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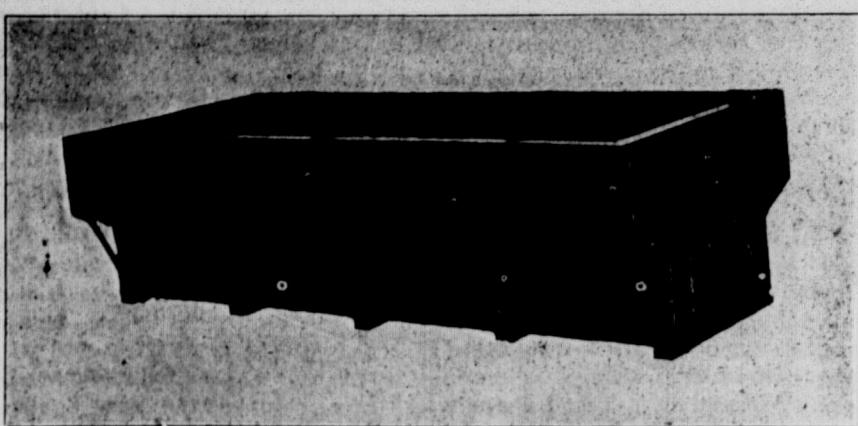
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History of Co-operation

Continued from Page 7

committee, called on a number of employers, who assured them that they had no sympathy with the tactics of the traders. One large employer of labor is reported to have said that he would rather close the gates of the works than resort to any such action as that suggested by the traders.

Meat Supply Cut Off

But the boycott proper was yet to come. The fleshers of Glasgow, alarmed at the great success of our societies in the butcher-meat trade, decided to hold a mass meeting to consider their position in relation to co-operation. At this meeting it was resolved, 'that the fleshers of Glasgow pledge themselves to refuse to supply co-operative societies, either wholesale or retail, with fleshmeat, or to have any commercial transactions with them of any description whatever.' Printed notices were at once posted outside the dead meat market in Glasgow, which read as follows:

CO-OPERATION

NOTICE

In compliance with the resolution come to at the mass meeting of master fleshers, held in Trades Hall, on Thursday, 25th June, 1896, intimation is given that from and after this date no co-operative society will be supplied at this establishment. Glasgow, 25th June, 1896.

The salesmen, with one exception, were compelled to cease doing business with the societies. The market is the property of the Corporation, and the markets committee, representing the Corporation, caused the notices to be removed. But that in no way affected the boycott, which still continued. Co-operators, too, in some mysterious manner were being partially supplied, and there was trouble in the enemy's camp.

The successful efforts of the Wholesale Society to bridge over the difficulty ought never to be forgotten at this time. Profit was no part of the business with the Wholesale; it was simply a determination that the societies should not suffer by the traders' tactics. Societies that had not been over-loyal formerly now found that their only chance of supply was through the Wholesale Society.

A Law Suit

Public meetings were held by both parties, and in a traders' meeting the business capacity and ability of the Wholesale buyers were attacked; the speaker was landed in a law court, but without result. To keep up the agitation against co-operation, two periodicals appeared in 1897. Each of them did its best (which was not very much) to traduce the movement and the men who took a leading part in its administration. All this trumpet-blowing and loud denunciation of co-operation was only adding members and trade to co-operative societies.

Up to this point the traders felt they were making no progress, and something more sensational must be done if they were to win. An advertisement appeared in the Glasgow Herald of 29th March, stating that at the sale of cattle that was to take place that day at Yorkhill Wharf, 'no co-operative society, or persons selling to or dealing with co-operative societies directly or indirectly, will be allowed to bid.' The auctioneer, Mr. Roderick Scott, stated the conditions of sale before commencing business; he stated also that if an animal was accidentally knocked down to a person who afterwards was proved to be a co-operator, delivery would not be made. But there must be two at the making of a bargain; and as the Wholesale Society, through its efficient buyer, Mr. William Duncan, was a constant and large purchaser in the market, they were not going to allow Mr. Scott to thus ride roughshod over them without having something to say. Accordingly, Mr. Duncan made a bid of twenty pounds for an animal that was put in the ring; he was of opinion that the sum he had bid was its full value. The auctioneer wished to know if he (Mr. Duncan) represented the Wholesale Society. Mr. Duncan answered in the affirmative, adding that he would pay cash for the animal. The bid was declined, and the animal was knocked down to another bidder for eighteen pounds fifteen shillings.

It has to be borne in mind that this market is also the property of the Corporation of Glasgow. On Mr. Duncan reporting the incident to his committee, the chairman and Mr. James Marshall

(manager), of the Wholesale Society, proceeded to Yorkhill, at the next public sale, to acquaint themselves with the methods prevailing there. It will be sufficient to say that they received a rather warm reception from the assembled fleshers. Sir James Marwick, town clerk, acting for the Town Council was appealed to. Sir James wrote an exhaustive letter on the subject to Mr. Roderick Scott as chairman of the fleshers' executive. The following quotation from the letter will be sufficient to show the opinion of the Council: 'But, if the fact be as reported to the committee, and stated above, they deem it necessary to remind you that the foreign animals wharf is a public place provided for the service of the whole community, and that no auctioneer or seller of animals there is entitled, or can be permitted, to discriminate between persons to whom animals shall be sold, so long as the bidder, whether a member of a co-operative society or not, is prepared to satisfy the seller of his ability to pay the price offered. In other words, the seller has no right to differentiate between members and non-members of such societies.'

The press generally took the same view of the situation as Sir James Marwick states in his letter, and strong condemnatory articles of the butchers' tactics appeared from time to time in the leading newspapers. Still the butchers held on their way, vowing vengeance, as only butchers can, on all who trafficked with co-operators. Local societies purchased their supplies from neighboring farmers; this greatly enraged the butchers' organization, which used every means in its power to get the farmers to pledge themselves not to supply to stores. The farmers, as a rule, rejected their proposals with contempt.

Wholesale to the Rescue

The directors of the Wholesale Society were equal to the occasion, and arranged for direct shipments of Canadian cattle to arrive weekly. If a little money was lost to the Wholesale in this effort, the stores were saved much annoyance and money in having their supplies brought to their door. This move of the Wholesale Society fairly upset the butchers; they at once circularized shippers of cattle and shipowners, and their chairman hurried off to the States and Canada to try to stop supplies. But all to no purpose; co-operators, through their Wholesale, had more resources than were dreamt of in the butchers' philosophy.

As the result of much earnest and continuous work, the Town Council of Glasgow at last moved in the matter. They passed what was called new by-laws for the markets. These by-laws made it imperative for salesmen in the markets to receive all bona-fide bids, and inflicted a penalty upon any salesman who refused to accept such bids. This, most people would have thought, should have settled the market question; but it only fanned the fire to a whiter heat. The Wholesale Society raised an action for damages against Mr. Roderick Scott on account of loss sustained by the society because of his refusal to sell to Mr. Duncan, their buyer, an animal for which he had offered the highest price in the public market. Mr. Bishop, of Leith, was also brought into court for libelling the buyers of the Wholesale Society in a speech he made at a traders' meeting. In both cases the Sheriff decided against the complainers. Still, the Wholesale Society, through its directors, were not satisfied that justice had been done to co-operators, and they forthwith raised an action against the Master Fleshers' Protection Society and the cattle salesmen for breach of the Conspiracy Acts, by conspiring to damage the trade of the society by refusing their buyer's bids in public auction marts at Glasgow. This case came before Lord Kincairn, in December, 1897, but his lordship decided that there was no case, and the matter dropped.

The market question had now somewhat passed out of the hands of the co-operators. The Corporation by-laws alluded to, if carried out, would upset the butchers' plans. They defied the Corporation, and the case was taken to Court, and latterly to the House of Lords, where it was decided that in such a market all honest bids must be taken in accordance with the by-laws. This was a terrible blow to the knights of the cleaver. They

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