let it not be said as of old, "Many are called, but few are chosen," for by a great refusal the dark night of human strife and revolution draws ever more near.

CHAPTER V.

RETAIL DISTRIBUTION, PAST
AND FUTURE.

Food distribution is a vital human problem. Let us inspect this retail question at close quarters. Food makes a universal appeal. It appeals to the most evident and clamorous sense we possess. Almost every physical emotion common to us is excited by the presence or absence of it. Therefore, for the people—the masses—to get a full and appetising supply is a fundamental bed-rock proposal vitally affecting every man, woman, and child.

Under a Free Association Trading Control such as I propose, it will be possible to set before all British households a range and quality of comestibles never before possible. For, in the first place, we have never possessed in the Trade or in the Nation a thinking and providing food department acting as one organisation. We have never collectively deliberated on the question of food—its possibilities and combinations. As with competition itself, we have used food without much thought. We were satisfied with time-honoured methods, and our imagination remained dormant. Combinations, ways and means to an ampler supply and a more varied dietary aiming at higher food values, were beyond the range of ordinary households. Thus, in our unimaginative way, we resigned food to the reign of competition, and things remained practically as they were. Contrast in this respect the fine French combinations with our British insensibility. Or take the case of Germany. I find that during three years of war 557 limited companies were formed, with a capital of ten millions, in the provision trade alone.

I affirm that extraordinary combinations in the production of food value are possible under a Free Association Control when it aims, as it will, at a national and not merely individual profit, which scientifically investigates and combines

natural food values not as a trade charlatan, but as a project, a national duty toward national health.

I mention four things in regard to national health which competition has not, will not, and possibly cannot do. It will never provide clean bakeries and slaughter-houses, or furnish full cream and clean milk, or destroy tuberculosis in cattle and pigs. I affirm free association for food supply will establish all these essential ends.

In the second place, the local life of each town will be stimulated to its highest, the moment each housewife obtains a free association voice and vote in respect to food values. No town council election will call forth animation so universal as the election of the Managers of the Town Provision and Grocery supply.

No mayor of a town council will undergo such a test for public usefulness, or will be more anxious to please and to assist in and to procure for his constituents the articles they demand, and which he possibly has been the means of introducing. Free association for highest food values will put the salutary competitive spirit into a man. He must now compete against nature, not against his fellows. His competition with nature will be put to popular approval. As we are to-day no collective voice exists to express approval or censure, but with free association, housewives will be free to approve or disapprove by vote at the town quarterly food meeting.

Adulteration of food will disappear, for the men and interests which occasioned it will themselves have disappeared, never to return.

The doubtful practices which struggling tradesmen use in the attempt to fight a death-dealing competition will also disappear. The moral atmosphere of the town's trade will be higher and brighter.

In the third place, we are startled when we seriously consider the functions of the local grocer and provision dealer. The surprise is the result of our previous lack of serious reflection on these things. The grocer is for economic convenience a local carrier. He arranges to carry a stock of household necessities near at hand, and his store is a local place for food, as the post office is a local place for stamps, money orders, &c. True, a technique of a kind is necessary under the competitive system, but it is only the technique of a carrier, say, for example, one who carries 112 lbs. against another man's 111 lbs. The advantage one grocer offers over another is slight, and barely worth consideration. He is a

carrier, for not a single household article originates with him ; everything he sells is predetermined by the producer or wholesale house. Originating nothing, yet he charges a profit, not as a carrier would on his labour, but as a producer would on his goods. This is the startling thing custom has permitted ; he charges a profit on the money value of the goods, and only incidentally on the weight. All that should be paid for is the grocer's labour, just as one would pay for, say, the gardener's labour. For, be it remembered, he has fabricated nothing, originated nothing. But instead of charging time for the operation of handing out sugar, salt, soda or tea, he charges profit on each article transferred. What should we say to the "handy-man" who comes into the house to do a little plumbing, a little painting, a little carpentering, and a little lock-mending, if he charged for each separate tool? Surely we should demur. In the case of the handy-man there is skill and a considerable technique, yet we pay such a man for his labour, and not for the separate tools used. Yet custom permits the grocer, the wholesale man, and the intermediaries between each, to charge a profit on the value of the goods transferred. The consumer pays all these ad valorem charges out of which fortunes are made, while the producers and manufacturers, as Lord Goschen, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, pointed out, rarely make such fortunes.

My proposal then comes to this, that the Town Food Association should employ its own labour, and distribute the articles, acquiring thereby the profit on the articles sold.

I am suggesting that the distribution of food is not an art but a labour service. Let me illustrate this point again.

Let us return to the local post office. We get the penny stamp for a penny because the Government originated the service of letter carrying, and provides the stamp for the purpose. The Government can afford to supply the local labour to supply the stamp and to carry the letter to its destination, because it employs labour in a continuous service to this end. It ruthlessly shuts out all competition and intermediaries, and thus obtains a full control from the moment a stamp is sold until a letter is delivered. I want to obtain in every town a food supply in its food palaces by free association, which will be one continuous and indivisible physical operation, free from all intermediate profits, as the operation of stamp supplying and letter carrying is free. We must plan for a direct connection between the producer and the consumer.

After the war, the need for food will be greatly more necessary

than letter writing and post office facilities. I wish to provide, by the enterprise of the wholesale houses and local tradesmen, working in combination with every housewife in free association in every town, a food supply—complete, bountiful, health-sustaining, so comparatively cheap and so beautifully produced, such as can only be done by a mutual aid association embracing all consumers.

But I would be careful of the position of the local tradesman. I would have more and better consideration for him than my Lord Kimberley appears to have as chairman of a military tribunal reported in the "*Grocer*," of November 10th, "In the first case the man was managing a business in High Street, Hunstanton, and was stated to be blind in the right eye and deficient in the left eye, and was classed C3. Lord Kimberley: 'It is one of Devonport's shops, isn't it?' Mr. D. F. Jackson, 'Yes.' The Chairman, 'You can go on working for Devonport, and give him my love.' The exemption given to the son of a wholesale grocer at Friars Street, Lynn, was also appealed against. The respondent's father appeared. Lord Kimberley: 'It's your business. Why don't you stop at home, and let him come?' The father said his son was engaged in the business, and if he was taken it would have to be closed. Lord Kimberley: 'Nonsense; businesses never close down.' The father: 'This one will. I cannot get another manager.' The chairman: 'It's your money?' The father: 'Yes.' Lord Kimberley: 'Then it's a hundred to one you will look after it.' The appeal was allowed, the man not to be called up till January 1, 'to give this man,' added Lord Kimberley, 'time to close his business.'"

Apart from the inconsistencies of Lord Kimberley's remarks, it is clear a kind of prejudice is here in favour of one and against another trader. We want to clear our minds of all prejudice, and proceed with reorganisation in the national interests without injuring individuals. Indeed, we mean to do good to the individual, whether a present or future trader. We are a wealthy, strong, and fair-minded people, and so let us proceed with the business of reorganisation in a really high-minded spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

 BRITISH FINANCE AND FUTURE
 FOOD EMPIRE BUILDING.

Let me summarily notice the condition of British finance before the war.

According to the "*Statist*," an authoritative journal, of which Sir George Paish is one of the editors, the sum of £3,836,104,000 is the amount of our investments abroad, £1,935,740,000 going to India and Colonies, and £1,900,364,000 going to foreign countries. A commentator remarks, "Even the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade do not appear to the public in general to take sufficient cognizance of such matters, although the nature of the investments may affect our foreign affairs, and may even influence our policy, not only in the realm of politics, but also eventually in those of trade and commerce."

This money was made in competitive business and has been invested by competitive finance. But I feel sure this period of foreign investments is drawing to an end. I have faintly sketched out the future under a condition of co-operation broad-based on our 45 millions of people, and not on 45 thousand investors. I trust that the Food Statesmen who must appear in our midst, will use the people's power and elasticity of free association so as to direct their earnings and savings toward food production within the Empire.

I want to retain our trading freedom and independence as a people; but if we listen to the "cat-calls" of superficial thinkers and mewings for Government aid, we shall have it no longer. We must rely upon ourselves. We must create our own food trade organisation on this or some such plan. Even the smallest organisation requires a thinking department. 'How much more does the mightier organisation of the Empire's food supply need the same?

But we may be easily bewildered by the mere size and complexity of the Empire when our Food Statesmen arrive. Our population is between 400-500 millions, but only 58 millions are white. Of these, only 14 millions, including men, women and children, are engaged in agriculture. Our home population is 45 millions, but only 8 millions are on the land, while in Germany, with a population of 66 millions, one-third is in agriculture. This situation requires thought, and an immediate remedy, and we as food trade specialists can help.

I, therefore, urge to-day, as I did seven years ago, that the development of Home Production is our first vital need. Co-operation in agriculture, with an intensive system of cultivation and new model village communities are ways of achieving this result. In the Greater Britains beyond the seas, we have lands and climates whereon we can produce all the earth holds best, and it is to these great problems that our Food Statesmen should by free association lend all their powers, backed by the 45 millions of our consuming and investing fellow countrymen. As our power of food consumption increases, our power of production can also increase by a wise application of the people's pence.

This is no dream, but a realisable Trade proposition. We propose to catch some more of the rays of that sun which never sets within the big Empire. Highly favoured of God, and given the mutual aid of men and women working in free association, rich and poor alike can realise at every meal table the enormous blessings provided by the vast aggregate of peoples of which they form a part. In the depths of winter we ought to be able to revel in summer fruits, if only we take advantage of all the seasonable foods of the earth, while it revolves round the sun in our colonies and dominions.

I protest that this suggestion is not a figment of my imaginative mind, but a Trade proposition which our Food Statesmen can bring to pass when we are linked up by free association in mutual aid. But there are at present grave deficiencies in the Empire supply. We need an increase of 50 per cent in wheat production. Canada, Australia, and British East Africa, can, if they will, supply this lacking balance. All the help we can give is needed, because the world is very seriously short of wheat, and will continue to be so for many more years. We are also 50 per cent short of beef and mutton. Australia may be able to make up the balance in mutton, but beef building is a much harder problem. British East Africa is looked upon as our favourable ground. But in respect to our meat supply generally,

it is certain we are in for a meat famine. I do not know that any of our people are planning how to meet the future famine. They are easy-going and thoughtless, and their money is going in cheap jewellery, high-heeled boots, and fine clothing. A day of reckoning is at hand. We are short of 50 per cent in bacon. To-day only Canada is in the running for the immediate future. Our merchants and tradesmen were content to leave Denmark in charge of the middle-class bacon supply, while the higher class trade was divided up among, say, 20 competing English and Irish factories. We have only two co-operative bacon factories in England and Ireland, yet Denmark has at least 50 of the same. Can there be any wonder, therefore, that the bacon rasher has disappeared from our morning meal? In England and Ireland we want at least an increase of four to five million pigs annually. Our present pig population is under four millions.

Here I should like the general reader to realise that in 1914 America killed 113 million hogs. How modest, therefore, is my suggestion! If we are to be self-contained Canada has some work to do, for American bacon is the bacon used in the North and Midlands by our great army of workers.

We are minus poultry to the value of 3 millions, and eggs to the value of 7 to 8 millions yearly. Is it any wonder the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. egg has advanced to $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 5d. as I write?

We imported in 1914 close upon 4 million cwt. of butter, representing a money value of say 23 million sterling, Australia and New Zealand supplying one-fifth. Within the Empire all the butter we need can be easily produced.

In 1914 we imported $1\frac{1}{2}$ million cwt. of margarine, while our estimated weekly consumption is between 80,000 and 100,000 cwt. In 1915 we imported 60,000 cwt. weekly from Holland, and yet the kernels, copra, and cocoa-nuts are largely grown within the Empire itself. There is no need to comment upon this lack of enterprise.

Cheese from our own Dominions represents almost three-fourths of our imports, and the remaining fourth can easily be supplied from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, our principal producers.

Before the war we depended upon Austria and Germany for almost 90 per cent of our sugar supplies. During the war we have had to look within the Empire, to the British West Indies, British Guiana, and Mauritius. The Govern-

ment have now taken steps toward a beet supply, and a factory for sugar production in England.

Happily our tea supply within the Empire equals 90 per cent, while cocoa only totals 50 per cent, and coffee only 15 per cent. There is room, accordingly, in the West Indies and Africa for a large increase in the production of cocoa and coffee.

Within the rivers and seas of the Empire we have fish enough for all. Yet with enormous supplies we have no co-ordination for its economic disposal. Left as usual to private enterprise, charges increase at every opportunity; and it is asserted in regard to home fisheries, that the cost of bringing fish from the bottom of the sea and packing in a box is 1/- per box, but to transport it from Hull to Billingsgate costs 5/6 to 6/6. It is evident from our present position that, if we are to make good the ravages of war, every trade and industry requires its own tribunal to elect or reject this or that proposal. That the Empire's task is stupendous is clear enough to all who think, but it is not beyond the powers of mutual aid. That mutual aid will arise as a result of one man's work is folly to think, but that the aid of all in the task of all is surely a thoroughly rational belief.

Here is a table showing the numbers of persons (male and female) engaged in certain chief classes of specified occupations, according to the Census Returns of 1911.

(000's omitted.)

Occupations.	Commonwealth.	New Zealand.	Canada.	Ireland.	Scotland.	England and Wales.
Professional	145	33	121	141	168	714
Domestic	201	44	214	171	225	2,121
Commercial	287	66	283	111	43	790
Transport and Communications.....	157	36	218	—	207	1,423
Industrial	562	134	737	613	940	8,424
Primary Producers (agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining and quarrying)	586	131	1,074	781	422	2,305
Total of persons occupied in specified occupations.....	1,961	454	2,723	1,817	2,066	16,284
Total Population	4,455	1,008	7,179	4,390	4,760	36,070

If we consider the total numbers in the industrial army and then remember the small minority engaged as primary producers, we must ask ourselves how and from where is cheap food to be had after the war? Our task is to settle upon the lands of the Empire, beginning first at home, as large a number of first-class men as is possible.

By drastic economy in distribution we shall be supplying labour in the primary producing occupations, thereby adding to our real wealth. By retaining an extravagant system of distribution the trade will be rolling on to bankruptcy and the workers to poverty. Suppose we remain deaf to these suggestions! What then shall it profit a nation to maintain an economic system which lifts up like a balloon a small number, while pressing down like lead the infinitely greater number? Or, what shall it profit a nation to produce a few trading giants, when the bulk of the trading people are nothing more than pigmies? A system of trade which provides lordly mansions and gorgeous palaces for the few is surely wrong, always recalling the majority live in four to six-room houses. We see the new road whereon all may travel without competitive jostle, violent falls or fractures. It is a road leading to harmonious co-operation in all that makes a man or a nation worthy.

It is our privilege to think in Continents because our Empire demands it. Unlike the Germanic race, we are the people who can safely map out for ourselves and others large cohesive designs and plans for the advancement of the trading power of the world. Let us rise to the occasion. Let us plan to reorganise our own trade amid the destructions of war, by inducing the people to associate freely for the common good—that people who have never made a secret of their desire for freedom.

What can we say then for the intelligence of men waging this past and present economic battle to feed, clothe, and house their bodies, in which their souls all too insecurely dwell?

I feel safe in saying that the picture of coming events, as I have outlined them, is the picture in which many business artists, architects and statesmen will add their details as the outline clears in their minds.

They will see that the nexus of a cash basis in human intercourse is altogether too narrow to permit of any really great moral and material works being done by the children of men.

By our religious, social, artistic, scientific, literary, and

musical fellowships, we acclaim to one another the faulty and insufficient structure of our economic and trading life. Be it known then to all men that, in my belief, the economic structure can be made so complete and so satisfying as to find room within it for the harmonious working of men in every conceivable human direction.

Give me common human "goodwill," and I will undertake, with those others who are ready to extend it, to produce all the desirable and noble conditions which this sketch of our Free Association trading possibilities foreshadows.

" These things shall be! a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

" Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free ;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity."

AN ESTIMATE OF SAVINGS.

HOME PRODUCE	...	...	400	million sterling.	
IMPORTS ...	...	...	380	„	„
			780	„	„
TOTAL			...	780	„
<i>Add</i> Approximate Profit to Inter-					
mediaries	...	...	260	„	„
			1040	„	„
TOTAL			...	1040	„

£260,000,000 is probably paid away to Intermediaries (Commission Agents, etc.), between Producers and Consumers.

There are about $9\frac{1}{2}$ million families in Great Britain. This intermediate profit saved would enable these $9\frac{1}{2}$ million families to live rent free in a £30 a-year house.



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

“The End of Male Ascendancy.”

Can be obtained from the Author,

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