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## History of Co-operation

ARTICLE 111.

## The Anti-Co-operative Movement

One of the most interesting chapters in the History of to-operation in Scotland is that which tells of the triumph of the co-operators over the selfish forces which have from time to time endeavored to destroy the movement. "It would not be very difficult," says Mr. Maxwell in his book, "to prove that opposition to co-operation is quite as and as the move-ment itself. From the very earliest records we find selfishness assuming virtues it certainly never p ssessed. In modern times this belief in the superiority of individual effort over that of united effort was not content to merely assume, but in Scotland, in 1888, it took the form of a declaration of war-not of open war, where competition and co-operation would have laid their claims before the unbiased judgment of the world, but a guerilla war, where the valiant defenders of competition could use their privileged position to cripple the most defenceless of the co-

operative army. During the year referred to the Scottish Traders' Defence Association was formed in Glasgow, its declared object being to sweep co-operation from the country. Soon the traders of other towns were affiliated with the central association, to aid in staying the onward march of cooperation. At first the press was the medium of attack. Co-operation and its leaders were denounced. Co-operators returned fire in grand style, and for a time

the controversy waxed vehem-ently. Mean and false statements were made against managers and foremen of public works, who were charged with using their position for the purpose of coercing the workmen to join the stores. In one case a general manager of a railway company warned his foremen not to take When the battle raged at its fiercest, the Scottish Section of the Co-operative Union sent a challenge to the Traders' De-fence Association to publicly debate the merits of co-operation

versus private trading. Some time afterwards the challenge was accepted. Mr. James Deans was chosen to champion the cause of co-operation, while Mr. Robert Walker, organizing agent of the Traders' Defence Association. was selected to uphold the merits of private trading. On 5th February, 1889, the Waterloo Rooms, Glasgow, was crowded with an audience comto when the champions appeared. Mr. gentleman who had championed their cause; he won golden opinions from his own

was made the recipient of a handsome testimonial from the co-operators of Scotland in acknowledgement of their high appreciation of the service he had rendered to co-operation. The direct effect of the debate was felt in the quieter and more peaceful attitude the traders assumed for some months after, although employers of labor were still being approached and urged to dismiss those of their employees

who still persisted in remaining members

of the store.

Co-operation Beneficed Co-operation seemed to have greatly benefited by the traders' agitation, for the attention of the people was now drawn to the subject in a manner it had never been before. This naturally incensed the Traders' Association, and in 1895-6 the war broke out afresh. The press had columns of correspondence, the letters, frequently anonymous, making more or less untruthful statements regarding co-operative societies and their methods. Public meetings were held in most of the towns in Scotland, more especially in those towns where there were flourishing societies. Speeches were delivered by officials of the Traders' Association, who certainly could not be blamed for moderation in the terms they used when denouncing co-operation. When an opportunity was given at any of these meetings to ask questions, the local co-operators arranged to put some pertinent queries that have not yet been answered. In the letters which appeared in the

In the letters which appeared in the press, and in the platform speeches, the principal objective was that all employers of labor should cease giving employment to persons who were either directly or indirectly connected with co-operative societies. But co-operators were neither silent nor inactive. Meetings were held, and the arguments of the traders vigorous-

reformers, and all in sympathy with the improve-ment of the condition of the people.

reformers, and all in sympathy with the improvement of the condition of the people.

The system of production and distribution of the commodities of life by combined action on the part of the working classes, or what is popularly termed co-operative enterprise, after more than fifty years of anxious thought and labor, has assumed proportions of so gigantic a nature, and its rate of progress, especially in the cities and large manufacturing towns, has so much increased, that a section of the trading community have become seriously alarmed. The columns of the press have for weeks been largely occupied by articles and correspondence commenting upon and violently attacking co-operation as a method of trading, and a combination of traders has been formed against it. The tactics of our opponents are peculiar. They desire to shake the confidence of the people in the financial stability and the beneficial results of the movement, even to deprive its members of their means of livelihood, and it is not thought advisable that co-operators should lettheir voice be unheard on the matter.

The object of our enterprise is to climinate the principle of individualism from trade and commerce, and to gradually establish a system of trade to the few, but will be largely shared by the whole community. Co-operators fail to discover how such aspirations and efforts can be either legally or morally wrong, and, if not, why they should be interfered with by any party in the prosecution of their work.

They consider it very unreasonable on the part of private traders to claim that to them should be exclusively given the privilege of conducting the trade of the country, or to suppose that trade should for all time be conducted on the principle of individual enterprise. It is admitted that private enterprise has in the past stimulated effort and conferred many benefits upon the country, but it has also been the source of much that is evil. We propose to eliminate it, and to do so certain changes are necessary. As hand labor has been all bu

Reserves at 28th March, 1896 Investments at 28th March,

1896
Paid for land, buildings, plant, and machinery, 28th March, 1896
Depreciation on same, 28th March, 1896
Nominal value, 28th March, 1896
Cash balance, 28th March, 1896 174.485 19 4

PETER GLASSE, Chairman. JAMES DEANS, Secretary.

In reply to the above manifesto, the traders wrote as follows:—

In reply to the above manifesto, the traders wrote as follows:

MANIFESTO
Central Office, 67 West Nile Street,
Glasgow, 25th May, 1896.
Dear Sir:—The Traders' Defence Association of Scotland believe that the time has arrived when vigorous action should be taken by manufacturers and merchants against the movement missamed co-operation, which aims at the destruction of all individual trading and private enterprise.

The association have printed a sotice for posting in factories, workshops and warehouses, and, in case you should be at one with them as to the principle of the non-employment of co-operators by private traders, a copy is enclosed for your use. While the association represent the urgent necessity of manufacturers and other employers of labor recognizing and acting upon the principle referred to, you must understand that it is left solely to your own discretion as to whether you should use the notice, but if you decide to do so kindly send intimation to that effect to the organizing agent, Mr. Robert Walker, at the above address, as it is proposed to publish a list of those firms who adopt this course.

The association will he glad to supply you with additional copies of the notice should you require them.

For the Roard of Management, Yours truly,
Robert Works.

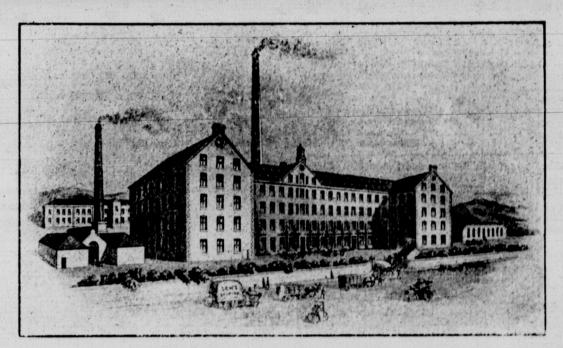
NOTICE. All employees who are directly or indirectly connected with any cooperative society must cease to have such connection before.
If they wish to retain their employment, or accept this intimation in lies of the usual notice to leave.

It is to be feared the issue of these manifestoes did not allay the bitterness, but rather accentuated it. The sentence that inflamed the traders most was that which says, 'The ob-

ject of co-operative enterprise
was to eliminate the principle
of individualism from the trade and commerce of the country.' From that day
forward they have made capital out of this sentence, never once suggesting that they had again and again threatened and promised to sweep co-operation from

The notices referred to were posted in the workshops of many towns throughout Scotland, and notices of withdrawal from societies were made, but not to an alarming extent. A great number of employees preferred dismissal from their employ-ment to giving up their membership at the store. Mr. Deans, in writing on the subject, says: 'A painful and most regrettable feature of the tactics of the traders at this time was that a section of them appeared to purposely select as their victims of the boycott the sons and daughters of poor widows, who were in several instances the sole support of their widowed mothers, and in many other instances there was evinced a heartlessness of conduct which constitutes a serious reflection on our common humanity

It is interesting to note that, despite the great efforts made by the traders organization, very many employers of labor flatly refused to interfere with the freedom of their employees. Mr. Peter Glasse, the chairman, and Mr. James Deans, the secretary of the vigilance Continued on Page 18



Ettrick Tweed and Blanket Mills. Property of Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society

ly replied to. A committee of representative co-operators was formed, called the vigilance committee. A fund was willing-ly subscribed to, and in a short time the sum of over £20,000 was at the call of

this committee.

A so-called 'manifesto' was issued by an individual trader, in which he set forth that after a given date the co-operators were to be practically cut adrift from civilization. We have only space for the last clause, which practically explains what he had said before:—'That we, the traders of Scotland, have signed an agreement that we shall only purchase goods from those wholesale houses and manufacturers who have publicly advertised the selves to be non-supporters of co-operation.' This 'manifesto' was of co-operation.' evidently a one-man show, and was repudiated by the officials of the traders' They felt somewhat jealous organization. of anyone else having a tilt at co-operation; they had promised to slay the monster, and they could not tolerate the idea of any individual interfering and partaking in the pleasure of even having a slap at it

in passing.

The Co-operative Vigilance Committee now sent forth a manifesto, which read as follows:-

MANIFESTO CO-OPERATORS AND THE TRADERS' DEFENCE BOY-COTT AGITATION.

Appeal to co-operators, trade unionists, social compelled to give place to a better and more perfect system, of which co-operation is the

compelled to give place to a better and more perfect system, of which co-operation is the pioneer.

The trend of affairs is obviously in the direction of associated effort. It may be noted even in the ranks of capitalists and traders themselves in the form of limited liability companies and syndicates. Competition has thus developed into combination, and the wisdom of the principle is everywhere approved by those in business, for it enables them to raise the price of commodities, or at least to increase the profit to be derived from them. It is, however, a two-edged weapon, and the reason for this virulent attack on the co-operators may no doubt be found in the fact that they have used it to diminish profits and cheapen commodities.

That the co-operative movement has been the means of conferring enormous benefits on a large section of the working classes is admitted by all unbiased persons, and the movement has on this account all through its history received the approval and support of the most emineat thinkers and writers in the country.

The following statistics will show at a glance the financial stability of the movement and the business capacity it has developed among the wage-earners of the country, but it is difficult to estimate the measure of comfort and happiness implied by this wealth in the homes of the people:

Number of societies in the United

Kingdom at the end of 1895.

1,711

Number of societies in the United
Kingdom at the end of 1895. 1,711
Number of members 1,414,155
Amount of share and loan capital £20,331,569
Amount of trade £52,502,126
Profit £5,397,582

Amount of share and loan capital £20,331,569
Amount of trade £52,502,126
Profit £5,397,582
The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society has been specially attacked, but the soundness of its financial condition, as well as the colossal dimensions of its trade, may be judged by the following statistics. dimensions of its following statistics:

any prominent position in cooperative administration. Through the action taken at once by our leaders this general manager in a few days resiled from the position he had taken up at the dictation of the traders, and allowed the employees their former freedom. Still the influence of the traders was sufficient to make the position of a poor pointsman untenable; he was given the choice of continuing in his employment, or leaving the store. The response in a case of this kind was, restore the man, or no traffic. The man was restored.

posed by arrangement of equal numbers of cooperators and traders. The audience soon made it known what side they belonged John Turnbull, president of the Glasgow Parliamentary Debating Society, made an excellent chairman. Of course, no award was made, but, whatever the traders thought of their champion, the co-operators were more than delighted with the

and even encomiums from his opponents. A short time afterwards Mr. Deans