J. W. Hattersley

The COMMUNITY'S CREDIT

by

C. MARSHALL HATTERSLEY

(2nd Edition)

A reasoned consideration of the theoretical content and practical implications of the

DOUGLAS CREDIT PROPOSALS

The author deals specially with those difficulties that arise most frequently upon a first examination of these proposals.

Craigside Cottage
Leckhampton Hill,
Cheltenham!

The Community's Credit

A CONSIDERATION
OF THE PRINCIPLES
OF SOCIAL CREDIT

By

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"Men, Machines and Money"
and
"This Age of Plenty."

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Introduction to First Edition.

Events to-day are moving far faster than ideas, and while governments and their expert advisers are seeking a cure for the economic malady along old, discredited lines, the governed are finding scant comfort in the out-worn formulae of past decades and the platitudes of present-day politicians. And in the meantime the condition of modern industrial civilisation grows daily more serious. The present situation needs fresh analysis, and for its betterment, a new remedy.

In the spring of the year 1920 there appeared the former of two remarkable books by Major C. H. Douglas. In "*Economic Democracy*," and later (assisted by Mr. A. R. Orage, late editor of "*The New Age*"*), in "*Credit-Power and Democracy*" also, Major Douglas has undertaken a new and fundamental analysis of the industrial situation, and has pointed out the principles upon which any permanent solution of the present economic difficulties must be sought. The Social Credit Movement has arisen as a direct result of these two books, in order to study and develop the principles formulated therein, and to discover ways and means of carrying them into effect.

* And present editor of "*The New English Weekly*" (1933).

But the movement offers something more than a bare economic framework. It holds out an ideal, and it shews how that ideal can be attained. Therefore the social creditor feels he has something to work for—something well worth working for. He has gained a new outlook on life, an outlook full of hope. He knows that he is in possession of a very great truth, and that it is "up to him" to pass it on.

The following pages contain the gist of a series of papers delivered to the Swinton (Yorks) Group of the Social Credit Movement during the latter part of 1921 and the Spring of 1922. They were first written in an endeavour to "bottom" some of Major Douglas's rather startling and certainly unorthodox contentions, and to become satisfied as to the accuracy or otherwise of his conclusions. They are here submitted with a deep consciousness of their many limitations, but also in the hope that they may be found of some assistance towards the better understanding of a vital subject.

C.M.H.

Swinton, Rotherham.
December, 1922.

Foreword to the Second Edition.

Since the publication of the former edition of this little volume, there has from time to time been expressed the need for a booklet (as distinct from a pamphlet) dealing in simple terms with the essentials of Social Credit, at a price within the reach of every purse. It has now been suggested that a re-issue of "*The Community's Credit*" at one shilling would be a valuable addition to current Social Credit literature. To enable the price to be reduced to this figure has, unfortunately, necessitated considerable abridgement of the text, and the substitution of a paper-cover for the original cloth. It is hoped that the demand will nevertheless be such as to justify the number it has been found necessary to print in order to reduce sufficiently the price per copy.

The text, except for necessary curtailment, has been left substantially as written in 1922, in order to demonstrate how certainly experience has confirmed the essential truth of the Douglas analysis—as certainly as it must have disappointed those misled by the prognostications of recognised "experts."

In October 1932, speaking at the Mansion House, Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England since 1920, declared: "*The difficulties are so vast, the forces so unlimited, so novel, and precedents are so lacking, that I approach this whole subject not only in ignorance but in humility.*" Seeing that, "*since* 1919 *the monetary policy of the Government has been the policy of the Bank of England, and the policy of the Bank of England has been the policy of Mr. Montagu Norman,*"* it seems a pity that the latter's new-found humility did not find earlier expression. Perhaps the realisation by those in high places of their ignorance will in due course be followed by the further realisation that assumptions and theories inherited from an era of handicraft and comparative scarcity are incompatible with the possibilities and aspirations of a machine age.

C.M.H.

Swinton,
Nr. Rotherham.

May, 1933.

* Mr. V. C. Vickers, a Director of the Bank of England from 1910 to 1919, in his preface to Robert Eisler's "*Stable Money.*"

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CHAPTER I.

Some Preliminary Assumptions.

The Economic Impasse.

Even the most superficial observer of current events finds himself to-day confronted on every side by a number of seeming paradoxes and startling contradictions. Around him he sees, on the one hand, land, material and plant lying idle, and armies of unemployed, and, on the other hand, a world in dire need of goods—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say a world in dire need of some effective method of distributing the goods it has produced and can produce. If he thinks about the matter at all, he is perturbed to realise that, in the midst of an ever-increasing potentiality of plenty, impotent poverty is the lot of a steadily growing proportion of the world's industrial population. Or again, while doubtless agreeing that "Germany must pay" for the havoc she wrought in the Great War, he is, in common with many others, baffled in his search for some method of accepting payment that will not seriously embarrass the recipient. Looking to America, he sees that great Creditor Nation, possessed of the bulk of the world's gold, confronted with an unemployment problem more serious even than that which menaces the peace and prosperity, if not the very existence, of his own country. Gigantic contradictions such as these seem to point to something more than a temporary hitch in the working of the world's economic machinery.

Orthodox Advice. Were it not so tragic, it would be almost ludicrous to see the appalling helplessness of our recognised leaders of Commerce, of Labour, and of Finance, in the face of the breakdown of the wonderful economic machine that has developed almost beyond recognition during the past century of industry. Of such orthodox economists, the majority stand aghast, and would seem to await a miracle. Others appear to find consolation in the thought that wars have often, if not always, been followed by periods of acute trade depression and economic distress, and profess to look upon present conditions as merely a severe manifestation of a more or less necessary evil—like, for instance, measles. Strange to say, they find this a good and sufficient reason for patient endurance, rather than active search for a remedy, forgetting that even measles occasionally proves fatal. The only advice they have to offer* (when docked of its surplusage) seems to reduce to this: "Produce more; Consume less; Export the surplus." Produce

* At any rate in 1921.

more—and add to the already enormous accumulation of unsaleable stocks. Consume less—a difficult doctrine to preach to those already unable to afford the bare necessities of life. Export the surplus—where?

Present Conditions accelerated by the War.

The history of the past century records frequent hitches in the smooth working of the world's economic machinery; and as industry gradually approached to its present state of development these hitches became more frequent and increasingly serious. It is sometimes forgotten by those who blame the European War of 1914-1918 (at present popularly known as "The Great War") for the prevailing economic conditions, that before and up to the outbreak of that war there was, and had been for the past twenty years at least, a constant rise in the general level of prices; that there was at the same time a steady increase in the number of unemployed; and that there was an ever-increasing state of friction in foreign markets, of which the logical culmination was the War itself. Indeed, it would appear no exaggeration to say that the War has merely accelerated the process, and that economically we have reached a state of affairs to-day that, had it been possible to avert the war, we should probably have attained some twenty or thirty years hence.

Owen, Marx, Douglas. Inherent defects in the modern economic system have been proclaimed from time to time by thinking men. Unhappily these have not always been correct in their diagnosis of the evil. Robert Owen and the co-operators concluded that the middleman was responsible, and established co-operative factories and stores with the set purpose of excluding the middleman and his profit. Karl Marx, whose influence on Labour thought to-day it would be hard to exaggerate, taught, in effect, that the Capitalist was and is the hereditary enemy of the Worker; he laid his stress on the appropriation of profits by the employer. Major Douglas carries the analysis deeper, and, behind both the middleman and the employer, he perceives in the financier and his system the basic cause of the economic difficulties of our modern industrial civilisation.

Assumptions of the Orthodox Economist. The orthodox economist, wherever his private sympathies may lie, or even if he approaches the subject with an unbiassed mind, tacitly accepts, wholly or in part, the following premises from which to draw his conclusions* :—

(1) That the only source of a community's wealth is its output.

* See "Notes of the Week" in "The New Age" for 3rd February, 1921.

(2) That it is only possible to make the poor richer by making the rich poorer.

(3) That Great Britain is now a poor country, whose one need is economy.

(4) That external trade is indispensable to the proper distribution of goods at home.

(5) That the price of goods to the consumer can never be less than the financial cost of production.

(6) That work is the only title to a share in the goods and services of the community.

(7) That industry exists, not solely for the production and distribution of goods, but also to provide employment.

Let us, however, take the above assumptions for detailed consideration.

That the only Source of Wealth is Output.

(1) *That the only source of a community's wealth is its output.* This assumption entirely loses sight of another great source of communal real wealth, namely, capacity to produce. Two men, we will suppose, are at work in a coal-mine. A. is hewing coal; B. is opening a gallery to the coal-face. A. is thus increasing the output of the mine; B. is increasing, not the actual output, but the capacity of the mine to produce. The real wealth of the community is enhanced not only by A.'s work, but also by B.'s. So that, just as financial wealth is of

two kinds, currency and credit, the real wealth of a community is also of two kinds, products, and the capacity to produce.

That the Wealth of a Community is Limited.

(2) *That it is only possible to make the poor richer by making the rich poorer.* This proposition implies that the wealth of a community is limited, and follows naturally from a failure to realise that the real wealth of a community consists of goods, *and the capacity to provide goods.* When it is realised how every new factory erected, every new invention made, every fresh scientific discovery achieved, and every ton of coal raised increase this capacity, one is bound to conclude that the real wealth of a community is practically limitless. That being so, a proper utilisation of our resources would result in the standard of living of the poorer classes being infinitely bettered, without the abstraction of one jot or one tittle from the possessions of the rich.

That Great Britain is now a poor Country.

(3) *That Great Britain is now a poor country whose one need is economy.* The truth of the matter is that, measured by goods in stock plus capactiy to produce more goods, when, where, and as required, England's real wealth is greater than ever before. During the War her industrial machine

was keyed up to concert pitch, and her capacity to supply the needs of mankind is now far in excess of what it was in pre-war days. "The first thing to remember is that the old "explanation of our poverty and commercial "impotence will not stand investigation. "According to this view, we are poor and "economically unhappy because we spent so "much in the war, *i.e.*, destroyed so much "property of all kinds, and dissipated so much "Capital. The analogy of the private individ-"ual is used to shew that we must expect to be "poor. . . . That analogy sounds well "enough, but in fact it is almost wholly "fallacious. This country and indeed the "world in general, has not been impoverished "by the War at all in the way the ordinary "man is impoverished. We, and most of the "countries of the world, are in essentials as "rich as we were before 1914. It is true that "by loans and taxation we have altered the "distribution of property in a manner which, "if it had been done in a different way, "would have been called revolutionary, but "that does not mean a diminution of total "wealth. . . . There are no great indus-"tries that have been destroyed by the War— "our coal-pits, our cotton-trade, our ship-"building yards, and all our industries, from "iron furnaces to woollen mills, are there "ready to be worked. . . . We have not "even got a demoralised population. Take it "altogether, the War was a stimulus, and "there are more people at this moment ready "and eager, if they can see how, to make a "profit and increase the wealth of the world "than there were ever before"*. Are these the characteristics of a poor country?

That Export is Essential.

(4) *That export trade is essential for the proper distribution of goods at home.* By this time we are so accustomed to the cry, "We must export more," that we scarcely pause to ask ourselves the reason why. It is, of course, obvious, that if Great Britain is to import (*e.g.*) wheat from abroad, she must sooner or later export an equivalent value of home-products in exchange. But what each and every industrial country is striving after to-day is to obtain a so-called "favourable balance of trade," that is, not so much to exchange superfluous for needed commodities, as to acquire, by exporting greater value than it imports, a money income from outside sources. Douglas shews how this is a necessary result of the prevailing economic system. We shall examine his arguments a little later, but for the present will only remark that this necessity is accepted as a fact on all sides, and that the condition of world affairs to-day does

* The Spectator, October 15th, 1921.

indeed afford weighty circumstantial corroboration. But (and here lies the danger) if it is an economic necessity for Great Britain to export goods and services to a greater value than she imports, it is also an economic necessity for America, for Japan, for Italy, and for Germany. International friction is, humanly speaking, unavoidable. A very disquieting doctrine this, and one which, if true, points to some radical defect in the world's economic system.

That Goods cannot be sold "under cost."

(5) *That the price of goods to the consumer can never be less than the financial cost of production.* In other words, that if a manufacturer pays out £1,000 for raw materials and £1,000 in wages, salaries and overhead charges, the price of the finished product to the public can never, economically, be less than £2,000 and may very well be considerably more. Under the present financial and economic system this is certainly the case. The selling-off by a manufacturer of his accumulated stocks at less than production-cost is, of course, no more than a temporary expedient, the loss incurred on which will be recovered in enhanced prices at the earliest opportunity. Indeed, so accustomed are we to regard this assumption as axiomatic that it sounds strange at first to suggest that it is not

necessarily true under every possible economic system. And yet it would not necessarily be the case if, for instance, the financial system of an industrial community were deliberately based on the real wealth of that community, and the present so-called gold basis were for ever discarded as obsolete. This, however, is a somewhat intricate matter, with which we shall deal in detail later.* For the present it is sufficient to note that whereas under the present system the price of goods to the consumer cannot economically be less than the cost of production, it is not theoretically impossible or absurd to conceive a system wherein this does not hold true.

That "Work" is the only title to Goods and Services.

That Industry exists not only to Produce and Distribute Goods, but also to provide Employment.

Our last two assumptions may very conveniently be considered together. They are (6) *That "work" is the only title to a share in the goods and services of the community*, and (7) *That industry exists not only to produce and distribute goods, but also to provide employment.* Industry has two aspects. Primarily, of course, the purpose of industry is the satisfaction of man's material wants by the production of goods; and,

* *Infra*, Chapter VI.

under the present system, industry is also the medium for distributing, in wages, salaries and dividends, the money that entitles its possessor to share in those goods. In the former capacity industry functions admirably; in the latter it is a failure. Nor is the reason far to seek.

Science and the Present System. Scientists are ever busy designing new machinery and discovering fresh processes to replace manual labour by that of machines. Solar energy is being harnessed for the service of man, with the ultimate object of supplying his temporary needs with the minimum expenditure of human energy, or time-work units. In other words, invention and science are daily striving to remove the burden of production from off the shoulders of man and to throw it on to machinery, to the relief and release of mankind for leisure, culture, and recreation. All of which admirable object the present economic system is as busily thwarting. At the present day the great majority of our population depends for its daily bread upon employment. Employment is limited by the public demand for goods and services. Scientific progress and the erection of great quantities of efficient producing machinery have placed industry in a position to meet any possible public demand without the employment of more than a fraction of the human-labour-power available. There is no longer room in industry for all who seek employment there. Instead, however, of releasing men for the pursuit of knowledge, discovery or leisure, science is to-day, in effect, casting them out to starvation or "doles."

Two Conflicting Principles. Here we see two conflicting principles at work. The principle of progress would harness machines to the service of man. The principle that "work" is the only title to a share in the produce of industry harnesses men to the service of machines. In long-ago days it was laid down by St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians "that if a man would not work, neither should he eat." Admirable as this doctrine may have been before the industrial revolution, nowadays, when abstracted from its context and suitably interpreted, it has become the unwitting cause of much unnecessary misery. If we lived under a sane economic system we should rejoice that we could produce all we required or desired without employing all the man-power available. There would be no "unemployment problem," and no hungry, ragged army demanding "work" as a means to existence, when there is clothing and food enough for all, but not sufficient employment to go round. Present-day conditions afford a direct incentive to adopt a policy of ca' canny, while "making work" has developed into one of the fine arts. And yet there can be no intrinsic good in taking ten hours to produce by hand what can be turned out in ten minutes by a machine. The fact that one man can now do the work of sixty ought not to result in reducing a considerable proportion of the world's population to a condition of semi-starvation and servility. The saving effected by means of new inventions and processes should enure to the benefit of the whole community*. *We shall never even begin to solve the great Industrial Problem until we have realised that the true purpose of Industry, first, last, and all the time, is the production and distribution of goods and services, and not the provision of employment. And, as a corollary, we must cease to regard "work" as the only title to a share in the goods and services of the community.*

To Sum Up. Let us sum up. The present-day economic system has palpably broken down. Orthodox economists are at a loss to find any adequate solution for the besetting problems of to-day, because they base their arguments upon false premises. What we have so far attempted to show is this:

*See also *infra*, Chapter VII

Amended Assumptions.

(1) *That the wealth of a community consists not only of its output but also of its capacity to produce.*

(2) *That it is not necessary to make the Rich poorer in order to make the Poor richer.*

(3) *That Great Britain is not a poor country.*

(4) *a. That a favourable balance of trade is generally considered absolutely necessary for the proper distribution of goods at home.*

b. That this implies a struggle for foreign markets, and a continuance of economic wars.

(5) *a. That under the present system it is not economically feasible for commodities to be sold to the consumer at a price less than the financial cost of production.*

b. That it is not, however, inherently impossible to devise some system under which this would not be the case.

(6) *That "work" is no longer the only title to a share in the goods and services of the community.*

(7) *That the true purpose of Industry is the production and distribution of goods, and not necessarily the provision of employment.*

CHAPTER II.

Credit and Credit-Power.

Introductory. It will be utterly impossible even to begin to understand the causes of the present-day economic impasse unless first of all we grasp the two salient facts about our modern financial system, namely, the immense power of the banks to issue credits—the life-blood of an industrial community—and the effect of such issues upon prices and policy.

The Conception of Credit. If, to begin with, we consider what is meant by credit, we mark at the outset that credit is, as indeed its name implies, something based on belief: belief in the capacity of the person credited to accomplish something. A bank, for instance, only allows a tradesman to overdraw, or, in other words, gives him credit, if it believes that in due course the tradesman will be in a position to pay off the overdraft with interest. Belief is of the very essence of credit.

Real and Financial Credit. Credit, it will be seen upon reflection, is of two kinds, called by Major Douglas "Real Credit" and "Financial Credit" respectively. Adopting his terminology, *real credit* may be defined as *an estimate of the capacity of the person credited to deliver goods or services where, when and as required*. The real credit of a manufacturer is based upon the belief of others in his capacity to deliver goods, and may be due to his possession of suitable machinery or an accumulated stock of past products. *Financial credit*, on the other hand, is *an estimate of the capacity of the person credited to deliver money where, when and as required**, and is, in general, equivalent to an estimate of his capacity to dispose of his goods or services in return for money. By way of illustration: if A., a manufacturer, applies to his bank for an overdraft on security of his factory, the bank will estimate the market value of A.'s factory before allowing him to overdraw up to a certain amount, which amount will not be in excess of such value. In other words, the lender considers the borrower's real credit, his capacity to deliver his goods or services, and if he comes to the conclusion that the said borrower has insufficient real credit, will refuse to advance him financial credit. So far so good, but the analysis is not yet complete. A lender will not give credit to a would-be borrower simply because the borrower can deliver a large stock of boots upon demand. He will only

*This definition of financial credit differs slightly from that given in the former edition of this book.

give financial credit if he believes that the borrower can sell his goods, and out of the prices obtained from the public repay the amount advanced in money. Indeed, the lender would be disagreeably surprised if the borrower attempted to wipe out his indebtedness in kind, by presenting equivalent value in footwear. It would seem, then, that financial credit is in general based not only on the real credit of the borrower, but also upon a belief in the capacity of the community to absorb and pay for his goods or services.

Loan Capital. The following extract from the writings of Walter Bagehot may perhaps help towards a realization of the extent to which Industry to-day is dependent for its very existence on bank issues of credit. In 1873 he wrote as follows :—

"English trade is carried on upon borrowed "capital to an extent of which few foreigners "have an idea and none of our ancestors could "have conceived. . . . If a merchant "have £50,000, all his own, to gain 10% on it he "must make £5,000 a year, and must charge "accordingly : but if another have only £10,000 "and borrow £40,000 by discounts . . . he "has the same capital of £50,000 to use, and "can sell much cheaper. If the rate at which "he borrows be 5%, he will have to pay £2,000 "a year; and if, like the old trader, he make "£5,000 a year, he will still, after paying his "interest, obtain £3,000 a year, or 30% on his "own £10,000. As most merchants are content "with much less than 30%, he will be able, if "he wishes, to forego some of that profit, lower "the price of the commodity, and drive the "old-fashioned trader—the man who trades on "his own capital—out of the market. In "modern English business, owing to the "certainty of obtaining loans, on discount of "bills or otherwise, at a moderate rate of "interest, there is a steady bounty on trading "with borrowed capital, and a constant dis-"couragement to confine yourself solely or "mainly to your own capital."*. If Bagehot could write so emphatically in the year 1873, one is led to wonder how he would have expressed himself had he lived to view the economic developments of the present day.

Bankers' Credit and Prices.

It is not difficult to realise how great and important a part is played in modern industry and commerce by bankers' credits. What is not always realised is that these issues of financial credit are virtually issues of new money. The effect upon the level of prices, that is, upon the purchasing-power of existing credit and currency is the same. To all intents

*"Lombard Street," Pages 8 and 9.

and purposes the banks have in course of time acquired a monopoly of credit-issue and credit-restriction, and even Governments do not hesitate to pledge the National Credit for the inferior credit that the banks create. In support of these assertions it is impossible to do better than cite the words of an eminent banker, the Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, Chairman of the Midland Bank Limited. Speaking on January 29th, 1920, he said: "The actual spending-power of the public is "gauged by the total amount of currency in "circulation added to the total amount of "bank deposits. In 1914 the public spending-"power was £1,198,000,000, to-day it is "£2,693,000,000, an increase of £1,495,000,000, "or 125%. . . . If we take 100 to "represent the cost of living in 1914, the "corresponding figure to-day would be about "225, or an increase of 125%. . .

Bank Loans and Deposits. "Let me give a brief illustration "of how bank deposits are "increased by bank loans. When "a bank makes a loan to a customer, or allows "him an overdraft, in the ordinary course the "loan will be drawn upon, or the overdraft "will be made by a cheque drawn by the "customer upon the bank and paid into "someone's credit at the same or another "bank. The drawer of the cheque will not "have reduced any deposit already in existence "because we are supposing a case in which he "has been given a loan or allowed an over- "draft. The receiver of the cheque, however, "when he pays it into his own account, "will be credited with its value, and thereby "a new deposit will be created. . . In the "same way, when a bank buys or discounts "a bill, the proceeds of the sale are paid "into the credit of the seller's account, and "increase the total of bank deposits: and "in the same way also when a bank buys "War Loan, or makes any other investments, "the purchase money goes to the credit of "somebody's account in some bank, and "increases the total of deposits. . . .

A few Figures. "In June, 1914, the banks held "£75,000,000 of currency. Last "month (December 1919) the figure "stood at £191,000,000. The banks therefore "held more currency to the amount of "£116,000,000, and to this extent the increase "in the aggregate of bank deposits is accounted "for by payment in of currency. But it is "estimated that since June, 1914, bank "deposits have risen by £1,230,000,000. If "£116,000,000 of this amount are accounted "for by payments of currency into the banks, "there remains £1,114,000,000 which, if the "previous analysis be accepted as correct, "we must attribute to Bank Loans."

Comments. Here for a while let us pause to consider the meaning of the above quotation from the speech of the Chairman of our largest bank. First we remark that the effect upon prices of additional spending-power is the same whether that spending-power take the form of additional legal tender issued by the Government, or additional financial credit created by the banks. In the second place we see that the banks can issue this credit to their customers without any detriment to themselves. When A. lends to B. £10 he gives up the use of that sum. But when a bank allows a customer an overdraft, the amount of this overdraft appears as a new deposit there or elsewhere, and the banks' financial position is practically the same as before, except that more interest is charged on the overdraft than is allowed on the deposit. The only limit to the banks' power to create new credit is their legal liability to pay out legal tender on demand in exchange for it. A 15% backing of legal tender is considered more than ample security.* *Thirdly, we have to remark the fact that only approximately one-fourth of the increase in our spending power during the War was due*

*The present backing is more nearly 10%.

to the creation of additional currency by the Government, and that three-fourths was due to what was in fact the creation of new money by the banks. This is a fact that is frequently overlooked by those who blame the Government for issuing "paper-money." It is true that from time to time certain bank loans are paid off, and deposits correspondingly diminish; but, as we saw a little while ago, the whole trend of modern finance is to encourage trading as far as possible on borrowed capital, and in many cases one loan is only repaid by the obtaining of a larger credit elsewhere. We can realise, therefore, how, under the present economic system, bankers' credit has become a necessity to modern Industry.

Bank Loans and Prices. In normal times the money created by the banks and lent to manufacturers is used to induce further production. This increase, it may speciously be contended, counteracts, by the law of Supply and Demand, the tendency of the price-level to rise consequent upon an augmentation of the spending-power in the hands of the community. How is it, then, that for some years prior to the Great War the level of prices had been gradually rising ?* How is it that in November 1920, after two years of intensive

* Between the years 1910 and 1914, there was an increase of 20% in the total of bank deposits, and of 7% in the cost of living.

production, prices were considerably higher than they were in November, 1918? * There are at least two reasons. 1. The flow of additional spending-power into the community precedes the flow of additional goods. The prices of existing goods rise. The cost of living increases. Wages may perhaps rise to meet this. Cost of production rises with wages. By the time the new goods are ready for the market, the general level of prices has risen, perhaps imperceptibly in individual cases, but none the less certainly in the aggregate. 2. In the second place, whereas the "Law of Supply and Demand" regulates the *maximum* price of a commodity, the *minimum* price is determined by quite another consideration, namely, the cost of production, below which, under the present system, it is not economically feasible to sell.

Government Borrowing. Mr. McKenna continues: "We "have seen that during the last "six years bank loans have been "responsible for £1,100,000,000 in bank de- "posits. . . . The best estimate that I can "form is that of the total of eleven hundred "million, eight hundred million pounds, in- "cluding Treasury Bills, have been lent to the "State, and three hundred million pounds

* The Ministry of Labour index figures for the cost of living were (taking August, 1914 as 100), November, 1918, 222; November, 1920, 276.

"to trade. The Government, under the over-"whelming necessity of war effort, has been "the great borrower from the banks. . . . "When the Government borrows directly "from the banks, or indirectly from the banks "through members of the public, who obtain "bank advances to enable them to take up "loans, the banks subscribe by drawing on "their balances with the Bank of England. "The money received by the Government is "paid out in due course to meet liabilities to "contractors, by whom again it is paid to "the credit of their accounts with the banks. "The customers' deposits are thus increased, "and as the banks in their turn pay the money "into their accounts at the Bank of England, "the previous withdrawals from the Bank are "made good. Thus the nett effect of the "whole proceeding is to increase the total "amount of bank deposits by the exact amount "which the banks have lent to the Government "directly or indirectly."

Trade and Government Loans.

Again, what exactly does this mean? First, of course, that only about 30% of the increase in prices was due to loans for the purpose of trade, and that approximately 70% was the direct result of Government borrowing. But the inference is strong that if the Government had not been compelled to borrow even one penny, bank loans to manufacturers or traders would, by themselves, have caused a considerable rise in prices during that period. Secondly, it means that when the community, by its Government, borrows from the banks, the nett result is that the community has the doubtful pleasure of paying at least 2% more per annum for the money it borrows through its Government than, as the Public, it receives when it pays the same money into the banks. And yet, so accustomed are we to our present financial system, we do not deem it intrinsically absurd to see the community, as represented by its Government, pledging the communal real credit to secure an inferior credit from a small section of itself—the financiers and the banks—whose whole ability to create such financial credit is the outcome of the economic stability of the community as a whole. *A true Government should lend, not borrow.*

The Basis of Credit Power. That the financiers and the banks do indeed derive all their power to issue credit, and even their ability to carry on at all, from the stability of the community itself, may be made clear by a single illustration. When, in August, 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany, there was an immediate rush on the part of the public to withdraw their deposits, and particularly their gold, from the banks. Had the public continued to demand payment in gold, the banks would have had to stop payment altogether: their credit, that is, the belief of the public in their stability, would have vanished, and with it the possibility of their continued existence. But so dependent has the community grown under the present system upon the stability of the banks, that the Government felt itself obliged to interfere to prevent their failure. Consequently, at the request of the financial magnates, the Government declared a three-days' bank holiday, and when next the banks resumed payment, the demand of the depositors for their money was met by a flood of Treasury Notes. It was thus the Treasury, the purse of the community, that saved the private banks by utilising public credit: *and it is undoubtedly true that behind and supporting the credit of the banks there is and has always been the real credit of the community.*

Policy and Prosperity. *The prosperity of an industrial community is dependent upon a wise and disinterested financial policy.* A short-sighted or self-seeking policy on the part of those who exercise the power of credit-issue and credit-restriction is disastrous to the economic and industrial well-being of the whole community. The Cunliffe policy of gradual monetary deflation may be instanced as a case in point. To quote once again the words of Mr. McKenna*: "A "declared policy of monetary deflation is a "public warning to the trader that he must be "prepared to lose on every contract for the "future delivery of goods. Owing to the "general fall in prices, the market price of "goods when he gets them will be lower than "at the time when his contract was made. "A policy of gradual monetary deflation, but "deflation so guarded as not to interfere with "production, is a policy impossible of execu-"tion. Trade is never good when prices are "declining, but the consequence of a continu-"ous fall in prices entailed by dear money and "restriction of credit, and accentuated by "heavy taxation, must be complete stagnation "of business." Without prolonged insistence upon the truth, often overlooked but self-evident upon reflection, that deflation of money means inflation of the real burden of the National Debt and therefore of direct or indirect taxation, enough perhaps has been said to shew how an injudicious financial policy can work havoc with industry. And yet, the general public has no voice in the matter. "He who pays the piper calls the

* In a speech to the shareholders of the L.J.C.& M. Bank, January 28th. 1921.

tune" is only another way of saying that he who controls credit controls policy.

Democracy? Here is a new menace to modern democracy. Without protest on the part of the community, the dominating power of credit-manipulation has become concentrated in the hands of a few financial magnates, giving to each of them a control of national policy far in excess of that of a cabinet minister. A cabinet minister is responsible to the country for his mistakes. A financier is responsible to no one for the consequences of his policy. This country prides itself on being essentially democratic, because the policy of the majority as expressed at the polls is said to prevail. And so it does, in mere matters of administration. But when financial interests and economic policy are concerned, then it is finance that rules, and finance alone. And it must be noted well that the policies of the financier and of the individual member of the public are by no means necessarily coincident. The individual member of the community looks upon money, rightly, as a title to goods and services; but the financier looks upon goods and services as a means to money, and if it pays him to keep commodities in short supply he has the wherewithal to effect this object.

So long as the control of financial policy is left in the hands of private individuals, so long will it be little better than bitter mockery to speak of this, or any other industrial community, as being "democratic."

Credit Power and Democracy. One is therefore led to conclude that at the root of the economic evils of the present day lies neither the greed of Capital nor the exorbitant demands and extravagant policy of Labour, but that behind these, and stronger and deadlier than either, there is the present financial system, to which both Capital and Labour are slaves. Labour sees the Capitalist in his more comfortable circumstances, and, failing to look behind the obvious, concludes that this same Capitalist is the hereditary foe. In truth, the enemy is not the Capitalist—not even the Financier personally (for the Financier is, after all, generally as humane and well-meaning a man as his fellows)—but this present-day financial system. Until Labour and Capital realise that their interests are one in this matter—until they unite to replace this present financial system by one more in tune with the ideals and aspirations of the times—until then, it is submitted, will our national and international well-being remain in jeopardy.

Consumer Control of Credit. Financier, Capitalist, Worker, all have at least one attribute in common; all to a greater or less degree are consumers. It is from this point of view alone that they see money in its natural and true light, as a title to goods and services—merely a convenient and conventional machinery. Industry should be carried on for the benefit of every member of the community, and not merely for the enrichment of a small section thereof: but this ideal state of affairs will never be realised until the ultimate control of the community's credit rests with the consumer.

CHAPTER III.

Industrial Stagnation.

Introductory. There can be little or no question about the truth of the statement that the immediate cause of the present industrial stagnation is a lack of purchasing-power on the part of the consumer, whether at home or abroad. However great and real may be the need for goods, unless demand is backed by purchasing-power it is not a commercial proposition to cater for it. Industry cannot continue to produce goods unless there is an *effective* demand for them. When we begin to ask ourselves the reason for this present serious lack of purchasing-power, we shall find more than one very plausible explanation.

The Flow Theory. Perhaps the most elusive conception of the Douglas Analysis, and one which confronts the enquirer at the very outset of his investigations, is that which we may, for shortness, term the "Flow Theory." Briefly, it is this "*In any given unit of time, the flow of purchasing-power to the various individuals connected with Industry is never sufficient to buy* *the total products of Industry produced within that unit of time, at the prices which manufacturers are, by the present system, compelled to charge.*" It may be well to quote Douglas' own words in support of this proposition. His argument runs thus :—

Douglas' Argument. "A factory or other productive "organisation has, besides its "economic function as a producer "of goods, a purely financial aspect. It may "be regarded on the one hand as a device "for the distribution of purchasing-power to "individuals through the media of wages, "salaries and dividends, and on the other "hand as a manufactory of prices—financial "values. From this standpoint its payments "may be divided into two groups :—

"Group A. All payments made to individuals. (Wages, Salaries and Dividends.)

"Group B. All payments made to other organisations. (Raw materials, Bank Charges, and other External Costs.)

"Now the rate of flow of purchasing-power to "individuals is represented by A, but since all "payments go into prices, the rate of flow of "prices cannot be less than A plus B. The "product of any factory may be considered as "something which the public ought to be able "to buy, although in many cases it is an "intermediate product and of no use to "individuals but only to a subsequent manu-"facturer: but since A will not purchase A "plus B, a proportion of the product at least "equivalent to B must be distributed by a "form of purchasing-power not comprised in "the descriptions grouped under A."*

Ultimate and Intermediate Production. The exact implication of this obviously true statement has occupied a preponderating space in Social Credit literature, and aroused considerable controversy. It may, therefore, be helpful to those whose "dynamic perception" of Industry is not yet sufficiently developed to follow Douglas in his argument, if we attempt to present one aspect of the case in a somewhat different form, and from another point of view. Before we proceed to do so, however, it may be well to emphasise the fundamental distinction that exists between the two broad classes of goods that Industry is capable of producing. There are (1) *Ultimate Commodities*—goods which are ultimately produced, and to provide which is the only true purpose of Industry. These are the goods which you and I, as individuals and consumers, require. Then (2) there are those goods from which, and by means of which, ultimate commodities are

* "Credit-Power and Democracy" (2nd Ed.), at pages 21 and 22.

developed. These we will call *Intermediate Products*. The importance of this class of production lies solely in its function and capacity to produce other goods or be developed into ultimate commodities which the consumer demands.

Market Topheaviness. Let us, then, imagine the existence of a self-contained industrial community, and assume the presence therein of manufacturing companies owning goods which it has cost, say, £1,000,000 to produce. Some of these goods will be intermediate products, such as plant and machinery; the remainder will be ultimate commodities. The £1,000,000 represents the aggregate amount of all payments made (however long ago) to individuals in the course of the production of these goods, the greater part of which has already been spent and is no longer available as purchasing-power in the hands of consumers. Now, *every penny distributed to individuals in respect of both kinds of production has, sooner or later, to be recovered in the prices charged to the public for ultimate commodities only*. The possible effective demand for ultimate commodities is limited by the amount of available purchasing-power in the hands of individuals. Let us assume this to be £100,000. Let us also assume that various members of the community invest, say, £10,000 in Industry, which sum is duly paid out in the form of wages, etc., in the course of new intermediate production. The total available purchasing-power of the individual members of the community still remains unaltered at £100,000 (for the £10,000 paid into certain pockets as wages, etc., has been taken out of other pockets as investment), while there is now an additional £10,000 to be eventually recovered in prices of ultimate commodities. *An increase in the monetary value of unrecovered payments without an increase in the amount of available purchasing-power in the hands of would-be consumers naturally tends to lengthen the average time that must elapse before a payment made in the course of manufacture can be recovered in price.* Hence manufacturers find themselves better equipped for production, without any greater effective demand for the goods they can produce. Stocks begin to accumulate, unsaleable because the community has not sufficient available purchasing-power to buy them. The wheels of industry are slowed, and there is an immediate drop in the rate of flow of money into the pockets of the consumers as wages, etc., and a corresponding diminution in the effective demand for ultimate commodities. This automatically increases the length of time that must elapse before payments made in the course of production can be recovered in prices. Acute "market-topheaviness" of this description is the prime cause of industrial stagnation.

Capitalization of Profits. We have just seen how the investment of money in industry which would otherwise be spent on the purchase of existing commodities increases, however slightly, the tendency of the market towards "topheaviness." This, in itself, is a sufficient condemnation of the existing system, for the investment in production of money which would otherwise be used to consume wealth ought in all sanity to be a benefit to the community. It must be borne in mind, however, that it is not only by means of direct investment that "topheaviness" is increased. If a manufacturing company, out of accumulated and undistributed profits, makes an extension to its plant and machinery, the effect is precisely the same. In order that the total products may be purchased, it is clearly necessary that, among other things, all profits should be distributed to consumers directly, in order that they may be expended. Wages and salaries alone cannot buy the whole production if profit be included in the price. But if some profits, instead of being distributed directly, are diverted to finance new production, and are only distributed as payment for further work done, then there is a corresponding augmentation of market-topheaviness. An increase in productive equipment, therefore, *unaccompanied by a similar expansion of purchasing-power*, adds its quota to the general topheaviness of the market. Profiteering, so often blamed for the present economic situation, is certainly an aggravation of the industrial malaise, but it is not a primary cause thereof. That lies inherent in the system itself.

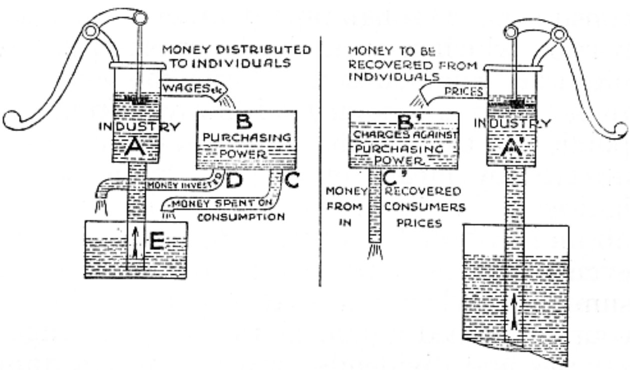


Diagram of the Cause of Market Topheaviness. (1) Purchasing Power.

The above is an attempt to express the foregoing proposition in diagrammatic form. Considering first the diagram on the left-hand side, we see Industry represented as a pump (A), from which there flows a stream of wages, salaries, dividends, etc., into a storage tank (B). This tank (B) represents the community regarded as a potential consumer of ultimate commodities. The contents thereof denote the as yet unexpended wages, etc., received by individual members of the community in the course of production, *i.e.*, the amount of money available, if desired, for the purchase of ultimate commodities. At the bottom of the tank (B) there are depicted two outlet pipes, (C) and (D), through which money leaves the pockets of consumers. Through pipe (C) there flows that portion which is spent in the consumption of ultimate commodities. Through pipe (D) there flows all money withdrawn from the public for the expansion of Industry, either directly by means of new capital issues, or indirectly, by the utilisation for that purpose of undistributed profits. Both these pipes eventually discharge their contents into a sump (E), whence the same money is in due course pumped again, in the form of wages, salaries and dividends, into the storage tank (B). Here, then, we have a rough illustration of the way in which money flows from Industry to the consumer and back again.

(2) Charges against purchasing power. Let us now turn our attention to the diagram on the right-hand side. Every payment made to individuals in the course of production has two distinct aspects. Positively, it is an addition to the consumers' purchasing-power. Negatively, seeing that every penny must sooner of later be recovered in the prices of ultimate commodities, it is a fresh charge against such purchasing-power. So here we see Industry, again depicted as a pump (A'), pouring out a stream of charges against purchasing-power into a storage tank (B'), exactly equal to the flow of wages, etc., passing from (A) to (B). The contents of tank (B') may be regarded as the total amount of payments made to individuals in the course of production which have not yet been recovered by Industry in the prices of ultimate commodities sold to consumers. More shortly, it represents the total amount of outstanding charges against purchasing power. This tank (B') has but a single outflow pipe (C'). Money spent on consumption reduces not only the available purchasing-power of consumers, but also the total value of payments still to be recovered in prices. The outflow from tank (B') along pipe (C') is therefore exactly equal to the outflow from tank (B) along pipe (C).

Diagrams Compared. Taking the diagrams together: the inflow into both tanks (B) and (B') is the same; the outflow from tank (B) is greater than the outflow from tank (B') by the amount flowing down the pipe marked (D). Therefore the contents of tank (B') are ever increasing in comparison with the contents of tank (B). In other words, the total charges against purchasing-power are ever expanding in comparison with the amount of the available purchasing-power itself, which means that *the average time which must elapse before a payment made in the course of production can be recovered in price from the consumer is gradually lengthening*. Unrecovered payments are represented by accumulated stocks. Industry is gradually becoming choked with its own production.

Comments on the Diagrams. The above diagrams, for the sake of simplicity, deliberately omit any reference to the part played by the bankers in the financing of Industry, and it may perhaps be contended that this omission entirely vitiates the argument. We do not think so, and for the following reasons. First of all, while we have made no direct reference to the banks, the term purchasing-power, or money, includes not only legal tender, but also bank credits. An issue of new bank credit to Industry would be diagrammatically represented by the addtion of a certain volume to the contents of the sump (E) which has to pass through the pump Industry before helping to swell the purchasing-power of consumers, consequently also swelling the total charges against such purchasing-power. And any extension of productive equipment not paid for by entirely new money must be, directly or indirectly, financed by money withdrawn from the pockets of consumers—money which would otherwise be spent on consumption. Hence there is a steady flow of purchasing-power along pipe (D), and in all essentials the foregoing analysis holds good. *We conclude, then, that under the prevailing economic system, a modern industrial community is unable to absorb all its own production.* Anyone still unconvinced will, on looking about him, see and read for himself a daily confirmation of this conclusion. Whatever difficulties may obscure the line of thought leading to the final proposition, the events of every day testify to the truth of the proposition itself.

Bank Credit Issues. And so, in years of industrial prosperity, this "topheaviness" increases, until at last Industry can struggle on no longer. Then its wheels are slowed, and unemployment and wide-spread poverty result, because, as a community, we are "too rich." Relief of a temporary nature can, it would seem, be found in two directions. (1) The bankers may issue fresh credits to producers, by means of which Industry for a time manages to retain a semblance of prosperity, until yet vaster stocks are accumulated; or (2), the surplus production may be exported to foreign communities. If, however bank credit issues are in any way to relieve the existing tension, they can only do so when issued in respect of the production of goods not immediately required by the individual members of the community as such. In other words, such issues must be, and in fact are, for the most part, made in respect of capital production, such as the building of factories, the erection of new machinery, the development of mines, etc. Such additional purchasing-power does, for the moment, increase the effective demand of the public for ultimate commodities, and cause a temporary abatement in the "top-heaviness" of the market. Yet, seeing that the whole amount of these issues must sooner or later be recovered from the public in prices, such beneficial effect has but temporary duration.

Export, and the Struggle for Foreign Markets.

There remains, however, to be considered the relief afforded by exportation, the need for which is by the Orthodox Economist tacitly (and, under the present system, rightly) assumed to be essential for the continued well-being of an industrial community. Surplus production beyond what the members of the community can afford to purchase for home consumption is, as far as possible, exported to countries that are not, as yet, glutted by their own produce. In this way a certain amount of the accumulated stocks may be disposed of without further depleting the already overburdened purse of the community. But it is not merely a question of exchanging surplus stocks for the products of other communities. If a community cannot afford to purchase at home the goods it is therefore obliged to dispose of abroad, neither can it afford to purchase what it imports in exchange for those goods. The whole struggle is, therefore, to obtain a surplus of exports over imports, and that is why all the industrial nations of the world are busily competing for markets among their less "progressive" brethren, for spheres of influence, and for monopolies. Germany, the most intensively industrialised community in the world, was compelled to fight by the economic necessity of capturing fresh markets for her output. The same artificial necessity that drove Germany into her mad bid for world supremacy acts and reacts on the United States, on Japan, and on ourselves. International agreements may, indeed, postpone for a little while a catastrophe from the contemplation of which Civilisation shrinks in horror. But mere political or diplomatic action, however successful it may appear at the time, and however universal its appeal to all that is best in man, cannot do more than delay. If the present system be persisted in, stern economic necessity will render the final cataclysm inevitable. *Every year the surplus for export increases. Every year the available markets become fewer and fewer as other nations tend to become industrialised. Every day brings us almost perceptibly nearer to the next Great War.*

The Danger Ahead. Briefly to recapitulate. The present-day industrial community is unable to absorb all it produces. This is due to a blind adherence to an obsolete financial and economic system. This system is not replaced, because, for one reason, its retention ensures wealth and power to a small section of the community, who naturally utilise this same wealth and power in preserving the system. Consequently the industrial nations of to-day are driven to seek what relief they can in export, and the necessity for the capture of foreign markets, ever growing more acute, paves the way for war. It would seem, then, that a continuance of the present financial and economic system is, in effect, but a lingering form of world-suicide—and perhaps not so very lingering after all.

CHAPTER IV.

Prices and Price-Regulation.

"The Law of Supply and Demand."

It can hardly be superfluous, at the beginning of a chapter such as this, once again to emphasise the fact that the doctrine commonly known as "The Law of Supply and Demand" is only partial in its application to the regulation of prices. It is commonly contended, and with some plausibility, that demand, relative to supply, regulates the price of any marketed commodity, and that therefore accumulations of stock should (and do) ensure a lowering of prices to such an extent that the community as a whole could (and can) afford to purchase such stocks for consumption. It would seem to be overlooked that under the present system a fall in prices is only the after-reflection of a greater decrease in the rate of flow of money into the community, and can only be achieved through wage-reduction, unemployment, industrial stagnation, class-bitterness, hunger and misery. Although prices are, on the whole, considerably lower than they were, yet it can hardly be disputed that the effective demand of the community has decreased to a far larger extent, and that in spite of this fall in the cost of living, the majority of the public is to-day being forced to accept a lower standard of existence. Less than ever can men afford the goods they need. Ultimately, it is true, this so-called "Law" does tend to fix the *maximum* price of a marketed commodity, but, as we have already pointed out, the *minimum* price at which a commodity can economically be sold is at present based on a very different consideration, that of the cost of production. Under the present financial system no manufacturer or trader can for long continue, however great his supply may be in relation to demand, or however small may be the effective demand in relation to his available supply, to dispose of his products at less than the financial cost of their production.

An Era of Combines.

In the period that preceded this present era of trusts and combines, competition tended to counteract somewhat the effect of the former part of our dual postulate. It kept prices down to a "reasonable" level, which, under the existing financial system, is one only slightly in excess of the cost of production ; and it was generally considered good commercial policy to increase profits by increasing the quantity produced and sold, rather than, by restriction of supply, to endeavour to obtain the maximum profit from the sale of each individual commodity. But this is the era of the large trade combine, whether of employers or workpeople, resulting to a large extent in the elimination of competition. It follows that the necessities of life are supplied, by those whose interest it is to regulate supply and price, to the members of the community at such prices as will absorb the greatest possible percentage of available purchasing-power; as will, in other words, enable the majority of the community to maintain only a somewhat precarious existence. It follows also that whatever the level of wages in an industrial community may be, the majority will never, under the present system, be able to afford much more than the necessities of life, and that anything in the nature of luxuries will ever remain the privilege of the minority.

Control of Industrial Policy. We have already seen how the power behind Industry, the power to control policy and direct initiative, lies with Finance. It is the power of credit-issue and of credit-restriction that dominates the whole existence of an industrial community. When a bank is approached with a view to an issue of credit, it is only natural that it should most readily grant such an issue to the manufacturer or trader who is able to satisfy the bank that he can make the maximum profit on the minimum outlay, *and whose increased activity will not tend to cause a fall in prices to the detriment of the bank's other securities.* We see, then, that under the present financial system, so long as money remains the sole inducement to production, "the control of the policy of production rests, "not with the administration of productive "enterprise, but, as to its initiation, with the "banks and others who finance production, "and as to its continuance, with the price- "makers, whose motive is in the very nature "of things anti-public, since it aims at de- "priving with maximum rapidity the individu- "als who comprise the public of the inde- "pendence conferred on them by the possession "of purchasing-power"*.

Consumer Control of Credit. And thus we saw, at the conclusion of a previous chapter, that it is upon the control of credit by the consumer, and upon that alone, that the possibility of any prolonged continuance of modern civilisation depends. Control of credit by the consumer is, of course, impossible so long as the whole of the financial credit distributed to individual members of the community as such in the process of pro-

* "Credit Power and Democracy," (2nd Ed.), at page 90.

duction is re-absorbed as quickly as possible through the medium of unregulated prices. Is there, then, no method whereby this re-absorption can be prevented, or at any rate greatly retarded ?

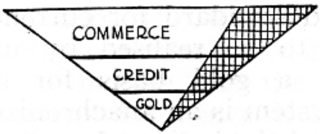
Passing of the Gold Standard.

There is, and it is the object of the later chapters of this book to outline such a method. The first step in this direction must be to discard any notion of returning to our pre-war gold standard for currency. It can hardly fail to be realised by unprejudiced minds that a gold basis for an internal monetary system is an anachronism. It was, indeed, one of the indirect benefits of the late war that it tore us ruthlessly away from the gold basis, and although the pretence is still officially maintained that there is a gold backing (admittedly inadequate) to every note, no thinking person is deceived thereby. *The only genuine, the only logical backing is, of course, the real credit of the community.* Apart from the folly of basing our monetary system upon gold, which, after all, forms but an infinitesimal portion of the community's resources, some idea of the danger to our national and international well-being inherent in an adherence to a gold basis may be gathered from a perusal of Mr. Arthur Kitson's interesting treatise entitled "A

Fraudulent Standard"*, from which the following extract is taken.

Danger of a Gold Basis.

"The following illustration of the "triangle shows that at present "all our huge volumes of credit "are piled upon an insignificant "amount of gold, so that every golden "sovereign represents from twenty to one "hundred sovereigns' worth of credit.



"If, therefore, a million pounds of bullion "are exported, the banks are compelled to call "in all the credit resting on that sum, in order "to maintain their so-called margin of safety. "Hence the movement of a comparatively "small amount of gold or legal tender means "the addition to or cancellation of a large "volume of currency. Some years ago *The "Bankers' Magazine* gave a most startling "instance of the effect of gold exports upon "the prices of our gilt-edged securities. During "a period of ten weeks a certain group of "American financiers drew from the Bank of

* In this connection see especially the first eight, the tenth, and the eleventh chapters.

"England sums equal in all to eleven million "pounds in gold and shipped it to New York. "Prior to this operation these gamblers sold "British securities heavily, and bought United "States bonds and shares. The transfer of the "gold caused a fall in the prices of 325 of "our representative securities, equivalent to "£115,500,000, whilst the absorption of this "gold caused a corresponding rise in Americans. "This illustration explains why a relatively "small addition of legal tender can sometimes "seriously affect the price level. It is not "due so much to the increase in legal tender, "but to the disproportionate amount of "bank credit based upon it. This fact also "explains the reason why the values of "commodities have become so easily the "sport of speculators. The sudden creation "or withdrawal of credit, the export of gold "from one country to another, is sufficient to "ensure certain profits to the cosmopolitan "gamblers in finance."*.

The Real Credit Basis. The alternative to a metallic basis for our monetary system is a real credit basis. Imagine a community in which the gross increase in real credit within a given period of time is of the value of £1,000,000, and wherein the production-cost of goods simultaneously con-

* "A Fraudulent Standard," pages 153-155.

sumed is £800,000, leaving a nett increase in real credit, during that period, of the value of £200,000. If it be objected that such an increase is not a matter of real experience, the following considerations may be found helpful. There can be no question but that every year sees a substantial increase in the productive capacity of any industrial community—new factories, new machinery, development of mines, etc.—over and above any simultaneous capital depreciation. Therefore, even if it were possible to consume all ultimate commodities as fast as they were placed on the market, capital appreciation added to ultimate commodities produced must, except under very abnormal circumstances, exceed the simultaneous capital depreciation plus ultimate commodities consumed. Even during the late War, when our wastage almost exceeded our comprehension, ultimate commodities were replaced as speedily as they were destroyed, and in many industries capital production was unprecedented. But to return to our illustration: our community, we will suppose, has adopted a real credit basis for its monetary system; the £200,000 value of the nett appreciation of real credit (represented as it is by actual goods or development in the capacity to produce goods when, where, and as required) would thus be an effective backing to a

Treasury issue of financial credit. Indeed, we have seen that without a money or credit issue from some source or other, a community is unable to utilise its increased real credit, and Industry is hampered rather than stimulated thereby. Such issue, made by the Treasury as the purse of the whole community, to the consumers, who are the community, up to a sum not exceeding £200,000, would achieve at least this: it would give to the consumers as a whole a power to purchase those commodities they desired, or else a power to invest some of this credit in Industry—a power, that is, to initiate the production of such commodities.

Distribution of Purchasing-Power to Consumers. In making such an issue of purchasing-power to consumers, there are two possible courses to adopt. The first is to distribute purchasing-power direct to the individual members of the community as such. The most obvious objection to such a course is that the general level of prices would rise simultaneously until inflated prices had absorbed much of the purchasing-power so distributed, and the majority of the consumers, as such, would, in a very short space of time, have no more credit-power than they have at present. But the second course promises more satisfactory results. If the prices of commodities to the consumer were to be regulated at some percentage of production-cost, the Treasury might then reimburse to the producers the amount they were out of pocket by such action. The level of prices being regulated by, and under, cost of production, it would seem that the automatic expansion of purchasing-power in circulation corresponding to the increase in the community's real credit could not cause an inflation of prices.

Recapitulation. Let us briefly re-state the position. The foregoing analysis of the present-day economic system and the industrial conditions produced thereby points irresistibly to the conclusion that *so long as the prices of goods to the consumer are limited only by the purchasing-power available, and must of necessity include every cost incurred in the course of production,* so long will it be utterly impossible for an industrial community to avoid the evils attendant upon a merciless competition for foreign markets, the degradation and misery that to-day wait upon compulsory unemployment at home, or the economic subjection of the life, liberty and resources of the whole community to the service of the financial interests of the few. "Consumer control of credit" can only become a glorious reality, instead of a mere pious aspiration, through the regulation of prices, not by the bureaucratic and unscientific methods experienced during the Great War, but in proportion to the cost of production, and by the sale of ultimate commodities to the consumer at what is to-day termed "under cost." The question immediately before us reduces, then, to this :—Granted that it is feasible to sell ultimate commodities to the consumer at a percentage of production-cost, the producer being reimbursed by Treasury issues based upon the increase in the communal real credit (and we have attempted to show that this is not only possible but absolutely necessary for our economic salvation), what, then, is the right and proper proportion of the cost of production to be charged to the consumer ? In short, what is the "Just Price" ?

But before we attempt to discover the answer to this most pertinent question—which answer provides the key to Douglas' constructive proposals, as distinct from his analysis—it may, perhaps, be well to consider shortly some of the suggestions emanating from other quarters for the solution of the economic riddle. This we propose to do in our next chapter. Meanwhile let us in a few words re-state the chief points of the Douglas analysis.

Industrial Stagnation. 1. The industrial stagnation of to-day is not due to any breakdown in capacity to produce but in methods of distribution. Effective demand (*i.e.*, demand backed by purchasing-power) is not equal to the capacity of Industry to supply.

Unemployment. 2. Scientific inventions and discoveries have lessened the importance of the human labour element in Industry. There is no longer sufficient effective demand to employ all the available man-power.

War. 3. Under the present system, an industrial community is unable to purchase goods equivalent to its own output at the price the producer is, by that system, compelled to charge. Hence arises an artificial necessity for thrusting surplus production on to foreign markets, in fiercest competition with that of other industrial communities.

Poverty. 4. Meanwhile, accumulated stocks clog the wheels of Industry; real demand goes unsatisfied because it is not backed by purchasing-power; fresh purchasing power is only distributed to consumers as payment for further production.

Plutocracy. 5. Ultimate control of policy, national or industrial, rests with Finance, that is, with those that hold the power of credit-manipulation. Unregulated prices deprive the vast majority of the community of whatever financial power they earn in Industry. Credit-power is vested in a few financiers.

The WAY OUT. 6. (1) Scientific Price Regulation. (2) Consumer Control of Credit.

Part II.

A Brief Survey of
Various Suggested Remedies.

CHAPTER FIVE.
ECONOMIC PANACEAS.

CHAPTER V.

Economic Panaceas.

Proposed Economic Remedies. Having now concluded our analysis of the causes of the present-day economic impasse, it may not be altogether without profit if, before we turn to an examination of the Social Credit proposals for the removal of those causes, we first of all briefly consider certain of the remedies advocated by other schools of current economic thought. If upon examination these various schemes are found to afford no sure road to a permanent betterment of conditions, and if we are able to lay our fingers upon the weak spot in each so-called remedy, we shall find ourselves well-equipped to criticise Major Douglas' own proposals, and to form an accurate estimate of their merits.

Increased Production. In support of his demand for increased output, the orthodox economist has a plausible case to present. The more products a factory can turn out in a given time, he argues, the less does each several product cost to produce. This enables prices to be lowered to the mutual benefit of all concerned. Such an argument demands further consideration. Would increased production really enure to the mutual benefit of all concerned ? Or even to the benefit of the majority ? Let us examine this question in the light of the analysis of the previous chapters. One of the primary causes of the prevailing economic distress is, as we have sought to demonstrate, the inability of the members of a progressive industrial community, with the purchasing-power distributed to them in the course of production, to buy up or absorb *all* the products manufactured by that community. Increased production is no remedy for deficient demand. It matters little that individually the several articles are cheaper—the deadweight of the "market-topheaviness" as a whole is not diminished by such a policy. At the best, increased production can only afford a temporary alleviation : it offers no permanent remedy for the existing evils.

Lower Wages. Commonly allied with the above is the suggestion of a general reduction in wages. This can never be a solution. In the first place, it is a fact frequently overlooked that prices rose before wages, and that therefore logically they should be the first to fall. And secondly, a fall in the amount distributed in wages only serves to emphasise the existing discrepancy between the purchasing power of the community and the total charges against such purchasing power. Industry to-day is hampered by lack of demand. Demand, to be heard and catered for, must be backed by purchasing-power. A general lowering of wages and the consequent curtailment of what effective demand still exists, would hardly appear a logical way of setting the wheels of industry in motion once again. Eventually, of course, prices would tend to be favourably affected by the lowering of the cost of one of the chief essentials of production, *viz.*, labour; but this result would not follow immediately; and even when prices fell, as a consequence of reduced wages, they would not in the aggregate fall by a greater amount than the total of such reductions—by a greater amount, that is to say, than the decrease in the available purchasing-power of the community.

The Gold Standard. A very influential body of opinion, particularly amongst bankers, is in favour of a return at the earliest opportunity to the gold standard. We have already seen that such a return would be nothing less than a calamity, except perhaps to that small proportion of the community to whom it would bring additional opportunities for self-interested manipulation of credits and values. It is unnecessary to add anything here to what has been already said, except to repeat with all possible emphasis that a return to the gold standard is a step backwards. Such a standard for our currency is illogical, and exposes the community to unnecessary dangers, whilst effecting little or nothing in the way of a solution of its problems.

Administrative Control by the Workers.

Another school of thought, and one which receives much publicity and even a modicum of support, both in the Capitalistic and Labour Press, would place a far greater share of the administrative control of industry in the hands of the workers themselves. Those who by their labour, either with hand or head, contribute to the production of goods should, it is plausibly contended, have a substantial voice in the control of production, as regards the amount produced, the methods employed, the hours worked, and the wages paid. Because of this have arisen Whitley Councils, Trade Boards, Shop Stewards' Committees, and other similar ingenious machinery for admitting Labour to a greater share in industrial administration. But these devices, in effect, merely replace a manager by a committee of management, and united by divided control. Details may be altered here and there; factory life may, on the whole, become more wholesome; but the principal cause of the prevailing economic distress will remain still untouched. To continue to exist, Industry must still "pay its way," and so long as the present financial conditions hold sway, no mere transference of administrative powers from the few to the many can possibly effect any radical benefit to either party. Control of administration can only go a very little way towards a general betterment of conditions. To effect anything permanent there must be financial reform.

Profit Sharing. Some there are who urge that the workers should have, not indeed a share in the administration of industry (which they recognise as a technical matter, far better left in the hands of experts), but, in addition to their wages and other remuneration, a share in the profits. Quite apart from any ethical question as to whether or not it is right on principle that an employee of a well-paying concern should receive correspondingly more than one who does equally good work for a firm that is only just managing to struggle along, it is obvious that profit-sharing schemes fail in at least three directions to provide any solution to the economic problem. In the first place, the profit-sharing concern has as great an interest as any private manufacturer in the maintenance of high prices, if high prices mean enhanced profits. It is purely selfish in its attitude towards the community as a whole. Secondly, the obvious policy of the participators in any such scheme is to do as much work as possible with as few workers, in order that the profit-shares of each may be as large as possible. When it is remembered that Industry to-day is unable to absorb all the available man-power—in spite of the marvellous ingenuity displayed in the direction of making work—it is clear that if a community's production were carried on entirely by profit-sharing societies, there would still remain outside the charmed circle of producers an ever-increasing number of unemployed, whose prospect of obtaining employment would be even more remote than at the present day. Thirdly, those profit-sharing schemes that have temporarily proved fairly successful have achieved that success by the incorporation of a live "team-spirit" among the employees owing to the active interest of all concerned in the financial returns of the particular factory in which they work. This team-spirit, which is in itself a very admirable thing, and worthy of all encouragement, makes possible successful competition with other factories wherein such a spirit does not exist. But if all industry was run on profit-sharing lines, then the team-spirit of one factory, fostered by self-interest, would give it no such advantage over its rivals, and industry would tend to be carried on by fewer people working at high pressure. However excellent in conception, and however beneficial under different financial and economic conditions, profit-sharing affords no solution under the present system. Competition would tend to become keener, and prices might fall in consequence: but the freedom of the employee would become progressively less, and the condition of the unemployed, in all probability, steadily worse. Control of policy would remain precisely where is rests nowadays—with Finance; and the artificial necessity for export, with its attendant dangers, would continue unabated or even intensified.

Nationalisation. To deal briefly with the Nationalisation of Industry, or, in other words, State Ownership of the means of production. Apart from the almost insuperable difficulties entailed by an extensive expropriation carried out, we may be sure, in the face of a tremendous and organised opposition (and for the moment assuming a point that is certainly debateable, namely, that Industry so nationalised could be got to work more or less smoothly), it needs no lengthy argument to show that the greater part of the claims advanced in favour of

Nationalisation is far from being probable of realisation; that it is by no means the panacea that its advocates would have us believe. Nationalisation is, in fact, the substitution of State Ownership for Private Ownership—an administrative change. Administration of Industry would be carried on by officials, and, in addition to all the other evils of departmental and bureaucratic control, the one (State) employer would be supremely powerful. The workers might, perhaps, be given some ill-defined control over local administration by means of Committees, Soviets, or what you will, but administration would still be a technical business, rapidly becoming more and more centralised. More and more would the individual worker become a mere cog in the industrial wheel, and an easily replaceable cog at that, while in trade disputes there would be no appeal from the fiat of the employer. Besides, under the existing financial system, the present-day economic dependence of the worker would continue, even in his hard-won Utopia, and so would the other evils of the present system, in greater or less degree.

A State Bank.

It will have been observed that so far none of the remedies suggested for the cure of the economic malady have touched the one really vital matter—Credit. They are concerned either with minor adjustments of the existing economic machinery, or else with administrative changes on a lesser or greater scale. The importance of credit, however, is at last forcing itself into general recognition, and there are at the present day two suggestions in addition to the Social Credit proposals, that demand serious attention, if for no other reason than that they concern credit. One such suggested remedy is the creation of a State Bank, whereby the issue and restriction of credit would be taken out of private hands and come directly under Government control. Let it be admitted at once that this suggestion marks a great step forward. Then we should no longer see the Government pledging the public credit with private financiers in exchange for the inferior credit that these financiers create upon the strength of that same public credit. But the establishment of such a bank is open to many and obvious objections. Centralised financial power would be a very dangerous weapon in the hands of an unscrupulous, or what is almost worse, a short-sighted Government. The possession of such power might provide an irresistible temptation to use it for political purposes. Such a bank, too, would presumably conduct its business on strictly "sound" lines, that is, of course, along the lines of orthodoxy. Credits would be issued only to producers, and the idea of issuing financial credit to consumers as such would, then as now, be regarded as foolishness by the financial "experts." And yet, without such issues, direct or indirect, "market-topheaviness," unemployment, enforced export and economic wars will continue in their present seemingly inevitable cycle.

Credits for Export. The second Credit Scheme is to borrow and issue financial credit for the purpose of enabling our manufacturers to export their wares to such foreign countries as cannot at present afford to buy from us. The proposals involve the pledging of the public credit—to whom? To the bankers and financiers. For what purpose? In order that our factories may continue to produce goods. For whom? For the foreign buyer. It is superfluous to point out that the credit-manipulators will receive ample interest for their valuable assistance; but what of the great mass of the community whose credit is pledged? How will they benefit? The newly-created financial credit will, *if the scheme be ever taken up seriously*, be paid out in this country as wages, salaries, dividends, etc., entirely unrepresented by goods on the home market. The purchasing-power so paid out will represent pure inflation, and, being unaccompanied by any method of price-control, will inevitably affect prices. Any diminution that may be effected in the prevailing market-topheaviness will be of merely temporary duration. To which must be added the further consideration that those exported goods being in fiercest competition with similar products of other industrial communities, will help to bring a little nearer the next great economic war.

The Marxian School.

It would be impossible to omit from this Chapter all reference to two other schools of thought that exercise a not inconsiderable influence at the present time. A friend of the writer's was confronted by one of Marx's more vehement disciples. After listening for some time to a heated denunciation of the prevailing state of affairs, he naturally enquired what remedy was advocated by Marx and his followers. "First of all, the proletariat must be educated "in class-consciousness," was the reply. "And "then ?" "Then will come the Revolution," "And then ?" "Then, as a temporary measure, "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," "And "then ?" No reply. Then of course, having waded through blood and sorrow to proletarian dictatorship, the community—or what was left of it—would be faced with the same problem it has to meet to-day. In other words, there would still be men and machinery, producers and consumers, and the same economic problem of production, distribution and consumption. Far better face this question now than, having undergone all the horrors of internecine strife, find it still awaiting solution at the end.

A Change of Heart. The other school of thought holds widely different views. It would teach us that the need of the industrial world to-day is a change of heart and unlimited Goodwill. But a change of heart without a change of economic conditions is powerless to avert industrial collapse. There is any amount of goodwill and reasonableness existing to-day between masters and men, but no amount of goodwill unattended by economic reform will, for instance, enable an industrial community to absorb all its own production, nor remove the economic necessity for export, with its attendant dangers. A change in the economic system attended by general goodwill may yet prove the salvation of civilisation ; goodwill and change of heart by themselves can effect nothing permanent.

Such, then, are some of the principal remedies variously offered for the cure of the economic malady of our times. None is adequate ; few are even alleviatory ; some are frankly worse than the disease they profess to cure. We have seen in each case some of the reasons why this is so. Now at last we are in a position to examine the Social Credit proposals of Major Douglas, and to see whether they, in their turn, afford the remedy the industrial world to-day so urgently needs.

Part III.

Some Constructive Principles and Proposals.

CHAPTER SIX.
THE JUST PRICE.

CHAPTER SEVEN.
NATIONAL DIVIDENDS.

CHAPTER EIGHT.
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS.

CHAPTER VI.

Social Credit Principles.

(1). The Just Price.

Major Douglas' constructive proposals are based upon two outstanding principles—first, the Just Price, and secondly, National Dividends. Of each in its turn, and first with regard to the Just Price.

The Just Price. We have already seen that *to enable an industrial community to benefit by an extension of productive capacity, such extension must be accompanied by an equivalent expansion of purchasing-power in the hands of consumers; otherwise the increased productive capacity acts not as a stimulus to but as a clog on industry.* At the conclusion of a previous Chapter we saw that the community as a whole would receive most benefit from an influx of new purchasing-power if it came in the form of reduced prices—if, in fact, new financial credit were issued to producers to reimburse them for selling "under cost." And so we found ourselves face to face with this vital question: In a community whose financial system is based on real credit, what is the Just Price of an article to the consumer?

Or, in other words, what proportion of the production-cost of an ultimate commodity should be borne by the consumer, and how much refunded to the producer out of newly created financial credit?

The Price-Factor. Perhaps the very simplest method of approaching the problem of the Just Price is as follows:—If in the course of any accounting period the gross production of communal real credit be represented by, say, 10, and the simultaneous gross consumption thereof be represented by 8, then it is clear that the nett appreciation of communal real credit during that period must be represented by 2. The total real benefit (if we may temporarily so term it) received by the community as a whole, apart from the individual consumers (*i.e.*, the nett increase in its real credit) is, in these circumstances, 2. It is submitted, therefore, that under the given conditions, any price paid to the producers for their commodities should be borne, as to 8 parts thereof by the consumers, and as to the remaining 2 parts thereof by drawing on the credit of the community as a whole. In other words, 8/10ths of the selling-price of an article should be borne by the consumer, and the remaining 2/10ths credited to the producer by the Treasury on behalf of the community in its entirety. It is, of course, superfluous to point out that there is no peculiar virtue in the numbers eight and ten. The result is a perfectly general one, and the conclusion reached may be enunciated thus: *In a community wherein the financial system is based on real credit, the Just Price of an article to a consumer bears to the cost of its production the same ratio as the gross depreciation of communal real credit bears to the gross appreciation thereof.* This ratio we will henceforth refer to as the Price-Factor.

$$\frac{\text{Just Price}}{\text{Cost Price}} = \frac{\text{Total Consumption of Real Credit}}{\text{Total Production of Real Credit}} = \text{Price Factor}$$

An Illustration. Major Douglas would, then, have us break away finally and completely from any pretence of maintaining a gold standard for our monetary system, and, having done so, regulate the price of each ultimate commodity to the consumer at a figure arrived at by multiplying the cost of its production (which would include a fixed percentage of profit for the producer) by the price factor as just defined. Intermediate products would be priced, as to-day, at something over the bare cost of labour and materials, which something would, however, be limited to a fixed percentage by way of profit. In our hypothetical community of Chapter IV the gross decrease in the communal real credit bore to the gross increase therein the ratio of 8 to 10. The price-factor for the period would therefore be 4/5, and the Just Price of an article to the consumer would be 80% of the production-cost. The £800,000 gross decrease in real credit represents the production-cost (including capital depreciation) of all goods consumed, and therefore either immediately or later appears in prices. Were the Social Credit proposals in force, the consumers would be called upon to pay 4/5ths of this sum, that is, £640,000, while the remaining £160,000 would be refunded to the producers by means of new Treasury issues of credit and currency, based upon and backed by the £200,000 nett increase in the community's real credit.

Inflation. It is, however, perfectly true to say that whenever there is any suggestion of making an issue of paper money, however regulated and safeguarded, the bugbear of inflation is conjured up in one form or another. So-called experts point to the diminshed value of the Russian rouble, and in well-feigned alarm cry out, "See what paper money leads to!" But, as Mr. Arthur Kitson has pointed out in his treatise entitled "Unemployment, the Cause and a Remedy" (wherein he advocates Douglas' proposals as a solution of the unemployment problem), "Russia's experience with paper money has "no more to do with these proposals than the "act of drinking a glass of water has to do "with the act of committing suicide by "drowning. . . . The Russian paper-"money was used, as Lenin admitted, for the "purpose, not of assisting trade, but of "destroying it, and of getting rid of what they "term the 'capitalistic financial system.' *It is "one thing to issue currency for the purpose of "assisting trade; it is quite another thing to "issue currency for the purpose of destroying "it"**.

No "Inflation" under Social-Credit Proposals. By inflation, presumably, is understood a rise in the general level of prices brought about by an undue expansion of money in relation to goods on the market. But if the principle of the Just Price were adopted no such inflation could possibly occur, for the following, among many other excellent reasons: (1) The periodical issues of financial credit from the Treasury would merely represent in money the expansion in the capacity of the community to deliver goods and services since the last issue. (2) Such issues, far from increasing prices, would be a means of reducing and maintaining them below cost of production.

* At page 83.

Legal Tender and Bank Credit Issues. There is one source of monetary expansion, however, to which the adoption of the Social Credit proposals might possibly expose the community, although it is not quite easy to see how, with scientifically regulated prices, such expansion could entail any undesirable consequences. At the present day, if there is an abundance of legal tender in circulation (be it paper or gold), the banks are in a strong position for the issue of credits. It may, therefore, be raised as an objection to the regulation of prices "under cost" and the reimbursement of producers by newly created credits issued by the Treasury, that, even if the amount so issued were itself justified by the real credit increment within the community, such an issue would almost inevitably be made the basis of a quite unjustifiable expansion of bankers' credit.

Avoidance of an Undue Expansion of Bank Credits. It is hard to see how the general level of prices could rise if regulated at a percentage of production cost, and the jungle law of Supply and Demand replaced by a scientific price-law based upon the real credit of the community. If, however, an undue expansion of bank credit were regarded as a serious danger, there would seem to be no valid objection to placing some legal limit on the power of the banks to issue financial credit. This might be done by fixing some reasonable maximum amount beyond which banks might not issue financial credit uncovered by legal tender in their possession*. If some such precaution were taken, it is submitted that fresh issues of financial credit by the Treasury could only increase the total amount of money in circulation by an amount justified by the simultaneous increase in the community's real credit.

The Psychological Effect. The psychological effect of price-regulation along the lines suggested by Major Douglas is highly important. If, for instance, owing to the expansion of purchasing-power, there was temporarily a marked increase in the community's consumption unaccompanied by any corresponding increase in its production, then (as the price-factor varies directly as the total communal consumption, and inversely as the total communal production), prices would automatically increase until this disproportionate consumption was checked. Whilst it is clear that in practice the price-factor for any accounting period would have to be determined from the statistics of some

* It may be objected that this entails relating credit to currency, and is therefore unsound. It is, however, submitted that as the Treasury would still be free to issue, and would issue, all new financial credit justified by increased communal real credit, the precautionary restriction of the power of the banks to issue new financial credit would not in any way relate the total amount of financial credit within the community to the amount of legal tender in circulation.

previous period, the general psychological effect would, of course, be the same. It would quickly be realised that increased production without a similarly increased consumption was followed by a general lowering in the level of prices, and that increased consumption unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in production entailed a general rise in the level of prices. Which is exactly as it should be. There is then an incentive to greater production at the lowest possible cost, and for a sufficient though moderate consumption. Moderation in consumption, however, would not then be due to a lack of purchasing-power on the part of the community, but to a sane realisation of cause and effect.

Revitalising Industry. Let us now take a flight of fancy, and let us suppose that by some means or other every member of the community were suddenly to find himself or herself possessed of £10 more than he or she had a moment before. What would be the effect on Industry? The money would be spent on what its recipients, wisely or foolishly, desired. However spent, the effect would be an immediate and substantial diminution of the stocks at present carried by retailers. Orders would flow thence to the wholesale houses. The wheels of industry would speed up. More men would be taken on. More money would flow into the community as wages. Unemployment would be substantially reduced.

By the Just Price. But, of course, as things are at present, prices would also tend to rise. Suppose, however, that instead of increasing each individual's money by £10, the Government declared that if prices were reduced to a fixed percentage of production-cost they would refund the difference to the producers: suppose, in other words, that the Social Credit principles, so far as they relate to the Just Price, were adopted—what then? Prices would drop immediately, but there would not necessarily or even probably be any corresponding drop in wages. Each unit of money flowing into the pockets of the individual members of the community would purchase more. Stocks would gradually be cleared, and in a little while Industry would be employing many more than its present normal quota*. It is true that to some extent the nature of the demand might modify the type of commodities turned out, but this effect would probably be wholly beneficial. There would be less energy devoted to the production of armaments, as the gradual conversion of our capacity to consume more at home into an effective demand removed the artificial, though at

* As to the proper figure for the first price-factor, see *infra*, Appendix "A" at page 117.

present very real, necessity to fight for foreign markets. On the other hand, there would certainly follow increased attention to agriculture, and a real effort to stimulate it and assure its position as a national industry. But, however the changed demand modified the nature of goods produced, the immediate effect of the application of the principle of the Just Price would be to offer more and more chances of employment, and, with employment, remuneration that could procure for the recipient far more in the way of goods and services than he can ever hope to obtain to-day.

National Dividends. This much is clear, however, that even if by the means just indicated unemployment could be very materially reduced, and the standard of living raised all round, our factories could and would cope with the entire demand without employing the whole available man-power. There would still be, and there must always henceforward be, some for whom Industry has no place; but there is no ethical or necessary reason why compulsory unemployment should bring in its train the ugly consequences we see on all sides to-day. It is to meet, in particular, the case of those not directly engaged in production, and in the interests of communal justice in general, that Douglas enunciates his second principle, that of National Dividends.

CHAPTER VII.

National Dividends.

Unemployment *"Unemployment,"* said "The Times" in a leading article, *"is an inherent feature of the economic system."** The truth of this statement is unhappily only too apparent. Given the above premises, it would naturally occur to anyone unacquainted with newspaper economics that the obvious duty and interest of everybody was to cast about for some other system to replace this present one—a system whereof compulsory unemployment was not an inherent feature, or wherein, at any rate, its ugly consequences were eliminated. Not so, it seems; the article continued to fill up a platitudinous half-column with counsels of acquiescence in the inevitable, coupled with exhortations to work harder, to consume less, to beware of inflation, to do anything, in fact, except breathe against the established order of things. It is too sacred. And this although "The Times" realised that so long as the present economic system endures, so long will unemployment and its attendant miseries continue. Temporary alleviations may occur. Total eradication is impossible.

* See "Times" Leading Article, dated Sept., 30th, 1921.

Inadequacy of the Wage System.

How can it be otherwise? The object of the application of Science to Industry is the production and distribution of goods and services for the use and enjoyment of mankind with the minimum expenditure of human energy; and as the years pass, and scientific invention and discovery succeed still further in replacing human energy by the power of machines, increasing unemployment will render an already inadequate distributive system more and more so. So much the more necessary does it therefore become with every advance made in this direction to devise some means of distributing purchasing-power to those for whom Industry has no longer any need.

The Dividend System.

Among the many outward and visible signs of the gradual, if mainly subconscious, recognition of the inadequacy of the wage system at the present day, may be instanced the seeming anomalies of Old Age Pensions and Unemployment Relief. The former, in particular, is in effect nothing other than a system of conditional National Dividends, in that the right to receive an Old Age Pension is based on membership of the community alone, and not on work done or services rendered*. As it

* The fact that receipt of a pension is subject to certain arbitrary conditions as to the age and means of the recipient has no bearing on the fact that the only title to such pension is membership of the community.

is, many people to-day derive their whole income from dividends of one sort and another. It may, indeed, be affirmed with confidence that the natural and logical partner of the wage system is some system of dividends, distributed to the members of the community as such, and entirely independent of their remuneration for work done or any other exterior consideration. On grounds of expediency alone it must be admitted that some such supplementary system is eminently desirable. But the objection, heard on many sides to-day with reference to the pecuniary relief of unemployment distress, that it amounts, actually or virtually, to "something for nothing," and is therefore immoral, is sure to be raised sooner of later in this connection also. It may therefore be well to point out at once that not only is some system of National Dividends eminently desirable, but that it is, in addition, ethically justifiable in principle.

The three Factors in Industry.
(1) Capital
(2) Labour
(3) Common Cultural Inheritance.

Production by Industry to-day is the result of the combined effort of three distinct factors. There is, in the first place, Capital, the immediate provider of plant and machinery. Secondly, there is Labour, the provider of mind, muscle, and human energy in the widest sense. Thirdly, there is the Common Cultural Inheritance of the community. If it be asked what exactly is implied by the term "Common Cultural Inheritance," we cannot, perhaps, do better than quote a few words from a brochure issued in 1921 by the Manchester Credit Reform Group. We read therein how "Science has lengthened the arm "of man, and has strengthened his fist. It has "enlarged his eye and extended his ear. He "can throw his voice across an ocean or a "continent, and his body through space. "The power of a thousand horses is at his "command by the opening of a valve. "Wealth production is made so easy by "machinery, that the human-labour factor "decreases daily. . . . This is our real "heritage as against that of the cave-man."* Our inheritance is, however, greater even than this. It comprises ordered government, industrial, social, and political organisation, education, religion, and the hundred and one amenities of civilisation. These collectively form what we have called the community's Common Cultural Inheritance. Capital without Labour is impotent. Labour without Capital is practically powerless. Machinery, mind and muscle, apart from the Common Cultural Inheritance, would be disorganised

* "Socialisation of Credit," page 9.

and inefficient. But who can fail to have noticed that our unhappy industrial disputes almost invariably turn upon the division of profit between Capital and Labour, and that the share due to the Common Cultural Inheritance is forgotten or disregarded?

Morality of National Dividends.

Common Cultural Inheritance—who, then, are the heirs? The heirs to this splendid heritage are the members of the community as such. The individual members of the community are interdependent, and every member is co-heir to the Common Cultural Inheritance of the whole. So much is this the case that it is, strictly speaking, impossible for any one man to be said to be the sole creator of even "his own" idea or invention. He has merely manipulated mentally the inventions and ideas of a hundred others. The members of the community, as such, as well as Capital and Labour, are justly entitled to a share in the produce of Industry. Now it is quite true that the community comprises both the capitalist and the worker, and in so far as an individual member of the community is also a member of one or both of the other partners in production, his or her share as a member of the community should be additional to his or her share derived from that other source. But there are certain members of the community who cannot claim to belong to either of the other two groups, and such members should in common fairness receive at any rate such just proportion of the increased real credit of the community as is due to them as inheritors of the discoveries, inventions, culture, civilisation, order, thought, and accumulated resources of the past.

Necessity for National Dividends.

And so we look forward to the time when every member of the community as an individual shall, apart from and in addition to his or her remuneration as a producer, receive, as a matter of course and of right, his or her communal dividend—his or her proper share in the increase in the real credit of the community as a whole. *National Dividends as such should be distributed irrespective of whether the recipient is employed or not, or of his or her financial status.* At the present day, as a matter of economic necessity and political expediency, there are distributed, out of the proceeds of taxation, weekly "doles" to persons who are out of employment, with the manifestly evil result that a man is penalised by the cessation of his Government grant directly he begins to earn a wage. There is thus afforded to him a direct incentive to remain unemployed. At the present time also, it must be borne in mind that the amount distributed in unemployment relief bears no necessary relationship to the capacity of the community to pay it, but is the minimum amount required to keep the unemployed from open revolt. Unemployment pay to-day is, in effect, a kind of National Insurance against the evil effects of the present economic system, and the tendency is, of course, to keep the premiums as low as possible. Under the Social Credit proposals, the aggregate amount distributed in National Dividends, to employed as well as to unemployed, would be directly proportioned to the community's ability to pay, and it would therefore be to the direct advantage of every member of the community to increase this ability.

Benefits of National Dividends. In his brochure, "The Cure for High Prices," H.M.M. has touched upon further substantial advantages that would accrue from the adoption of a scheme of National Dividends paid to each member of the community as such. He writes: "It would "put the family man on an equality with the "bachelor: it would make women financially "independent of their male relatives, and "enable them to choose their way in life and "their partners in marriage free from ulterior "considerations, besides testing the strength "of their professed desire to remain in industry.

"It would provide for the case of the widow "and orphan, the sick, the helpless and the "aged, as well as for the man of genius who "does not fit kindly into the economic "structure, and for many more. In addition, "it would put everyone in the strongest "possible position to resist tyranny from "whatever quarter it might threaten."

Financing National Dividends. Here the question very naturally arises: "Where, then, is the money necessary to pay such Dividends to come from?" Major Douglas' reply to that question is that National Dividends could and should be financed out of the increasing real credit of the community. It is not, however, proposed at this juncture to examine in any detail the possible or probable methods of financing National Dividends. *All that is aimed at for the present is to render acceptable the principle of dividends for all members of the community as such, and to suggest that there do exist feasible methods of financing the same out of the community's real credit, without adding to the load borne by the taxpayer to-day.*

A New Incentive. In this connection, however, it is necessary to point out that, far from being an added burden upon Industry, the application of such proposals would provide a distinct incentive to further industrial progress. As the community's productive capacity increased, the amount available for periodic distribution as National Dividends would increase also. Those engaged directly in production would receive, then as now, remuneration for their work in the form of wages or salaries, in addition to and quite apart from their dividend. As pointed out by Mr. Allen Young in his pamphlet entitled "Dividends for All," wage-earners are at the present time admittedly hostile to the introduction of labour-saving methods and devices, since the tendency of such is to take away employment, whereas to-day it is practically only through employment that the majority of the population have purchasing-power distributed to them. But if each addition to the productive capacity and efficiency of the community were accompanied by an increase in the amount available for distribution as National Dividends, there would no longer be any ground for this hostility. Undeterred by the fear of causing wide-spread misery through unemployment, Science could then proceed apace towards the industrial emancipation of mankind. Gradually, too, the need for unemployment doles—baneful anomalies that they are—would diminish, until eventually they were banished, together with slums and sweated labour, into outer darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

Final Considerations.

Economic Development. The application of Social Credit principles would plainly found our economic system upon a real credit rather than on a pseudo-gold basis. But this would cause no sudden break in the continuity of economic development. Rather would it be a scientific moulding of natural economic tendencies. In the infancy of the human race, the economic system rested, manifestly, upon a barter basis. Goods and services were exchanged directly for goods and services. In course of time, as society evolved, it was found more convenient to effect exchanges by means of currency tokens. Such tokens were things desirable in themselves—hides, plumes, coloured stones, cattle—anything, in fact, sufficiently rare to be valuable and at the same time sufficiently common to be adequate to the needs of primitive commerce. This marks the second stage of economic development. It is the stage reached to-day by those who hanker after a return to a gold basis for our currency and economic system as a whole. The notion that money could have value apart from the intrinsic worth of the token itself is of much later origin. This third stage was reached when, with expanding trade and development of ideas, there entered into economic life a new factor, and it gradually became realised that a medium of exchange need not be in itself a thing of value, so long as attached thereto was a certain something, which we to-day know as credit. Tokens, valueless in themselves, began to be accepted in exchange for goods and services simply because, attached to each such token was the belief that, by its means, other goods and services might be procured. It was immaterial of what these tokens consisted. The notched stick and the modern bank note are equally good examples of the intrinsically valueless token being recognised as valuable because of the credit attached thereto. So long as such tokens are accepted as titles to goods and services, they are money.

Bank Credit. The issue of "money" has from the earliest times been the prerogative of Government. But with the advance of Industry and the extension of Commerce, there was felt keenly the need for a still more liquid medium of exchange, or, more correctly, of credit. This need was in due course supplied by the banking houses. Thereafter, in addition to the legal tender issued by the sovereign authority, there came into circulation a mass of credits issued by private persons and firms, fostered by which trade prospered exceedingly. These new credits were matters of book entry, and it has to-day become a usual and convenient practice to pay debts and settle accounts by means of mere transfers of such credits in the books of the banks. With expanding commerce and industry, there has been a corresponding expansion of bankers' credit, until to-day the aggregate amount of such credit in circulation in this country is between five and six times the total amount of legal tender. To this extent, then, have the bankers usurped the functions of Government. The power of credit-issue and credit-restriction is in private hands, while bankers' credit, not legal currency, is becoming more and more the life-blood of Industry.

The Logical Development. There would seem to be but one restriction to the amount of bank credit that may be put into circulation at any one time; that is the statutory liability of the banks to pay out legal tender in exchange for their own credit when called upon to do so, which liability in effect restricts the total amount of bankers' credit to a certain number of times the total amount of legal tender simultaneously in circulation. The bankers must, in fact, preserve a kind of safety limit. But the *raison d'être* of financial credit being the proper distribution and utilisation of real credit, it would seem an absurd restriction to limit the amount of such credit, not by the needs of Industry, but by the amount of legal tender there happens to be in circulation. And the absurdity is greater still if the aggregate amount of such legal tender is in its turn restricted by the amount of gold within the community. The natural and logical development of the economic situation will undoubtedly be the ultimate withdrawal of the function of credit-manipulation from the financier and banker, and the regulation of the issue and, if necessary, the restriction of credit automatically with the needs of Industry—that is, by the simultaneous increase or decrease in the communal real credit. Expanding industry and commerce will then be nurtured by expanding financial credit, unhampered by artificial and irrelevant restrictions. As part of, and quite auxiliary to, such credit there will be placed in circulation such amount of currency—which Douglas aptly terms "the small change of credit"—as may be deemed generally convenient. And finally, with automatic credit-expansion there must be correspondingly automatic price-regulation.

A Step Forward. In this way, then, would the adoption of Social Credit principles assist the logical development of economic tendencies. In place of the present-day system, under which financial credit is virtually a monopoly serving private interests, there would arise a financial and economic system under which financial credit was directly controlled by the consumers in the interests of the community as a whole. The amount of financial credit in circulation would tend more and more to become an accurate reflection of the national real credit. Economic development would have been carried another step forward.

* * *

"Machinery." It is obviously not to be expected that proposals embodying the principles of Social Credit can be operated without some appropriate machinery; but, considering how these principles strike at the very roots of the present industrial and economic malaise, it is remarkable how unobtrusive and simple are the means needed to carry them into effect. It has, however, never been Major Douglas' aim or intention to dictate how his principles ought to be materialised: such matters of administration are probably better left to those to whom it would fall to operate the principles when once the principles themselves have been approved as a policy.

A Commencement. One of the outstanding merits of the Social Credit principle is that it is not at all necessary to convert the whole world to one way of thinking before they can be carried into effect. *One* country—a single industry—can be selected as a commencement. Nor is it suggested that the principles need necessarily be applied to each industry in an identical manner. Major Douglas has, however, worked out in some detail a draft Scheme for application to the Mining Industry* which the reader is recommended to consider carefully, together with the full and most lucid commentary thereon by Mr. A. R. Orage†

Regional Clearing Houses. An alternative method which has been suggested would entail the establishment of what we may, for want of a better term, call Regional Clearing Houses. To this end the country might be divided into convenient areas—the precise extent of which is immaterial at this juncture—and in each of such areas might be set up one such House. These Clearing Houses would have a double function to perform: they would be responsible for

* See *infra*, Appendix "B," page 122 *et seq*
† "Credit-Power and Democracy," pages 147 *et seq.*

the issue and administration of financial credit within their respective areas, and they would collect the statistics necessary for the calculation of the price factor. In addition to these Regional Houses, it might also be necessary to establish one Central Clearing House for purposes of co-ordination. In his first book, "Economic Democracy"* Major Douglas has sketched out how such a Clearing House System might operate in practice. His illustration is, of course, merely hypothetical, and the reader is referred to that book as shewing how such a System might, but not necessarily would be worked. The work of the Clearing Houses would be largely the making and cancelling of book-entries of substantial amounts, book-keeping by no means as complicated as much of that carried on by banks to-day. Be that as it may, however, it cannot be too strongly emphasised, even at the risk of weariness, *that what the Social Credit Movement is concerned with* at present *is policy and principles, not precise form, and that when once the principles themselves have been approved, the form and method of adoption can be determined in accordance with the particular needs of the community or industry seeking to apply them.*

* At pages 130 *et seq.*

* * *

Results Anticipated. What would be the effect of the adoption of the Social Credit proposals ? "It is obvious indeed "that no change of system or machinery can "avert those causes of social malaise which "consist in the egotism, greed and quarrel-"someness of human nature. What it can do "is to create an environment in which these "are not the qualities which are encouraged. "It cannot secure that men live up to their "principles. What it can do is to establish "their social order upon principles to which, "if they please, they can live up, and not "live down"*. We have already seen how the application of these principles, based, as their advocates believe, upon right and justice, acknowledging, as they do, the inherent interdependence of the different members of the body politic, would remove the many hindrances to human progress that exist in the present financial and economic system. The problem of unemployment, for instance, ever growing more acute under the present system, would disappear under a comprehensive system of National Dividends. There would, moreover, be an immediate fall in the price of all commodities required by the ultimate consumer: but this fall would not be due to any lack of purchasing-power on the part of consumers, nor would it

* R. H. Tawney, in "The Acquisitive Society," at page 222.

entail (as is invariably the case under the present industrial system) stagnation of trade, coupled with the widespread misery that to-day accompanies wholesale compulsory unemployment. More important still, there would come, at last, an end to the seemingly interminable struggles, acrimonious and wasteful, between Capital and Labour, and the transformation of the structure of Industry from a *mĕsalliance* of apparently conflicting interests into a free union of fellow-workers, engaged in common enterprise. Finally, by increasing the effective purchasing-power in the hands of consumers, the application of these principles would enable the community as a whole to purchase and absorb, should it so desire, an amount equivalent to its whole production: there would thus be removed the present artificial economic necessity for exporting more in value (either in the form of goods or services) than the community actually imports. External trade could then resolve itself into an unfettered and willing exchange of superfluous for needed commodities. So, with the passing of the present necessity for thrusting surplus production on to foreign markets already glutted with the goods of rival nations, there would pass also from the horizon the ever-threatening clouds of impending war.

* * *

Overseas Trade. By this time it is not at all improbable that some such argument as the following will have presented itself: "Yes, there are obvious merits and possibilities in the Social Credit proposals. One can quite well realise that many substantial benefits would follow the application of these proposals to a self-contained community. But how would a country like Great Britain be affected? Great Britain depends so very largely upon her overseas trade; she relies upon her imports of corn for food, and of cotton for her looms; she looks to her exports of steel goods and coal, and to her services as the great carrying nation of the world, to pay for these imports. If the avowed object of these proposals is to enable an industrial community to absorb all its own production at home, how could we, here in Great Britain, pay for those things which we are bound to import?" To a great extent such a question arises from a misconception of the general aim of the proposals. There is admittedly no benefit to be gained in hampering or curtailing in the slightest degree the free interchange of commodities between nation and nation. The proposals simply aim at removing the artificial compulsion that at the present day forces an industrial community to strain every nerve in an endeavour to export goods and services to a greater value than it imports, or, as the phrase goes, maintain "a favourable balance" of trade. One of the main objects of these proposals is to make of international trade a mutually voluntary exchange of those commodities which each country has in superabundance for those it desires but cannot so conveniently produce at home.

Imports, Exports, and the Price-Factor. Perhaps the first point that arises in considering the international aspect of these proposals is this: under Social Credit, what would be the bearing of importation and exportation upon the price-factor within the community? The answer to this question is not a difficult one. When a country or a community imports a commodity, or any quantity of commodities, the capacity of that country or community to deliver goods and services is thereby increased: its real credit, as distinct from its financial credit, appreciates by the value of the goods imported. Similarly, whenever a country or a community exports goods to another, although its financial position relative to the importing country or community may be thereby enhanced, its real credit (*i.e.* its capacity to deliver goods and services) is correspondingly diminished. *Imported goods are, so far as real credit is concerned, equivalent* *to goods produced, while on the other hand, exported goods are equivalent to goods consumed.* As the price-factor for any period is calculated on a real credit basis, it follows that import must for this purpose be regarded as production, and export as consumption. Under the Social Credit proposals, the purchasing-power of the community expands automatically with the increased real credit thereof, so that an influx of foreign goods would not result (as to-day is most certainly the case) in aggravating the evils of existing unemployment, but would instead tend to raise the standard of living of the whole community.*

* * *

International Credits. It will possibly be argued that if a community such as Great Britain were to adopt a real credit basis for its financial system, whilst all other countries and communities retained their present bases, exchange of goods between Great Britain and foreign countries would (for some reason not explained) become impossible except by direct barter. Let us consider. At the present day, as we know only too well, producing communities are competing and clamouring for markets.

* It should be noted that under these proposals the payment to us by Germany of her treaty obligations could safely be received in goods. Such payment would then enure, as in all sanity it should do, to the unquestionable benefit of the recipient community.

If, then, we maintained our demand for Argentina's wheat or America's cotton, without doubt both Argentina and the United States would be only too glad to supply us. But to attract such goods to our markets, it is necessary for us to pay for what we import in cash, credit, or commodities. The cash payment we can disregard as obsolete. International transactions of to-day are carried out upon credit, with an occasional shipment of bullion to adjust matters. The fact that our credit was nominally secured upon a different basis from that of the foreigner ought to occasion no difficulty in practice. Whether we pay for our imports in gold or credit, it simply means that in the long run Argentina or the U.S.A. has a claim upon us to supply to their demand goods or services of equivalent value, In its essentials international trade is, even to-day, merely direct or indirect barter. So long as the foreign seller is satisfied that the credit advanced to him in exchange for his cotton or his wheat will be exchanged for goods or services upon demand, so long will he be willing to supply us with all the wheat or cotton we require. *The value of the credit we offer is what chiefly interests the foreign merchant. The basis of that credit does not greatly concern him.*

Foreign Exchanges. Or it may be suggested that the application of the Social Credit proposals to an individual unit among the interdependent communities of the world would ruin that community's foreign trade, "because of the rate of exchange." What exactly is implied by this phrase is a little hard to fathom. Is it feared that the purchasing-power of our credit or currency would depreciate to such an extent that we should be unable to buy from abroad, or that it would appreciate so greatly that we, as a community, should be unable to sell? In either case the fear is unfounded. A moment's reflection will serve to show that, political and sentimental considerations apart, and apart from merely temporary money-market fluctuations due to financial jobbery and speculation, the value of the sovereign in foreign markets tends to fluctuate directly with its purchasing-power at home. It is thus natural to expect that, as a consequence of the adoption of these proposals, foreign exchanges would move more and more in favour of the community adopting them. That community would therefore find little difficulty in buying abroad the various commodities it did not produce at home. And, under a sane economic and financial system, if a community finds itself able to buy from abroad the food and raw materials it needs or desires, it is surely a matter of little importance to it whether, owing to the prevailing rate of foreign exchange, its manufactures are or are not for the moment readily saleable in foreign markets.

Barter. It can easily be seen that, were our foreign trade to assume the form of direct barter, the advantage we should have over foreign rivals would be considerable. For instance, we want wheat. We have a number of superfluous locomotives. So, let us suppose, has the United States. Argentina wants locomotives. U.S.A. quotes a price calculated at production-cost plus profit. Great Britain, under Social Credit, balances, not financial cost but real need, and quotes, in Argentinian dollars, a lower figure. We get the order, and deliver the goods, receiving Argentinian credit in exchange. With this we approach the Argentinian farmer, to buy his wheat. He can have no hesitation in accepting the credit we offer him, being that of his own country, and based, presumably, on what he would call a good, honest, gold foundation. What, then, has this wheat cost us? No British financial credit has been used to buy it. It has cost us real credit to the extent of certain locomotives. And if wheat were scarcer, and locomotives more plentiful with us, we could, if necessary, send abroad more locomotives for the same quantity of wheat. In any case, we could undercut any possible rival when we wished to sell, and offer more than any competitor when we wished to buy. It is obviously true that the producer of locomotives does not personally want to receive payment in wheat, but in money. This could be adjusted through a National Clearing House—a matter of internal arrangement. Minor difficulties of detail there might be, but even these would seem to exist mainly in the imagination. So long as principles and policy are sound there is no need to be unduly pessimistic about administrative details. Where there is a will, there can generally be found a way.

* * *

Shipping. One final consideration before we draw to a close. Great Britain is the principal carrying nation of the world. Especially since the great cycle of wars we call Napoleonic, our merchantmen above all others have borne the world's produce over the Seven Seas. How would the application of the Social Credit proposals to Great Britain affect her shipping and her carrying trade? So far as this trade consists in bearing the produce of one foreign country to another (as, in fact, a great proportion of it does) it would in all probability be unaffected, and by services so rendered, Great Britain would pay, at any rate partially, for the goods she imported from other countries. So far as her cargoes consist of imports for home-consumption, or of home-manufactures exported to foreign markets, her carrying trade might conceivably diminish somewhat, though this is by no means certain. The fact that our foreign trade partook more of the nature of free exchange, and less of that of enforced export, does not necessarily mean that there would be less of it. In any case, the percentage reduction in Great Britain's carrying trade due to the application to our country of the Social Credit economic proposals would probably be of the slightest. Nor would it be inherently harmful that a smaller number of our population should spend their lives upon the seas, manning the big steamers of commerce. Our shipping would, like our other industries, tend to become operated, perhaps by fewer persons, certainly with greater efficiency. As for the others, they would then be able to devote themselves to more congenial pursuits. Their National Dividends would enable them to live in comfort, if not luxuriously, and their new leisure, directed aright, would lead to the arising of a brighter, cleaner, less material generation, no longer servants of industry, but masters thereof.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX "A."

THE FIRST PRICE-FACTOR.

APPENDIX "B."

DRAFT SCHEME FOR THE MINING INDUSTRY.

APPENDIX "A."

The First Price-Factor.

The Problem. We have seen how under the Social-Credit proposals the Just Price of a commodity to the ultimate consumer is found by multiplying the production-cost (including profit) of that article by the current price-factor. Yet, though we have seen how, when once the proposals were in practical operation, the price-factor for each successive period would be determined, we have never, so far, approached the question as to what would be the actual numerical value of the first price-factor.

Existing "Market-Topheaviness." If the aggregate purchasing-power immediately available at the present day was such that there was no "market-topheaviness," then we should be faced with a comparatively simple task. We should select our period (say, for instance, one year), calculate the gross consumption of real credit during that period, and the simultaneous gross production thereof, and an elementary division sum would supply the price-factor. But we know that, very far from there being no market-top-heaviness, there is indeed a serious discrepancy existing at the present day between the total available purchasing-power and the total charges against such purchasing-power. This fact affects the situation considerably. In determining the first price-factor, it is necessary to take into consideration, not only the present tendency to market-topheaviness caused by contemporary industrial expansion, but also, an equally serious matter, the accumulated topheaviness which is our heritage from past decades. So the question of the actual numerical value of the first price-factor must be approached from a rather different standpoint.

Ratio of Industrial Capacity to Actual Output.

We know full well that, at the present time, the capacity of Industry to supply is greatly in excess of its actual output, *limited as this latter is by lack of effective demand* (that is, demand backed by purchasing-power). In the absence of any authoritative statistics as to what figure exactly represents the ratio of this capacity to supply to the actual output, we shall have perforce to rely upon the estimates of those who have made a study of the subject. It is perhaps only natural that such estimates should vary somewhat widely. A conservative computation places the capacity of Industry to supply at, at least, four times its present actual output. A more liberal estimate declares it to be in the neighbourhood of fifteen, not four, times. Let us, for safety, take the lower figure, and henceforth assume that our Industry can, in its present state of development, if called upon, turn out as much as four times its present normal output. Output, to-day, is limited by lack of *effective* demand. Effective demand is limited by lack of purchasing-power. If, then, the amount of purchasing-power in the hands of consumers was increased to four times its present amount, and at the same time means were taken to prevent a corresponding rise in prices, effective demand would also rise, to something less than four times what it is to-day. Nor would this increased effective demand be in excess of Industry's capacity to meet it*.

Possible Price-Factor

We might, then, conceivably inaugurate the Social Credit era with a price factor of *one-quarter*, and this is the fraction often suggested when the actual working of the Just Price is under discussion†. If the Social-Credit proposals are, as a beginning, only to be applied to one particular industry, and the initial price-factor is intended to be applied to the products of that industry only, there would seem no possible objection to the adoption of this

* It has been estimated by Mr. H. L. Gantt that in America the industrial efficiency is only about 5%. An industrial efficiency of at least 75% ought to be well within the bounds of possibility.

† See, for example, "Draft Scheme for the Mining Industry" (Appendex "B").

figure. But if the initial Price-Factor is to have an extensive or national application, then it is submitted that the advisability of such a sudden and drastic expansion of purchasing-power must be considered very seriously from a psychological and practical point of view.

Dangers of too Sudden Application of full Reduction.

Quite briefly to enumerate the more obvious dangers of a too sudden application of the full price-reduction possible, we can, first of all, be morally certain that a sudden great expansion of purchasing-power would lead to a drain upon the stocks held by retailers to an extent that Industry, not yet fully revitalised, might for the moment be unable to replace. There would follow a disorganisation that might do as much harm as the evils it was intended to remedy. At the very least, it would give the new system a somewhat inauspicious start. Secondly, the sudden acquirement of comparative affluence might, to a certain type of mind, perverted by present-day conditions and unaccustomed to the possession of more than sufficient to satisfy life's barest needs, afford a great temptation to revel in a far from beneficial indulgence. Thirdly, the vast majority of the people, whilst realising the immediate advantages of expanded purchasing-power, having as yet had no practical experience of the system in operation, would have no firm appreciation of the fact that this present expansion was only possible because of the excess of real credit production over real credit consumption in the past, and that low prices could only be maintained in future by still keeping real credit production well ahead of simultaneous consumption. In short, there is a danger that instead of there being an immediate and progressive revival of industry, a diametrically opposite effect might be produced.

Suggested First Price-Factor.

On the other hand, however, a more moderate reduction of, say, 20% off prices could only do good. Therefore it is here submitted that, if the first price-factor is not to be merely of local application or confined to one particular industry (in which case it might well be fixed at *one-quarter*), but is rather to be of national application, it should be fixed at, say, *four-fifths* or *three-quarters*, and the first accounting period at one year or even longer. During that first period, our productive capacity would have been more and more fully utilised, and, fostered by increased effective demand, greatly extended. So, gradually and successfully, the whole system would enter its stride.

APPENDIX "B"

A Draft Scheme for Mining Industry.*

I.

1. For the purpose of efficient operation each geographical mining area shall be considered as autonomous administratively.

2. In each of these areas a branch of a bank, to be formed by the M.F.G.B., shall be established, hereinafter referred to as the Producers' Bank. The Government shall recognise this bank as an integral part of the mining industry regarded as a producer of wealth, and representing its credit. It shall ensure its affiliation with the Clearing House.

3. The shareholders of the Bank shall consist of all persons engaged in the Mining Industry, *ex-officio*, whose accounts are kept by the Bank. Each shareholder shall be entitled to one vote at a shareholders' meeting.

4. The Bank, as such, shall pay no dividend.

5. The capital already invested in the mining properties and plant shall be entitled to a fixed return of, say, six per cent., and, together with all fresh capital, shall continue

* First issued in January, 1919, and reprinted here by permission of Major Douglas.

to carry with it all the ordinary privileges of capital administration other than price-fixing. Depreciation shall be set against appreciation.

6. The Boards of Directors shall make all payments of wages and salaries direct to the Producers' Bank in bulk.

7. In case of a reduction in cost of working, one-half of such reduction shall be dealt with in the National Credit Account, one-quarter shall be credited to the colliery owners, and one-quarter to the Producers' Bank.

8. From the setting to work of the Producers' Bank, all subsequent expenditure on capital account shall be financed jointly by the colliery owners and the Producers' Bank, in the ratio which the total dividends bear to the total wages and salaries. The benefits of such financing done by the Producers' Bank shall accrue to the depositors.

II.

1. The Government shall require from the colliery owners a quarterly (half-yearly or yearly) statement properly kept and audited of the cost of production, including all dividends and bonuses.

2. On the basis of this ascertained cost, the Government shall by statute cause the price of domestic coal to be regulated at a percentage of the ascertained cost.

3. This Price (of domestic coal) shall bear the same ratio to Cost as the total National Consumption of all descriptions of commodities does to the total National Production of Credit, *i.e.*, Cost : Price : Production : Consumption.

$$\frac{\text{Price}}{\text{per ton}} = \frac{\text{Cost}}{\text{per ton}} \times \frac{\text{Cost value of Total Consumption}}{\text{Money value of Total Production}}$$

(Total national consumption includes capital depreciation and exports. Total national production includes capital appreciation and imports.)

4. Industrial coal shall be debited to users at cost plus an agreed percentage.

5. The price of coal for export shall be fixed from day to day in relation to the world market and in the general interest.

6. The Government shall reimburse to the colliery owners the difference between their total cost incurred and their total price received, by means of Treasury notes, such notes being debited, as now, to the National Credit Account.*

* For a full and explicit commentary upon the above Draft Scheme, see Appendix to "Credit-Power and Democracy," pages 147-212.

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SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

"The distinguishing merit of Mr. Hattersley's work is its breadth of survey and its orderliness of exposition."—*The New Age* (19th Sept., 1929).

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A brilliant and authoritative treatise.—*Irish News* (28th Sept., 1929).

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