

‘Therefore, it seems probable that the government will not be called upon, unless in very few districts, to make loans for the promotion and support of co-operative societies; nor, beyond the inspection by a registrar or other district officer, will the government direct, regulate or interfere with the free action of the committees appointed for the management thereof. The Raffeisen system has been so eminently successful on the continent, that with conditions equally or more favourable for its growth, it is difficult to doubt suitability and success in India.

‘The proposals now under consideration will not for some time directly affect the operations of the ordinary joint-stock banks, but in proportion as co-operative societies accumulate wealth by means of extended credit they will tend to increase the volume of interchangeable commodities, and when that happens the ordinary joint stock banks are bound to derive benefit, both in the form of deposits and custom.’

CO-OPERATION IN GENERAL.

In the preceding pages one form of co-operative associations has been somewhat fully examined, the figures as well as the appreciations given relate only to that form of co-operation, but from this it must not be implied that I have lost sight of the wonderful benefits already derived from other forms of the same principle as applied to the various economic fields. I have the greatest admiration for the marvellous results achieved by distributive and productive co-operation. The good that the workmen in towns and cities, as well as the agricultural classes have derived from both is so striking that it deserves the highest praise. To prove this I need to refer only to three countries where, under different forms, co-operation has been most beneficial to the humbler classes.

England is at the head of all so far as distributive co-operation is concerned. In 1903 the total number of co-operative societies was 1701, (among whom were 146 productive societies), numbering 2,116,127 members; the share capital was £27,017,278, the sales were £89,216,223, and the profits had reached £9,873,385. A very interesting feature of these societies is their house building. In 1903, 344 societies reported as follows:—

Houses built and owned by the societies.....	8,247
Houses built and sold..	5,080
Houses built by members on advances made by the societies	23,940
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Total houses....	37,267
Money expended by societies on houses owned	£1,658,810
Money expended by societies on houses sold to members..	1,141,267
Advances by societies on houses built by members	5,327,078
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Total	£8,127,155

Such splendid results tell their own story in a forceful language, and are of a very encouraging nature to all.

Let us now consider what co-operation has done for agriculture specially.

Denmark, the gem of agricultural co-operation, stands as an example to be followed by all countries. The International Alliance Congress report of 1904 contains these very striking statistics:—

	Members.
The co-operative societies for common purchase now have about..	200,000
The co-operative creameries..	150,000
The co-operative slaughter-houses..	67,000
The egg export centres..	65,000
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Total..	482,000
As compared with, in 1901..	400,000