

# SOCIETIES ESTABLISHED ON THE CIVIL SERVICE PLAN.

The success of societies working on the Rochdale plan induced a few clerks in the London General Post Office to combine and purchase a chest of tea at wholesale and divide it amongst themselves at cost price. The experiment was satisfactory, they gradually extended their purchases and in 1886 formed

## THE CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLY ASSOCIATION (LIMITED).

The objects of the society were that all shares should be held and the business be managed by members of the Civil Service, that by the aid of combined or co-operative capital they should buy the best goods at wholesale prices, and after charging sufficient for expenses of distribution and management, sell them to shareholders and members at a small advance for profit; the chief object being to obtain better goods at reduced prices, and by so doing reduce the cost of living, and make their salaries procure for them additional comforts and advantages; their business increased with wonderful rapidity. They sold in

1867.....	£ 21,322
1868.....	83,405
1869.....	218,242
1870.....	345,889
1871.....	492,418
1872.....	625,305
1873.....	712,890
1874.....	819,427
1875.....	896,004
1876.....	953,197
1880.....	about 1,500,000

In 1880 the number of shareholders was 4,424; the number of shares issued, 5,021; the amount paid on each share *ten shillings*. The original shareholders, instead of increasing their share capital, allowed the profits to accumulate until they had a sufficient capital for trade purposes, placing to the credit of each share the amount that would have been payable for dividend. The business was increased by issuing tickets to members, giving them the privilege to purchase at the stores on paying about one dollar a year; the amount reserved for profit is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent on the sales after paying all expenses; although the share capital is small, their assets or accumulated profits are about £370,000.

## THE CIVIL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

The *Saturday Review* designates this Society as "the most eminent of its kind," and, speaking of its origin, says:—

"Periodicals and pamphlets published in

London had oft told the marvellous story of co-operative profits in the North of England. John Stuart Mill in his 'People's Edition of Political Economy,' had borne powerful testimony to its significance; competition was held to be the parent of all the advantages of the market, but the excesses of tradesmen's bills were felt to be a great price to pay for them, and eminent members of the Civil Service at length agreed to join the revolt against them.

"Ultimately, a board of directors was formed from each of the departments of the Crown.

"It was agreed to commence with a capital of £5,000 in £5 shares. Purchasing members were required to pay a fee of 5s annually for tickets not transferable, giving the power of buying at the store. The new Society was opened in the Haymarket by officials of the higher State Departments, who were joined in their rebellion by members in every branch in the Service—Home, Colonial and Foreign, by Peers, Members of Parliament, Bishops, Judges, Colonial Governors, Foreign Consuls, and other high Government officials, who had never before regarded co-operation otherwise than as the ignorant dream of dangerous visionaries; this Society has its Physicians, Surgeons, Apothecaries, Solicitors, Stockbrokers,—all of whom are well known in London as men of good standing in their several professions; they have about 12,000 members; the annual sales are about £550,000.

The success of two Civil Service Co-operative Societies in London is shown by the following extracts from the *Pall Mall Gazette* July 23rd, 1879:—

## "CO-OPERATIVE STORES.

"Mr. Charles J. Cox, one of the Directors of the CIVIL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY (Limited), in the Haymarket, was examined. He stated, in reply to Mr. Mundella,

"That the original share capital in his Society, for which £2 was paid, was now worth £77 to £100.

"Since 1868 bonuses amounting to £75 had been paid on each of these shares."

## "CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLY ASSOCIATION.

"In the last report of this Society it is stated: 'For the year ending December 31st, 1878, £7 8s. 7d. has been placed to the credit of each Shareholder.'

"The amount, including capital and interest, standing to the credit of each Shareholder was £32 3s. 10d. (These shares sell readily for about £55, the original cost being only 10 shillings each.) The net profit for 1878 was:—

Half year ending June.....	£17,570 17 7
December.....	14,928 0 0

Total for the year.....£32,498 17 7