

the principal is very attractive, but the difficulty of putting it into practice with all the inherent weaknesses and socialistic tendencies of the ordinary working man, is an altogether different question. Just how it is being illustrated in Great Britain at the present time. The legislation, which was planned to better the condition of the working man, is failing through the greed and selfishness of the very men it was destined to aid. The result of this experiment is not encouraging to the advocates of social legislation.

THE BENEFITS OF CO-OPERATION.

That co-operation will prove to economics what the railway train has proved to transit is a claim made by economists who have studied this question. They hold that future generations will see in co-operation a necessity as indispensable as the ocean liner and the express train are at the present time. For some reason or combination of reasons, co-operation in Canada and the United States has not made the progress that it has made in Great Britain and on the Continent. As a matter of fact, so pronounced has been the advances made in co-operation in Europe, that recently the United States Government sent over a Commission to study the systems in operation there. Reports from this Commission are now being sent back commenting favourably on the success of the co-operative method. In Germany, co-operative societies cover the whole Empire and have resulted in general benefit to all parties concerned. Not only has the general standard of farming been raised, but improved methods of distribution have resulted advantageously to both consumer and producer. In the same way in Northern Italy it was found that the co-operative method proved of the utmost advantage to small farmers as well as to the consuming population in the neighboring cities. In Great Britain co-operation has practically revolutionized the retail business in many industrial centres.

In Canada and the United States, co-operation up to the present time has been almost a failure. Efforts have been made from time to time to establish co-operative stores, but, partly through the hostility of the retail merchants and partly through the failure of the people to hang together, the movement has not been a success. There are signs, however, that the principles underlying co-operation are becoming better understood and also that the system is being put upon a business basis. Some weeks ago, a movement was commenced in Saskatoon which has for its object the lowering of the cost of living by bringing producer and consumer closer together and thereby eliminating the middleman. Already, these farmers have purchased their binder twine

direct from the manufacturer and are also calling for tenders for coal, flour, barbed wire, machinery and other farm necessities. A short time ago a convention of apple growers at Spokane evolved a co-operative marketing organization which is planning to be continent-wide in its scope. They are establishing exclusive agencies in 150 of the leading centres of North America extending from Montreal to Texas and from Florida to Montana. The marketing of this year's crop has already commenced and it is expected that upwards of 16,000 car loads will be distributed through the society. In other parts of the continent somewhat similar movements are underway and in many cases are meeting with a large measure of success.

The one great question to be solved on this continent has to do with the bringing together of producer and consumer. Mr. B. F. Yokaum president of the 'Frisco Railroad System, estimates that the people of the United States pay \$13,000,000,000 for farm products for which the farmers receive but \$6,000,000,000. Over 100 per cent. goes to the "in-between" interests, such as the railroads, storage houses, wholesalers, retailers and others. In Ontario, last fall, it was shown that farmers received but 75 cents for a barrel of apples which sold in Winnipeg and other cities for \$5 and upwards. After making all possible allowances for freight charges, there was left over \$2 as profit for the middleman. The "spread between" 75 cents and \$5 is altogether too much. Recently, Mr. J. Lockie Wilson, superintendent of Agricultural Societies and Fairs in Ontario, cited an instance of a farmer living near Wiarton who put in an acre of cabbages with the idea of selling them in Toronto. He raised over 10,000 head of cabbage amounting to 15 tons. Wholesalers in Toronto offered him \$5 a ton f.o.b. in Toronto which worked out at \$75 a car load or 13 cents a head. At this time cabbages were retailing in grocery stores in Toronto at 15 cents a head. In order to transport his cabbages to Toronto from Wiarton he would have to charter a car which would cost him \$42., leaving him \$33 out of which to pay for the labor, the spraying and other expenses connected with the growing of his crop. At any rate, the farmer figured out that he would be \$35 out of pocket.

There is certainly something wrong when poor people in the cities cannot get fresh fruit and vegetables without paying exorbitant prices, while in the country thousands of barrels of apples and tons of vegetables go to waste simply because it does not pay farmers to market their products under present conditions. What is needed more than anything else is a more direct connection between producer and consumer. If a parcels post will do this, let us by all means have a parcels post. If a good roads movement will help, let us establish good