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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE BULLETIN.



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The Development of the Co-operative Distributive Movement in Great Britain and Germany.

The co-operative distributive movement has developed more strongly in Great Britain and Germany than in any other civilised country. Although in some countries, such as Denmark and Switzerland, the movement may show relatively greater strength, it is obvious that with regard to the number of organised consumers and the extent of commercial transactions, the distributive societies of no other country can compare with those of Great Britain and Germany.

It is interesting to compare the two strongest distributive movements with one another, and especially that we should try to find out which of them has increased to a greater degree during the last decade and which of them is likely to attain the largest dimensions. One by no means inconsiderable difficulty in making this comparison is in the fact that with regard to the movement in Germany we have no such complete statistics as we have in the case of Great Britain. In the latter country, nearly all the distributive societies are affiliated to the Co-operative Union, and where there are gaps, these can easily be filled in with the help

of the official statistics, which are compiled in Great Britain each year by the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. The German distributive societies which are more numerous than the British, are not by any means all affiliated to the existing central organisations, nor can information with regard to the large number of unattached societies be supplied by official statistics, as these practically do not exist in Germany. German distributive statistics however, seem to have been considerably improved during the last decade, and we can now obtain information with regard to the results achieved by about two-thirds of all distributive societies existing in Germany ; we must take into consideration the fact that of the other third, most of the societies are small and unimportant. All the larger societies should now belong to one of the three unions, which exist in Germany.

It is true that the results achieved by eight hundred societies, even if they be small, are by no means a negligible quantity, but if we go on the supposition that the figures really are between 20 per cent. and 25 per cent. larger than those given in the statistics, we shall not be far wrong.

If, first of all, we consider the development of the distributive societies with regard to numbers, we find that in Great Britain the number of distributive societies remained almost unchanged between 1901 and 1911, whereas in Germany the numbers considerably increased. In 1901, there were 1,462 distributive societies in Great Britain and 1,683 in Germany. In 1910, there were only 1,428 societies in Great Britain, this number having diminished to 1,407 in 1911. In Germany, there were, on the other hand, 2,311 societies in 1910 and 2,355 in 1911. Thus during the last decade the number of British distributive societies decreased by 55, the decrease between 1910 and 1911 being no less than 21 ; the number of British societies may therefore be said to have decreased by 3.76 per cent. during the ten years 1901 to 1911. On the other hand, the German societies numbered 672 more in 1911 than in 1901, there being an increase of 44 between 1910 and 1911 ; this is an increase of 39.9 per cent, during the last decade and 1.47 per cent. during the last year.

We must not, however, judge too hastily and say that these figures point to a falling off of the British co-operative distributive movement. During the period 1901-1911, it has very considerably advanced with regard to the number of members. In the following table we compare the change in the number of members of distributive societies in Great Britain and Germany. On taking the figures thus obtained as a basis, we have calculated the absolute and relative increase in each country. Further, we have calculated the

difference between the figures in different years and have found the percentage of Great Britain's supremacy in this respect over Germany.

STATISTICS OF MEMBERSHIP.

	1901.	1910.	1911.	Increase from 1901-11.	Increase from 1910-11.	per cent.	per cent.
Great Britain	1,793,770	2,542,532	2,640,091	846,321	97,559	47.18	3.83
Germany ..	630,785	1,473,740	1,689,642	1,058,857	215,902	167.86	14.65
Difference ..	1,162,985	1,068,792	950,449				
„ per cent.	64.83	42.03	36.00				

From the foregoing table we see that the membership of the German distributive societies has increased both relatively and absolutely to a greater extent than has that of the British societies. Whereas during the period 1901 to 1911, the increase in the membership of the British societies was 846,321, in the case of the German societies the increase was 1,058,857. During 1911, the membership of the societies in Great Britain was augmented by the addition of 97,559 persons, whilst during the same year the German membership was increased by 215,902. The percentage of the British increase from 1901 to 1911 is 47.18, and for 1911, 3.83; the German increase from 1901 to 1910 was 167.86 per cent., and for 1911, 14.65 per cent. The large increase in the number of members of German societies has considerably decreased during the last decade the difference between the membership of the British and German societies. In 1901, there were 1,162,985 more members of distributive societies in England than in Germany, but in 1911 the difference was only 950,449; in other words, the supremacy of Great Britain in this respect, which amounted in 1901 to 64.83 per cent., was reduced in 1911 to 36 per cent. If the two countries continue to develop to a like degree during the next decade, the British distributive societies in 1920 will have a membership of about three and a half million, and the number of organised consumers in Germany will not be less than that in Great Britain. Thus in about eight years Germany will catch up Great Britain in this matter.

We will now turn to the amount of trade done recorded by the British and German societies. We give the figures in the following table:—

STATISTICS OF SALES.

	1901.	1910.	1911.	Increase from 1901-11.	Increase from 1910-11.	per cent.	per cent.
Great Britain	£52,761,175	71,861,383	74,802,469	22,041,294	2,941,086	41.77	4.09
Germany ..	7,784,202	20,635,269	24,778,614	16,994,412	4,143,345	218.31	20.07
Difference ..	44,976,973	51,226,114	50,023,855				
„ per cent.	85.24	71.28	66.87				

From these figures, it is clear that although in absolute figures the trade done by the British societies is considerably greater than that done by the German societies, the increase in the amount of trade done by German societies has relatively increased to a much greater extent than has that done by the British societies. Whilst the turnover of the societies in Great Britain recorded an increase during the period 1901 to 1911 of not quite £22,050,000, the increase in Germany was nearly £17,000,000. The relative increase in Great Britain during the last decade was 41.77 per cent., and in Germany 218.31 per cent. The fact that during the last year of the decade the increase in the turnover of the British societies was only 4 per cent., whilst that of the German societies was 20 per cent., is quite in harmony with the figures for the whole period. Thus the German co-operative distributive movement is in this respect rapidly gaining upon the British movement. In 1901, the difference between the two countries was 85.24 per cent., in 1911 it was only 66.87 per cent. We must, however, point out that in 1911 the turnover of the British societies was still greater than that of the German societies by £50,000,000. The average amount of supplies drawn by German organised consumers must be considerably increased before the German societies can overtake the British societies.

The German societies do not show such a large increase in the amount of their share capital and their reserve funds, as they did in the case of their membership and turnover, since generally the increase of their own capital is not their strong point. It is only with regard to loan capital that they have made progress in proportion to the increase in their sales. We will now consider the figures with regard to share capital, given in the following table :—

STATISTICS OF SHARE CAPITAL.

	1901.	1910.	1911.	Increase from 1901-11.	Increase from 1910-11.	per cent. 1901-11.	per cent. 1910-11.
Great Britain	£21,966,628	31,614,559	33,253,757	11,287,129	1,639,198	51.38	5.18
Germany	.. 647,140	1,386,136	1,585,521	938,381	199,384	145.00	14.05
Difference	.. £21,319,488	30,228,423	31,668,236				
„ per cent.	97.00	95.61	95.23				

A glance at the foregoing figures suffices to show us the pre-eminence of Great Britain in this respect. In 1901 the amount of paid-up capital of the British and German societies stood in the ratio of 1 to 34; in 1911 it was in the ratio of 1 to 21; whereas during the period 1901 to 1911, British organised consumers placed an additional sum of £11,285,000 at the disposal of their societies, in Germany an additional sum of only £935,000 was subscribed. It is true that the share capital of the German societies increased

during the decade by 145 per cent., whilst that of the British societies only increased by 51.58 per cent., still the difference between the two countries has only slightly decreased, viz., from 97 per cent. to 95.23 per cent. The share capital of the British societies is thus not likely to be equalled by that of the German societies within any conceivable period. The German organised consumer does not yet sufficiently look upon his society as the enterprise in which he ought to invest his savings, more especially the dividend which he receives from the society; the German co-operator has not yet assimilated to such a great extent as has his British brother the virtue of saving. The comparison with Great Britain at any rate shows the German co-operator that he must make great efforts in this direction, unless he wishes to see the normal development of his movement hampered.

Things are better with regard to the increase of the reserve fund—the distributive societies' own capital—as we see from the following table :—

STATISTICS OF THE RESERVE FUNDS.

	1901.	1910.	1911.	Increase from 1901-11.	Increase from 1910-11.	per cent. 1901-11.	per cent. 1910-11.
Great Britain	£973,889	2,166,254	2,362,870	1,388,981	196,616	146.62	9.07
Germany ..	294,498	912,544	1,072,248	777,750	159,704	246.08	17.50
Difference ..	£679,391	1,253,710	1,290,622				
„ per cent.	69.76	57.87	54.62				

Whilst during the period 1901 to 1911, the British societies added £1,390,000 to their reserve funds, and the German societies only added £775,000, in 1911 the British societies only added £37,000 more than the German societies, the returns of which we have. In this respect, in our opinion, the British movement shows a peculiar weakness. The tendency is here apparent, not so much to strengthen the societies' own capital as to utilise the profits to return dividend to members on the supplies they have drawn. Although this fact has indubitably favourably influenced the growth of share capital, on the other hand, it has impaired the growth of co-operative capital. In Germany matters stand very differently. The members of German distributive societies are content with a moderate dividend, and willingly leave it to their governing bodies to set aside the necessary capital for carrying on the work of the society. As this is generally done by taking up loans, the result is to put the society on a firmer financial basis by strengthening the reserves. In spite of this, however, the reserve funds of the British societies amounted in 1911 to nearly £1,300,000 more than did those of the German societies, which fact shows better than anything else the strong finance which is the result of their long period of existence.

This brings us to our last table, which deals with loan capital.

STATISTICS OF LOAN CAPITAL.

	1901.	1910.	1911.	Increase from 1901-11.	Increase from 1910-11.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Great Britain..	£3,326,655	4,851,753	4,935,164	1,608,509	83,411	48.35	1.17
Germany ..	£786,552	3,372,697	4,064,733	3,278,181	692,036	416.77	20.50.
Difference ..	2,540,103	1,479,056	870,431				
„ per cent.	76.33	30.48	17.63				

The figures in these tables speak for themselves. Whilst the British societies borrowed £1,608,500 during the period, the German societies borrowed £3,278,000. In 1911, the British societies only borrowed £83,000, the German societies, on the other hand, obtained £692,000. The need for borrowed capital is now diminishing among the British societies, but increasing among German societies. With regard to the amount of money borrowed, the difference between the two countries, of which Great Britain borrowed the larger amount, decreased from 76.33 per cent. to 17.63 per cent., and it is possible that 1912 will show that the German societies have borrowed more than the British. We are far from seeing in this circumstance a disturbing symptom. It is explained by the extraordinarily strong development of co-operative distributive activity and by the conditions of which we spoke when dealing with share capital. At any rate, it could be wished that the German societies would not borrow capital to such a large extent, this being not infrequently accompanied by a limitation of the society's independence, and it would be a good thing if they would strive to retard the acquirement of loan capital.

Unfortunately, other commercial information, especially particulars with regard to the profits realised cannot be compared, in consequence of statistical information with regard to the German societies leaving much to be desired. We must, therefore, confine ourselves to the points we have already touched upon. We believe, however, that in spite of this limitation the attempt to compare the results given in the statistical returns of the British and German societies has been worth while.

International Co-operative Alliance.

Ninth International Co-operative Congress in Glasgow.—The Executive of the Reception Committee of the International Co-operative Congress to take place in Glasgow held a meeting on December 23rd, 1912,

to discuss arrangements in connection with the entertainment of delegates to Congress, when the following programme was agreed upon :—

If practicable, before Congress proceedings begin, a large vehicular demonstration, consisting of decorated vehicles from the societies in Glasgow will be organised, the demonstration to take place on the afternoon of Saturday, August 23rd.

On Monday, August 25th, after the rising of Congress, delegates will visit the factories of the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society in Glasgow and at Shieldhall. In the evening the Civic Reception of Congress delegates by the Corporation of Glasgow will take place at the Town Hall.

On Tuesday, August 26th, after the rising of the Congress, delegates will visit Edinburgh. The Board of Management of the largest distributive society, St. Cuthbert's Association, will welcome the delegates and show them over the society's premises.

On Wednesday, August 27th, delegates will go to Paisley by car to visit the premises of the Paisley Manufacturing Society, where they will be entertained by the Board of Management of the Paisley Society. Further, a concert will be given at the St. Mungo Halls, Glasgow, at which there will be Scottish music, Scottish dancing, and probably choir singing. Cinematographic views will also be given.

On Thursday, August 28th, which is the last day of the proceedings, it is proposed to arrange a pleasure sail down the Clyde.

Arrangements are also being made for delegates to visit the premises of the United Co-operative Baking Society in the mornings, as that is the proper time to see the bakery in full operation.

Co-operative Congresses in 1913.

May 12th-14th. **Congress of the Co-operative Union, at Aberdeen.**

June 7th-8th. **Meeting of Delegates of the General Union of Swiss Distributive Societies, at Zug.**

August 20th-22nd. **Congress of the General Union of German Industrial and Provident Societies, at Posen.**

August 25th-28th. **International Co-operative Congress, Glasgow.**

Co-operative Legislation.

Taxation of Distributive Societies in the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg.—The Diet which assembled in November at Malchin considered the question of a reform in taxation, and on this occasion approved a measure, which is very unjust towards distributive societies, and according to which 10 per cent. of the turnover of distributive societies will be reckoned as income and taxed accordingly. The *Konsumgenossenschaftliches Volksblatt* rightly remarks that it is nothing short of despotism that the distributive societies should have to pay income tax on 10 per cent. of their turnover regardless of whether profits amounting to 10 per cent. of the trade done have been realised or not. Under the cloak of law, the savings of the industrial classes will be confiscated. It is obvious that such an act of despotism is intended to impede the development of distributive societies in Mecklenburg to the advantage of small traders, as during recent years the former have made very satisfactory progress.

Co-operative Press.

Konkordia is the title of an organ, which is published fortnightly by the Union of Swiss Co-operative Societies "Konkordia," whose headquarters are at Zürich. The paper is chiefly designed to propagate co-operative ideals and to give information to members. The editor intends to increase the size of the paper with the beginning of the current year.

The Co-operative Journal.—This paper, which has hitherto served the interests of co-operative distributive societies in California, announced that at the beginning of the new year, it would become the organ of the State Farmers' Educational and Co-operative Union of America. At the last quarterly meeting of the delegates of this organisation, held on November 26th, a resolution was passed, adopting the *Co-operative Journal* as the official organ of the union, and providing that every member of the organisation must subscribe to the paper. In consequence of this, the *Co-operative Journal* will be enlarged at the beginning of the new year and will widen its sphere. From February or March it will appear fortnightly, and later weekly. The editor announces that there will be no change in the policy of the paper, whilst the affairs of the agricultural co-operative movement will receive greater attention in the future.

Die Ameise is the title of a new co-operative organ, which is being published at Kiew by the Union of Co-operative Societies for Small Credit. The paper is to appear fortnightly in two editions, one edition being published in the Ukrain language and the other in Russian. The object of the paper is to spread co-operative ideals in the Government of Kiew and to endeavour to obtain the collaboration of the different co-operative institutions.

Co-operative Education.

The Seminary for Co-operation at the Academy of Agriculture in Berlin is holding the following lectures and demonstrations during the winter :—The Importance of Co-operation for Agriculture ; the Organisation and Position of Agricultural Co-operation in Germany (Prof. Fassbender) (one hour a week) ; the Basis and History of Co-operation and the forms of Co-operation to be applied in Agriculture ; Technique of Co-operative Administration, including the Administration of Co-operative Unions (Dr. Jost), (two hours) ; Co-operative Law (one hour) ; Technique of the Payment, Credit and Exchange Systems (Prof. Fassbender), (two hours) ; Seminary for Co-operation (Prof. Fassbender and Dr. Jost), (two hours).

Co-operative News Items.

AUSTRIA.

Central Union of Czech-Slavonic Co-operative Societies.—This Central Union which has existed in Prague since 1908 comprises distributive and productive societies and also credit, tenant and building societies. At the end of 1911, 231 societies were affiliated to the union, thirty-seven of these having been established during that year. We quote the following particulars with regard to the report on the activity of the secretarial office of the union in 1911, and the results achieved by the affiliated societies from the co-operative almanach for 1913 recently published by the union :—

Of the 231 societies, 150 were distributive societies, thirty-three productive societies, nineteen building and tenant societies, twenty-four workmen's clubs, and five savings societies. Statistical returns were furnished by 213 societies, which had a total membership of 45,934 and a turnover of 16,612,955 crowns. The net profits amounted to 454,947 crowns. The sum of 1,263,177 crowns was paid up on shares. The reserve fund amounted to 541,506 crowns.

The following table will give some idea of the development of the union up to the present :—

	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.
No. of societies ..	86	120	198	231
No. of societies furnishing returns	86	112	166	213
No. of members..	14,267	25,520	37,202	45,934
	Crowns.	Crowns.	Crowns.	Crowns.
Sales	7,180,300	10,340,336	12,459,972	16,612,955
Net profits ..	172,568	234,318	316,218	454,947
Shares	417,419	636,436	957,504	1,263,177
Reserve funds ..	191,847	271,688	390,304	541,506
Other funds ..	20,909	38,393	45,592	71,782
Members' savings deposits ..	352,405	559,210	1,505,667	1,191,656
No. of employees	609	831	922	1,200

This table shows that since 1908, the Czech-Slavonic societies have achieved a very great development. The number of societies has increased by 169 per cent. and the number of members by 213 per cent. The amount of trade done has been augmented by 128 per cent. and the number of employees by 97 per cent.

We find that the 137 distributive societies which sent in returns, had a total membership of 36,217 persons, and a turnover of 10,750,000 crowns. The net profits amounted to 361,136 crowns, and the paid-up share capital to 484,838 crowns, the savings deposits to 600,280 crowns, the reserve funds to 297,901 crowns, the benevolent funds to 71,782 crowns. The goods in stock were valued at 1,414,366 crowns; the money owing to the societies on goods was estimated at 822,392 crowns, and the money owed by the societies for goods was estimated at 364,964 crowns. It was calculated that on an average each member drew supplies to the value of 297 crowns. Of the turnover, 10.85 per cent. was gross profit and 3.35 per cent. net profit.

Of thirty-one productive societies, the membership was 2,184, and the sales 5,500,000 crowns. The net profits amounted to 61,891 crowns, the paid-up share capital to 270,263 crowns, the saving deposits to 127,841 crowns, and the reserve funds to 203,485 crowns; the goods in stock were valued at 325,365 crowns, and the money owing for materials amounted to 609,296 crowns.

The membership of twenty-two working-men's clubs was 3,075; the turnover amounted to 313,416 crowns, the net profits to 11,651 crowns, and

the losses incurred by two societies to 58,729 crowns. The real estate was valued at 2,319,697 crowns; the debts on mortgage amounted to 1,621,082 crowns, loans to 572,202 crowns, share capital to 174,286 crowns, savings deposits to 76,272 crowns, and the reserve funds to 14,681 crowns.

The membership of eighteen building and tenant societies amounted to 1,999. The sum of 166,494 crowns was paid up on share capital, and the savings deposits amounted to 448,304 crowns. The book value of the buildings was 1,416,002 crowns. The mortgages amounted to 1,032,858 crowns. The profits realised amounted to 2,650 crowns, a few societies having to record losses amounting to 1,453 crowns.

The offices of the union record great propagandist activity. During 1911, 109 meetings, at which addresses were given, were organised by the union. Eighty-three audits were undertaken by the union's auditors. Two courses of lectures were organised for the employees and members of the committees of the societies. The money received by the union during 1911 amounted to 29,157 crowns, and the expenses to 28,124 crowns. The capital of the union has increased to 4,476 crowns, having been saved out of the contributions. The union has applied itself very energetically to the question of the co-operative press; it now publishes two organs. The one, which bears the name *Druzstevnik*, is intended for the use of the directors of societies and has a circulation of 2,000; the other, which serves the purpose of co-operative propaganda, is entitled *Prukopnik*; this has a circulation of 25,000.

The Wholesale Society of the Czech Distributive Societies, Prague.

—We have previously mentioned the fact that this society intended to be transformed into a limited liability company, and this has recently been effected, the society's capital now amounting to 200,000 crowns. This transformation has been most favourable to the development of the society, there being a considerable increase in the amount of trade done; the turnover may be calculated to have reached the sum of 2,800,000 crowns in 1912. As compared with the previous year, there has been an increase of about 50 per cent. in the amount of trade done.

Statistics of the Czech Credit Societies, 1909.—A book of statistics of the credit societies in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and Lower Austria has recently been compiled by Jednota Zalozen, which is the Union of Credit Societies in Bohemia. This is the twenty-sixth volume of annual statistics published by the Union, and it contains full returns of 798 Schulze-Delitzsch

societies. Of the 798 societies which furnished returns, 674 are urban, there being 357 such societies in Bohemia, 291 in Moravia, 15 in Silesia, and 11 in Lower Austria. 662 societies were registered under the law of 1873. There were 152 societies with unlimited and 510 societies with limited liability; further, there were 12 societies which were not registered, and 124 district agricultural societies constituted according to the law of the Diet for the Kingdom of Bohemia. The members of the latter societies may only be admitted as such if they are owners of real estate in the district. The 654 urban societies which furnished returns had a membership of 376,295 at the end of 1909, 818,810 shares having been taken up. The paid up capital amounted to 22,800,000 crowns, the reserves to 47,100,000 crowns, the pension and other funds totalled 4,750,000 crowns. The societies' own capital stood at 74,650,000 crowns. There were 726,000,000 crowns of savings deposits, 316,700,000 crowns of which had been paid in, and 305,800,000 crowns withdrawn, thus there was an increase of 10,900,000 crowns in capital in the form of deposits. At the end of 1909 a sum of 40,400,000 crowns had to be paid on loan capital, the total loan capital amounting to 766,400,000 crowns. The proportion of the societies' own capital as compared with the loan capital was in the ratio of 1-10.27 per cent. The assets amounted to 855,200,000 crowns, whilst the loans granted to members and other debtors only reached the sum of 650,500,000 crowns, 538,700,000 crowns having been paid out, 494,600,000 crowns of which was repaid; thus there was an increase of 44,100,000 crowns in the capital invested in loans to members and other debtors. Of the total amount granted in loans, 40.08 per cent was granted on personal credit, 57.58 per cent. on mortgages and 2.34 per cent. on other securities. The net profits amounted to 3,990,000 crowns and gross profits to 6,350,000 crowns. A sum of 2,520,000 crowns was placed to the reserve fund, 1,150,000 crowns was paid in interest and dividend on members' shares, whilst 660,000 crowns was granted to charities and other public funds. A sum of 490,000 crowns was paid in salaries and wages to board members and employees, and a further 680,000 crowns was written off for depreciation of the societies' own buildings. 200,000 crowns was written off from the reserve fund for loss on exchange and trade on credit. Management expenses, salaries to clerks, rent of offices and other expenses totalled 3,800,000 crowns, or 0.5 per cent. of the capital, whilst taxes came to 1,100,000 crowns or 0.13 per cent. of the capital.

The district agricultural societies had 195,368 members owning real estate. Their stock in hand amounted to 13,870,000 crowns, the reserve fund stood at 4,690,000 crowns, whilst the pension and other funds amounted to 870,000 crowns. The societies' own capital reached the sum of 19,400,000

crowns, savings deposits came to 159,010,000 crowns, 60,700,000 crowns being paid in and 54,700,000 crowns being withdrawn during the year. Thus there was an increase of 6,000,000 crowns in the savings deposits capital. 2,100,000 crowns had to be paid on loan capital, the total loan capital amounting to 161,200,000 crowns. The proportion of the societies' own capital to the borrowed capital was in the ratio of 1-8.29 per cent. The total assets of the agricultural societies amounted to 182,690,000 crowns. A sum of 142,300,000 crowns was put aside for loans, of which amount 64,800,000 crowns was paid out, whilst 50,800,000 crowns was repaid. 42.2 per cent. of the total amount granted in loans was granted as personal credit, 55.5 per cent. on mortgages, and 2.3 per cent. on other securities. The net profits amounted to 930,000 crowns, gross profits to 970,000 crowns. Of the total profits, 170,000 crowns was allocated to the reserve fund, 520,000 crowns was paid as dividend to members, whilst 100,000 crowns was devoted to charitable and other purposes. Taxes amounted to 220,000 crowns, or 12 per cent. of the total capital; management expenses necessitated an outlay of 730,000 crowns, whilst 0.43 per cent. of the total capital was spent in salaries, rent of offices, &c.

FINLAND:

The Struggle between Co-operation and Private Traders with regard to the Export of Butter.—Previous to 1905, the sale of butter in Finland was entirely in the hands of individual merchants. In order to put the butter trade on a sound basis and to make it independent of all manner of double dealing in the quotation of prices and to help the agriculturists to save millions, which in the past had found their way to the pockets of those who are quite opposed to the agriculturists, the co-operative society, "Valio," for the export of butter, was established. This society has worked to the satisfaction of agriculturists and has won their confidence. Since its establishment, the amount of trade done by the "Valio" has increased regularly, as is shown by the following table:—

Year.		Drittel.	Percentage as compared with total export of the Hangö.
1906	..	56,595	.. 20.9
1907	..	86,739	.. 38.1
1909	..	87,719	.. 42.4
1911	..	104,683	.. 47.8

In 1911, 150 of the three hundred and more co-operative dairies in existence in Finland, were affiliated to the "Valio." Special stress must be laid upon the fact that according to the rules of the "Valio," only first-class dairies can be admitted to membership. It is owing to the efforts of

this organisation that the quality of Finnish butter has improved so rapidly during the last few years. When consignments of butter arrive at the "Valio," they are submitted to a committee composed of three persons, who judge the quality of the butter and thus fix the price. Thus those who supply the butter are obliged to use every effort to obtain good quality. The "Valio" pays its affiliated dairies on an average prices equal to the highest quotations in Copenhagen.

Year.				Amount under Copenhagen prices.
1906	..	..	..	6.43 crowns.
1907	..	..	..	5.01 "
1909	..	..	..	2.93 "
1911	..	..	..	1.25 "

A great deal of Finnish butter, more especially the inferior qualities, has up till now been put on the world's market by individual traders. At all events, the "Valio" by its activity has succeeded in gradually reducing the profits realised by the individual traders. This continual development of the "Valio" has already proved so disastrous to the individual exporters of butter that this year the largest individual trader in butter in Finland, up till now one of the bitterest opponents of the co-operative movement, has turned his business into a co-operative society. It is related of Saul that when on the way to Damascus, he became changed into Paul, *i.e.*, he became an ardent advocate of those ideas which he had previously opposed. Finnish co-operators could not believe that a trader who was always practising commercial principles which were so strongly opposed to Co-operation, could so soon become an ardent co-operator from conviction. Indeed, certain facts have undoubtedly led us to believe that this is not the case. The co-operative society "Oma" has supporters and patrons amongst those who were but a short while ago opponents of the co-operative movement. The new society roused a great agitation; the "Oma's" banner was inscribed as follows:—"Competition is the elixir of life, it also animates the co-operative movement." By all this agitation, the organisation was able to obtain twelve or fifteen dairies as members. The "Oma" now does a fairly large business, since naturally it sells the butter formerly disposed of by its founder. These twelve members would not have been gained, had it not been for the fact that in some parts of the country disunity was induced among agriculturists formerly working in unity. For example, in one dairy the great majority of the small peasants wished the dairy to become affiliated to the "Valio," but a few of the more important land-owners imposed their will, by threatening to resign membership in the dairy, which would have meant ruin; thus the dairy was forced to become affiliated to the "Oma."

The new co-operative society for the export of butter also tried to agitate abroad, and sought to alienate the old commercial friends of the "Valio" by quoting lower prices. Although, in this way the "Oma" competed with the "Valio," it was the intention of the directors of the former society, when it had gained a footing, to form a ring with the "Valio" and thus to do away with competition. Throughout, the old commercial spirit has been visible in the actions of the newer society.

Although the society "Oma" purposed doing away with co-operative dairies in Finland and caused small passing disturbances, indirectly and involuntarily, it has rendered great service to the co-operative movement. For owing to the appearance of the "Oma," a wave of co-operative feeling has swept over the whole country. The newspapers and periodicals headed by *Pellervo*, which has a circulation of more than 40,000 among the agriculturists, have published many articles on this subject and have unsparingly uncovered the selfish motives of the new butter export society, which have been concealed under the cloak of Co-operation. These articles explained that competition is incompatible with Co-operation, and would only be harmful to it. Further stress is laid upon the fact that it is unreasonable to establish several butter export societies in our country, as all our butter is exported from one port and the "Valio" is quite able to export all the butter produced in Finland. General opinion seems to take a rather severe view of the attempt of the new butter export society to bring about a split. Only a few conservative papers, which have viewed the development of the true co-operative movement with disapproval, have welcomed this attempt; one of the organs of the private traders, which has always strenuously opposed the co-operative movement, has ranged itself on the side of the attempt to bring about a split. As a matter of fact, the result has been that those forces, which strove to oppose the co-operative movement in Finland, have given a strong impetus to its development. During the last year twenty-two new co-operative dairies have become affiliated to the "Valio," in addition to the one hundred and fifty societies already members; amongst these are several which used to send their butter to the manager of the "Oma," when he carried on business as a private trader. Further, these magazine articles and essays on practical Co-operation, which were called forth by the attempt of the "Oma," have done more than have purely theoretical expositions to disseminate co-operative ideals among those classes which had hitherto had only a superficial knowledge of these matters.

FRANCE.

Statistics of Productive Societies in 1911.—In the October number of the *Bulletin de l'Office du Travail*, the official report of the Board of Trade is published, in which are given the returns furnished by the productive societies on January 1st, 1912. According to this report there were at the end of 1911, 496 working men's productive societies situated in 72 departments. During 1911, 47 productive societies were wound up, while 36 new societies were founded, so that there was a decrease of 11 in the number of societies. As compared with the previous year there has been a slight decrease in the number of societies which have been wound up, whilst there has been an increase in the newly-established societies. The productive societies in France still continue to fluctuate. The majority of the productive societies, *i.e.*, 184—almost half of the total number of the existing societies—are situated in the Seine Department (Paris and district). With the exception of the Département du Rhône, the number of productive societies in the other departments is less than 20.

The productive societies pursue the following trades and industries:—Public Works and Buildings, 148 (1910: 151); Printing and Paper Trade, 81 (74); Clothiers, 57 (56); Timber Trade, 45 (47); Transport workers, 44 (46); Metal Workers, 35 (35); Stone and Glass Workers, 28 (27); Leather Industry, 23 (22); Provision Trade, 7 (11); Farmers and Foresters, 7 (6); Quarrying and Mining Industries, 6 (6); Chemical Industry, 1 (1); other industries, 15 (15).

Out of 496 productive societies it was possible to ascertain the membership of 483 societies, this being stated to be 19,323 as compared with 19,520 in the previous year; thus there has been a small decrease in the number of members. The printing and paper trade had the largest membership to record, *i.e.*, 4,699, and next to them came the metal workers with a membership of 3,129. The clothiers' productive societies had 2,605 members, and workers in precious stones and glass 2,090. The public works and building societies, the number of which exceeds that of the other industries, only had a membership of 1,699, whilst 44 transport workers' societies had a membership of 1,424. Three hundred and thirty-eight societies stated that they had 7,719 assistants as compared with 7,326 in the previous year, which is an increase of 4 per cent. The societies for undertaking public works and the erection of buildings, and also the societies engaged in the preparation of precious stones and glass had more employees than members; the former had 1,354 members and 1,927 assistants, whilst the latter had 965 members and 1,739

assistants. In the case of most of the other industries the number of assistants is less than that of the members. Altogether there are 96 productive societies or 28 per cent. of the total number of co-operative societies, which have a larger number of assistants than members. Of these 96 societies, 46 are engaged in the building trade.

The amount of trade done in 1911 by 450 productive societies amounted to Fr. 69,539,000 as compared with Fr. 63,455,000 in the previous year, which is an increase of more than Fr. 6,000,000. The societies engaged in the execution of public works and the erection of buildings had the largest trade to record. (Fr. 16,800,000 as compared with Fr. 14,600,000). Next come the metal workers with Fr. 14,200,000, and the workers in precious stones and glass with Fr. 12,400,000. The transport workers' societies had a turnover of Fr. 9,500,000, and the paper and printing industries a turnover of Fr. 6,300,000. All the other groups of industries did a trade amounting to less than Fr. 3,000,000.

The Board of Trade also endeavoured to ascertain in what proportion the number of members employed by the societies stood to the total number of members, further the number of members as compared with the assistants. In this connection, 421 societies sent in returns, from which it was seen that out of 17,167 members, 9,076 were employed by the societies, *i.e.*, 52.87 per cent. The transport workers' societies, the workers in precious stones and glass, the building societies, agricultural societies, mining and quarrying societies, timber societies, and metal workers' societies were above the percentage of 52.87, whilst the societies for the preparation of leather and skins, the clothiers' societies, printing and paper societies, and societies for the supply of provisions were below this percentage.

Of the 421 societies, 305 stated that they had 12,465 employees of whom 6,609 were members, the proportion of members to the employees being 48 to 52. Unfortunately, the Board of Trade has published no returns with regard to the societies' own capital, loan capital, wages, management expenses, and profits, so that the insight into the activity of the societies afforded us by this official report is somewhat limited.

The Congress of French Distributive Co-operators convened at Tours to ratify the Unity.—On December 29th and 30th, 1912, a congress convened by the leaders of the two unions, which have existed up to the present, took place at Tours. The object of the Congress was to ratify the unity by drawing up a set of rules for the new union. Three hundred and

seventy-five delegates, representing 598 societies, took part in the congress ; there were also present a number of foreign delegates. The International Co-operative Alliance was represented by its President, Mr. William Maxwell ; the English Wholesale Society by Messrs. Hemingway ; the British Co-operative Union by Messrs. Deans, May and Whitehead ; and the productive societies by Mr. Aneurin Williams. Dr. August Müller represented the Central Union of German Distributive Societies ; Mr. Pittoni, the Central Union of Austrian Distributive Societies ; Messrs. Jeggli and Pronier, the Union of Swiss Distributive Societies ; Mr. Serwy, the Federation of the Belgian Societies ; and Mr. van der Mandere, the Dutch Co-operative Union. The congress was preceded on December 28th by a well-attended public meeting, over which Mr. de Boyve presided, and which was addressed by Miss Alice Jouenne, Professor Charles Gide, and Messrs. Louis Héliés, Poisson, and Albert Thomas. This preliminary meeting was brought to a close by the exhibition of a number of lantern slides, the subjects of which were explained by Mr. Daudé-Bancel.

At the first session of congress, Mr. Soulet, of the local Organising Committee, welcomed the congress and the foreign delegates. After this, the foreign delegates in turn expressed their satisfaction at the decision of French co-operators to unite, and wished the new union success and prosperous development. These speeches were replied to by Mr. Albert Thomas in German, Mr. de Boyve in English, and Mr. Gide in French. At the afternoon session a committee was appointed to consider the mandates. The discussion with regard to the draft rules was then begun. Article 1, which provided that the new union should be named *FEDERATION DES COOPERATIVES DE CONSOMMATION, ORGAN D'EMANCIPATION DES TRAVAILLEURS*, was adopted without discussion. Article 2, to which was added, on the proposal of Mr. Albert Thomas, sections (d) and (e), runs as follows. The aims of the union are :—

- (a) The union and organisation of distributive societies constituted according to the principles of the declaration of unity, in order to safeguard their joint interests by united funds and united strength.
- (b) The development and prosperity of the co-operative movement in France.
- (c) The safe-guarding of the interests of consumers in general.
- (d) The replacing of the present competitive and capitalistic system by another system, in which production is organised in the interests of consumers and not for gaining profit.
- (e) The collective and gradual appropriation by combined consumers of the means of exchange and production, in order to secure for consumers the wealth they themselves have created.

Article 3 was adopted in its original form without any alterations. It reads :—The union seeks to carry out its aims

- (a) By publishing periodicals, compiling statistics, circulating books for the development of the movement and for widening the sphere of activity of the affiliated societies.
- (b) By establishing relations with foreign national co-operative unions and with the International Co-operative Alliance.
- (c) By the establishment of an information bureau to give advice to the affiliated societies in all matters connected with their activity and also to organise courses of lectures on Co-operation.
- (d) By helping to form new societies and by spreading co-operative principles.

Article 4 provides that all societies constituted according to the principles contained in the declaration of unity may become affiliated to the union. Thus no society will be admitted to membership which compels its members to belong to any particular political or religious organisation nor any joint-stock distributive society, which pays its shareholders more than a certain rate of interest, which limits the number of members, gives members voting power according to the number of shares they hold, and which does not consider the general meeting the supreme organ. This article gave rise to a long and lively discussion. Amongst other things, it was proposed that it should be laid down in the rules that the maximum rate of interest paid on shares should not be more than 4 per cent. On the other hand, 5 per cent. was proposed. A third proposal was to declare that the payment of interest on share capital is inadmissible. These proposals were opposed by Messrs. Thomas, Héliés, Nast, and others, on the ground that they would render it difficult to obtain sufficient share capital, and that the societies would have to follow the fluctuation of the rate of interest. Further proposals required that the number of shares in the possession of any one co-operator must be limited, and the exclusion on principle of all co-operative societies established by manufacturers for their workpeople. Mr. Gide objected that it would be unjust to reject societies merely because they were established by contractors. Instead of rejecting them it would be more just to influence them to become co-operative. Finally, Article 4 was adopted as it stood, five delegates only voting against it, and the consideration of the rules was adjourned.

On the evening of December 29th, congress delegates were officially received and entertained by the Mayor in the Town Hall, in the name of the town.

The consideration of the draft rules was continued at the two sessions held on December 30th, and the draft was finally carried. First of all those

articles to which no alterations had been proposed were adopted. These articles dealt with the revision of the rules, the possible dissolution of the union and the composition and method of election of the governing bodies of the Union. The supreme governing body is the committee of the Union, which is to consist of representatives of the sub-unions and of a central council of twenty-one members, which is to be elected by congress. The election, in cases where more than twenty-one names are proposed, is to be on the proportional system. The Committee of the Union is to meet three times a year and is to receive the report of the central council with regard to the activity of the Union. Only persons who are members of societies affiliated to the Union and who have drawn the prescribed minimum of supplies from their societies are eligible for the central council. Several alterations were proposed with regard to the latter rule. Additional provisions were adopted requiring that candidates for the central council must be proposed by societies affiliated to the Union, and that these candidates must have served for at least a year on a committee of their society.

The rules gave rise to long discussions with regard to the subscriptions to be paid by the affiliated societies. It was agreed by 389 votes to 159 that the amount of subscription should be determined by the trade done by the society. It was further agreed on the motion of the Paris sub-Union that instead of 5 centimes as proposed by the committee, 3 centimes should be paid to the Union for every 100 francs' worth of trade done, provided that the subscription of a society based on this calculation be not less than 10 francs. Of these three centimes, one is to be devoted to the regional union and the remaining two to the Central Union, which is to pay out of this amount the subscription to the International Co-operative Alliance, which organisation the new union intends to join collectively with all its members. It was pointed out by various delegates that the calculation of subscriptions on this basis will fall heavily on some of the larger societies, for which reason a special basis was proposed for such societies. Societies which have a turnover of from 1,000,000 to 3,000,000 francs are only to pay a subscription of 1 centime per 100 francs. This proposal was rejected by a large majority. On the other hand, it was agreed that the rate of subscription should be fixed each year by a special congress resolution. For 1913, the rate was fixed at 3 centimes per 100 francs.

Many alterations were proposed to the rule dealing with the voting power of the societies affiliated to the Union. On the proposal of Mr. Nast it was decided that one vote should be granted for every hundred francs or fraction thereof paid in subscription. Finally, the rules were adopted almost unanimously.

The next item was the election of the twenty-one members of the central council ; the following gentlemen were elected :—Messrs. Georges Alfassa, Bailly, Barnault, Boudois, Buguet, Carlier, Delorme, Daudé-Bancel, Héliés, Miss Jouenne, Gide, Bernard Lavergne, Lavernie, Levasseur, Nast, Perussie, Poisson, Roger Picard, Sellier, and Waseige. Further, Messrs. Gaumont, Chabert, Maurice Alfassa, and Luquet were elected as substitutes. Messrs. Prud, Hommeaux, Jouandame, Petit, and Thomas were elected as auditors. Before congress rose, a resolution with regard to co-operative action against war and in favour of peace was passed, couched in the following terms :—

“ In view of the fact that Co-operation by its aims and practical instrumentality seeks to do away with the economic causes which compel States to seek new markets for their people by means of wars of conquest and military colonisation, this congress once more recalls the fact that Co-operation offers one of the safest and most practical means to establish a brotherly understanding among the people. It calls upon the Union of French Distributive Societies to do all in its power to uphold the necessary conditions for the maintenance of international peace.”

GERMANY.

Extraordinary General Meeting of the Central Union of German Distributive Societies.—An extraordinary general meeting of this Union took place at Hamburg on November 25th. The purpose of the meeting was to give the Union a new constitution according to the resolution passed at the congress held in Berlin last summer (see page 203 of the *Bulletin*, 1912). The following alterations were introduced by the new rules : Hamburg was designated as the seat of the Central Union of German Distributive Societies, whereas up to the present the nominal seat of the Union has been the place of residence of the President of the Committee. In the future, no more productive societies are to be admitted to membership in the Union ; those productive societies, however, which are already members are to remain so. Mr. Kaufmann gave as the reason for this provision, the fact that many productive societies are established, which are capable neither of continued activity nor existence. He spoke as follows :—“ It has happened that in cases where a distributive society has contemplated erecting large buildings, productive societies have been established for the sole purpose of undertaking the erection of these buildings. The establishment of these productive societies, which were only founded for one purpose, puts us in an awkward position. They demand that we should, in the first place, give them work.” Mr.

Kaufmann gave a list of the productive societies which had been established during the last two years, amongst which was a butchers' society in Hamburg. In connection with this fact Mr. Kaufmann remarked that the establishment of productive societies had reached such proportions that in this city, a butchers' productive society had been founded, although the local distributive society, "Produktion," has a large model butchery of its own. The butchers employed by the "Produktion" are members of the new productive society, which now competes with the "Produktion." "It is not our duty to take any part in the movement for establishing productive societies. We do not wish either to hinder or to help in this matter, we do not wish to be in any way responsible for the establishment of these societies. That is all we desire and therefore we propose that productive societies shall no longer be admitted to membership in our Union." Mr. Kaufmann, whose views were approved by the meeting, recommended that the productive societies should form an auditing union of their own, in connection with and under the supervision of the General Committee of Trade Unions.

The chief purpose of the new constitution was connected not so much with the above-mentioned alterations, as with the new regulation with regard to the managing authorities and organs. In place of the General Secretary, a position which now ceases to exist, the executive authority is to be a committee composed of seven persons, three of whom are to be permanent officials, whilst four are to be honorary officers. As before, the committee is to be assisted by a board. As a third and entirely new organ, there is to be a general council, which is to consist of a hundred and twenty persons and to which the existing auditing unions and the Wholesale Society of German Distributive Societies are to elect twelve representatives each. The duty of this co-operative parliament is to carefully consider the motions and proposals to be placed before the co-operative congress and to give the committee the necessary directions.

Great importance is attached to that article of the new rules which provides that the resolutions of congress shall not in future be merely considered as advice and recommendations, but shall be binding. Mr. Kaufmann explained the reason for this alteration as follows: "An organisation, the resolutions of which are nothing more than advice and recommendations, is doomed before it is even established. It is really no organisation, but only a loose union of persons or organisations, which arranges meetings for discussions and then dissolves and lets each one do as he wishes. For this reason we have thought it right to at last abolish this antiquated rule." This proposal

was opposed by some of the South German delegates, who contended that congress ought not to interfere with the inner business affairs of the individual societies. Also previous experience has shown that the resolutions of congress have been accorded voluntary obedience by the societies. For these reasons, Mr. Feuerstein, of Stuttgart, the spokesman of the South German co-operators, proposed that the provision with regard to this matter should be that the societies should "take into consideration," not "adhere to," the resolutions of congress. On the vote being taken, it was found that Mr. Kaufmann's wording of the new rule was adopted.

It was further proposed by several of the larger societies that the larger organisations should have a greater number of votes. Congress, however, did not agree to this proposal and therefore the provision remained that each society should only have one vote. Finally, the whole draft of the new rules was unanimously adopted. At the close of the congress, Mr. Kaufmann was accorded recognition for the great services which he had rendered to the Union, since its establishment, in extending and developing its sphere of activity. Dr. August Müller, editor-in-chief of the *Konsumgenossenschaftliche Rundschau*, and Mr. Hugo Bästlein were elected as Mr. Kaufmann's colleagues on the committee; the following gentlemen were elected honorary members of the committee:—Messrs. Barth (Munich), Liebmann (Ludwigshafen), Lorenz (Hamburg) and Radestock (Dresden). Mr. Barth acted as president of the congress, Mr. Radestock, who was to have taken the chair, being prevented by illness from being present.

The next day the constitutional meeting of the joint stock company, the Publishing Society of the German Distributive Societies took place. This society is to take the place of the publishing society, Heinrich Kaufmann & Co., and is to be managed by the committee and board of the Central Union. In order to ensure the development of this society in the future, it has been allotted a share capital of £100,000, all of which except a few hundred pounds was subscribed on the day of its foundation by the distributive societies affiliated to the Union. In contrast to the principle laid down in the rules of the Central Union, the societies affiliated to the Publishing Society are to have voting power in proportion to their size. Further, in order to safeguard the rights of minorities, on the motion of fifty delegates with power to vote, the votes must be recorded in such a way that it is possible to verify the manner in which each delegate has voted.

Without doubt the Central Union of German Distributive Societies, and the Publishing Society under their new constitution, will contribute even more

to the splendid development of the German movement than they have hitherto done.

GREAT BRITAIN.

The English Wholesale Society in the third Quarter of 1912.— We see from the quarterly report which was recently presented to the quarterly meetings, held on December 14th and 21st, that the C.W.S. is developing soundly. As compared with the third quarter of 1911, there has been an increase of 4.37 per cent. in the amount of trade done, whilst there has been an increase of 15.75 per cent. in the amount of goods supplied by the productive departments of the Wholesale. Of the three branches in Manchester, Newcastle and London, the London branch has to record the greatest development. The latter had an increase of 12 per cent. in the turnover, whilst the branches at Manchester and Newcastle only had an increase of 4.25 per cent. and 2.37 per cent. respectively. There was likewise an augmentation in the trade done by almost all the factories, mills, &c., the increase in some cases being considerable, amounting to 40 per cent. or more.

What lends so much importance to the report is the fact that an agreement was come to with the Co-operative Insurance Society, with regard to taking over the business management of the latter. According to this agreement, the wholesale societies in Manchester and Glasgow will take over the whole of the engagements, liabilities and assets of the Co-operative Insurance Society. They undertake to employ, for at least three years, all the persons, who have been employed by the Co-operative Insurance Society, and to grant a pension to five old servants of the society in the event of their retiring after three years' service. The Wholesale Societies further agreed to pay the Co-operative Insurance Society a sum of £120,000, together with the amount of paid-up share capital. Each shareholder will receive a bonus of £2 10s. in respect of each £1 of share capital paid up, making with the return of the paid-up capital a total repayment of £3 10s. The quarterly meetings approved the agreement with the Insurance Society.

A resolution of far-reaching importance with regard to the adoption of a minimum wage scale for women employees was carried. As we have previously mentioned, motions had frequently been brought forward at quarterly meetings, according to which the minimum scale of wages for women employees, which had been approved by several co-operative congresses, was demanded for the women workers of the C.W.S. These motions were always rejected on the recommendation of the directors. They declared themselves willing to pay

wages according to the minimum scale, in so far as it was possible, but they wished to retain a free hand, and were able to announce that from the beginning of the new year onwards all distributive departments would adopt the minimum wage scale.

Several societies brought forward a motion to the effect that at the beginning of 1914 all the women employees in the productive departments should be paid according to the minimum wage scale. After a lively discussion and in spite of the attitude of the directors, the motion was adopted by 1,243 votes as against 1,104.

During the latter months of the past year, the Board of Directors of the C.W.S. lost two of their oldest and most highly esteemed members, Messrs. Thos. Hind and Joseph Warwick, both of whom passed away after short illnesses. Mr. Hind was one of the oldest members of the Board of Directors and filled this office for 35 years. Another director, Mr. William Lander, was unfortunately, injured in a motor accident, from which he has not yet fully recovered.

HOLLAND.

General Meeting of the Dutch Co-operative Union.—The annual meeting of the Dutch Co-operative Union was held at Rotterdam on Friday and Saturday, October 25th and 26th, being unusually well-attended. This was the first general meeting to be held after the opening of the large buildings of the Dutch Wholesale, the "Handelskamer," and there were many interesting items on the agenda, the most important of all being the question as to whether there should be a separation between the Co-operative Union and the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

Various co-operative bodies sent delegates to the Congress, among them being Mr. T. Horrocks, representing the British Co-operative Union and the International Co-operative Alliance; Messrs. Johns and Dudley, from the English Wholesale Society; Dr. August Müller, from the German Union; Messrs. Klug and Hoffmann, from the German Wholesale Society; and Messrs. de Backer and Dupont, from the Belgian Union.

After the inaugural address by Dr. Rutgers, President of the Union, in which he quoted figures that bore ample testimony to the flourishing state of the Union and its Wholesale, the foreign delegates conveyed greetings from their respective unions.

Compared with most of the co-operative bodies in other countries, the Dutch Union is still in its infancy, but its development is sound and healthy, and everywhere in Holland the co-operative spirit is being awakened.

During the first nine months of the current year, the turnover of the Handelskamer already reached Fl. 595,000, so that the turnover of four millions per annum will be surpassed. Of course, these figures are very small compared with those of Scotland, Denmark, and Switzerland, but those who have faith do not need to hasten. The more the true ideals of Co-operation are spread among the people, the more will co-operative trade increase.

We need not weary our readers by dwelling on the various questions of administration, which were considered by the meeting, but will confine ourselves to mentioning such items as are of general interest to co-operators.

Miss Meybom stated that the Dutch Co-operative Women's Guild is being awakened from its lethargy, and that in various parts of the country women are beginning to show more interest in Co-operation. The Guild was, therefore, confident that in a short time it would be able to afford further proof of the good work being performed.

It was decided that in future the co-operative newspaper of the Union be published fortnightly instead of monthly, as the meeting was of the opinion that the propagandist work of the Union should be further developed.

It was decided to hold examinations in Co-operation for co-operative employees, in order that they may better understand the principles and practice of Co-operation.

Proposals with regard to the establishment of a co-operative bank were submitted to Congress; this would, however, have meant doing business with capitalists. It was decided that when the bank was established it should do business with co-operative societies only.

The most interesting matter dealt with by the meeting was the question of the Handelskamer. Up to the present that institution has worked under the same constitution as the Union, the rules being similar to those of the Swiss and Danish Unions. Many of the Dutch co-operators have, however, wished that there should be a separation between the Union and the Wholesale. Among the reasons put forward for this separation, is the fact that in Holland there are neutral and socialist co-operative societies, and as all societies are

compelled to become members of the Union, in order to do business with the Wholesale, the socialists feel that this is unjust, since they propagate Co-operation on their own lines as distinct from the neutral societies, and have their own Co-operative Labour Union for the purpose of propaganda. Moreover, there are a great many Dutch co-operators who feel that freedom is a co-operative principle, and who consider that the wholesale as an entirely free institution will be a stronger backbone for Dutch Co-operation. A very lengthy discussion took place, the question being considered from many points of view. It was agreed that a legal separation should take place between the Union and the Wholesale, but a separation in principle was negatived. The Central Committee will have to bring before the next congress the necessary resolutions for carrying out this decision, a task which will not be easy.

The next meeting will be held at Arnhem, situated in the beautiful province of Gelderland. It is to be hoped that in 1913, the year in which Holland is to celebrate the restoration of its independence, it will also celebrate its greatest development of Co-operation.

GOEDHART.

ITALY.

Congress of Rural Co-operative Societies.—The Congress which was held from September 20th to 22nd, at Rome, under the presidency of Mr. Luigi Luzzatti, was chiefly convened to discuss the means to be adopted in order to secure a legal and economic constitution for the collective farming societies. As is well known, the organisations of labourers which carry on collective farming are specifically Italian. There are about 160 such societies situated in Lombardy, Emilia, Romagna and Sicily which now require a legal constitution from the Government and Parliament. After Mr. Luzzatti had delivered the inaugural address, Deputy Samoggia, of Milan, dealt with the question of rural credit, his concluding remarks being approved by the meeting. In this connection, it was decided to organise a movement similar to that of the farmers and agricultural colonists, in order to enlighten public opinion and to shew that the interests of rural production are identical with those of labour, and that their common enemies are the privileged classes and absentee landlords. Further, Congress passed a resolution in favour of the agricultural societies in Sicily, requiring from the Government and Parliament the enactment of a law, according to which the necessary amount of credit should be granted to co-operative societies for the improvement of land and for the purpose of acquiring and allotting latifundia.

Mr. Ruini read a report dealing with the enactment of a law in favour of agricultural co-operative societies. The following was the substance of his propositions, which were enthusiastically adopted by the Congress: Land belonging to the State, provinces, communities, benevolent institutions and other societies should be leased, by means of auction or private treaty, to co-operative societies formed by agricultural labourers, in so far as the societies could offer sufficient guarantee of their solvency.

Following this, Congress discussed the question of collective farming and unemployment. The great significance of the activity of the agricultural societies and the societies for collective farming in combatting the lack of employment, was recognised, the question of unemployment at present arousing special interest in Italy. The conclusions which had been drawn in this connection were submitted by Mr. Antonio Vergnanini and approved by Congress, viz., : There is an indissoluble connection between the institutions for agricultural colonisation and the improvement of the land, as a means for fighting against unemployment, on the one hand, and increasing the national welfare. Therefore (a) In the granting of State subventions for the improvement of the land, preference should be given to the provinces, communities and federations of communities, rather than to private companies. (b) The provinces, communities, societies and individuals should hand over the execution of work to the workingmen's co-operative societies and their unions. (c) Agreements should be made with the provinces, communities, societies and individuals for concessions to be granted with regard to the leasing of provincial land for long periods, on account of which the interest due is to be paid to the rural societies and unions.

Finally Mr. Samoggia read a report to Congress in which was embodied the following resolution: "The National Union of Italian Co-operative Societies, the Society "Umanitaria" and the societies which are interested in rural Co-operation, take the initiative in establishing an information bureau for the purpose of propaganda and for giving technical and commercial advice for the furtherance of collective farming."

Among those who took part in the Congress were the following gentlemen: Messrs. Raineri, formerly Minister of Agriculture, and de Carolis, Editor of *Co-operazione rurale*.

Personal News Items.

Mr. Moses Melchior passed away at Copenhagen on November 25th, at the age of eighty-eight. For thirty years he acted as director of the large Workingmen's Co-operative Building Society at Copenhagen, and in the capacity of President of the Committee did much to further the splendid development of this organisation. If Mr. Melchior's name was not well known in wide circles during his lifetime, this is to be attributed to his extreme modesty which prevented him from taking a prominent part in public affairs. The Workingmen's Co-operative Building Society at Copenhagen has had a stimulating effect on the co-operative building movement in Germany.

Mr. Karl Drobitz, one of the oldest and most esteemed co-operators in Austria celebrated, on November 14th, 1912, his fortieth year of activity in the capacity of director of the Workingmen's Savings and Distributive Society at Fünfhaus. It is chiefly owing to the efforts of Mr. Drobitz that this society, which had a very modest beginning, became one of the most important distributive organisations in Austria. On this occasion, Mr. Drobitz was presented with an illuminated address by Mr. Tobola, President of the Supervising Committee and Dr. Karpeles, a member of the Central Union of Austrian Distributive Societies. Mr. Drobitz also identified himself with the development of the co-operative union, and is held in high esteem by his former colleagues of the General Schulze-Delitzsch Union. Dr. Ludwig Vogler gave expression to this appreciation on the occasion of Mr. Drobitz being presented with an address.

Literature.

Taschenkalender 1913 des Verbandes schweizerischer Konsumvereine. Basle, 1912.

Almanach de la Coopération française 1913 de l'Union Coopérative des Sociétés françaises de consommation. Paris, 1912.

Almanach des Coopérateurs Belges pour 1913. Brussels, 1912.

The majority of the national unions of distributive societies publish almanachs at the end of each year. We will here shortly review those named above. The pocket calendar published by the Union of Swiss Distributive Societies is, as usual, a very useful and prettily bound little book. In addition to containing a diary, an instructive article on co-operative education and propaganda from the pen of Mr. Ulrich Meyer is published. Further, it gives information with regard to the organisation of the Union of Swiss Distributive Societies and the different institutions of the Union. The statistical returns of the societies affiliated to the Union are of special interest, and these are followed by a table containing information with regard to the wholesale societies in Europe.

The Almanach de la Coopération française, which is published for the twenty-first time by the Central Committee of the Union of French Distributive Societies, is compiled with a view to propaganda rather than that of everyday use. Professor Gide has once again contributed an introductory article on the position of the co-operative movement in Europe. This is followed by a report on the development of the Coopérative de Gros by Mr. Daudé-Bancel, whilst Mr. de Boyve gives a short survey of the development of the I.C.A. Mr. Pronier gives the reader an insight into the development of the large distributive society at Basle, whilst Mr. A. Mirus sketches the history of distributive Co-operation in Berlin. In addition, we find in the Almanach the terms of unity recently brought forward by the two unions of distributive societies, which had formerly been opposed to each other. Further, several statistical tables are given showing the position of the distributive movement in France.

The Almanach of the Belgian co-operators is compiled similarly to that of the French Union, only it is smaller. Mr. Bertrand briefly surveys the chief co-operative events of the last year. He also gives his reasons for being a socialist co-operator. Further, there is an article on co-operative collectivism in China, another on the Catholic working-men's co-operative societies in Italy, together with various other small articles referring especially to Co-operation in Belgium.

Zehn Jahre Bürger und Arbeiter Konsumverein "Eintracht," e. G. m. b. H. Essen, 1902-1912. With numerous illustrations.

The Working-men's Distributive Society "Eintracht," having its headquarters at the industrial centre of Rhenish-Westphalia, has now been in existence for ten years, and has just published a history of its activity and development to commemorate its tenth anniversary. The book is admirably got up, and everyone who reads it must agree with what the author writes on page 12 :—"The history of our society sounds like a romance, its sphere of activity to-day extending over twenty-five communities the number of employees being not far short of a thousand, and it will close the year

having done a trade amounting to more than £750,000." The rapid and colossal growth of the Co-operative Distributive Society "Eintracht," operating at the industrial centre of Essen, is indeed astounding. The way in which difficulties in connection with its growth have been overcome is no less remarkable. In looking further into this book, we soon see that the secret of this remarkable success is accounted for by persevering industry, by energetic, thorough and effectual management, and by the scientific manner in which all affairs have been conducted. It is hardly likely that there will, as yet, be a second society having to record a similarly rapid development, the great difficulties with which it had to contend inciting to greater energy on the part of its leaders. During the ten years of its activity, the distributive society "Eintracht" has not only opened about 100 shops, but has also established a large bakery, and has undertaken the supply of milk. Further, it has taken up pig-rearing, has established a savings bank, formed a burying fund, and established a fire insurance department. The society has erected nine tenement houses containing sixty flats, and is at present entering upon further extensive plans; for example, it intends to erect central premises for the stores in Duisberg and neighbourhood. In spite of this many-sided and far-reaching activity, the directors of the society have the reins firmly in hand, and are able to give us the most detailed figures with regard to all matters in connection with the society. It is a noteworthy fact that the board of management is far from confining itself to the purely commercial side of the society; it shows in addition, a true understanding of the ideals of the movement. Two of the many illustrations give us a fairly good idea of the co-operative festival which was held last summer in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the society. On this occasion there were lengthy processions, and banners were dedicated. Whoever would obtain a good idea of what may be accomplished by sound and efficient business management could not do better than study this book, which contains an unusually gratifying and striking contribution to the development of distributive Co-operation in Germany during the last decade.



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Report of the Proceedings of the Eighth Congress of the International Co-operative Alliance, held at Hamburg, September 5th to 7th, 1910.

Protokoll der Verhandlungen des achten Kongresses des Internationalen Genossenschaftsbundes in Hamburg am 5 bis 7 September, 1910.

Compte rendu des délibérations du huitième congrès de l'Alliance co-opérative internationale du 5 au 7 septembre, 1910, à Hambourg.

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