

# THE CIVILIAN

VOL. VIII.

MAY 28, 1915.

No. 3

## Address on Co-operation by John McLeish

*(Delivered at Annual Meeting of Ottawa Society.)*

In presenting the report of the directors for the past year, I should like to make more extended reference to some of the points contained therein, particularly in respect to some of the difficulties we have encountered during the year, the progress we have made, and our plans for the future.

I have no intention of attempting a dissertation on the principles and advantages of co-operation, assuming that you are already imbued with its high ideals. I shall merely remind you of the fact that there is a great growth of co-operative sentiment and in co-operative societies in Canada.

Our Society is merely one of a rapidly increasing number of similar societies and this fact should be kept prominently in mind when analyzing or discussing the results shown in our annual statements.

In Great Britain co-operative trading has become so firmly established that in many departments of trade, the movement is in full control from producer and manufacturer through the wholesale and retail distributor, to the consumer and in the whole cycle of operation the speculative profit has been eliminated, every employee being paid a fair return and no more for the service rendered. There is thus secured to the people not only control of supply, but also control of the quality of the product.

In Canada we have a long way to go before reaching such ideal conditions and we must be content in the meantime to be satisfied with a modest saving, looking forward to the time when it shall be possible to establish

in conjunction with other societies co-operative wholesales and co-operative manufacturing.

Our Association has now been in business four years and during that period we have made total sales amounting to over \$209,000, not including sales of coal.

On this business we have made a net profit of nearly \$2,900, of which \$1,054 has been paid in dividends and the balance credited to reserve, or brought forward to be used in the business on capital account.

In addition we supplied coal to those of our members who were in a position to take advantage of the opportunity and although I have not the exact figures at hand, I think I am safe in saying that we have saved for our members a sum equal to, if not greater than the amount paid in dividends. A return of \$2,000 in four years on a capital of less than \$4,000 would under some conditions be considered a very fair investment. If we expect a larger profit we must provide the means for earning it, and this brings me to the consideration of a question upon which I desire to lay special emphasis, viz: the inadequacy of our capital.

Our debenture and reserve capital now totals \$4,491.52 and if we add to this the net profits of last year, we have a total available capital at the present time of \$5,613.74. Against this we have invested in equipment, after writing off a generous amount for depreciation, the sum of \$2,124.16, leaving \$3,489.59 to swing a stock of nearly \$8,000. When you remember