

SIXTH CONGRESS OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
CO-OPERATIVE ALLIANCE.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

1182  
1186  
SIXTH CONGRESS

OF THE

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE  
ALLIANCE,

HELD AT

Budapest, 5th to 8th September 1904.

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*The same Report is also being issued in French and German.*

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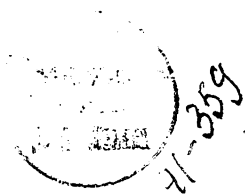
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## PREFACE.

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FOR the first time the Report of a Congress of the International Co-operative Alliance is issued in three languages, namely, English, French, and German, German being the latest addition. This means greatly increased labour for the Executive and staff, and a considerably heavier tax upon the Alliance's funds. The additional effort was, however, considered due to the increased number of German-speaking members, and to the propagandist aim of the Alliance, to which, by such means, greater justice is likely to be done.

In all essential respects the Sixth Congress has proved the most successful that the International Co-operative Alliance has yet held. It has been the means of bringing together co-operators from not less than seventeen distinct countries and of all various "schools," among them men who have never before met to plead and argue peaceably in presence of one another. The debates have gained not a little by such variety of opinion. The Congress has also proved a means of arousing a remarkably active interest in co-operation in those Eastern countries in which co-operation is still unfortunately backward, but greatly needed.

The subjects for discussion were, as usual, selected with special reference to the time and the place of meeting, and reports upon them have been collected with great care, and with a view to the greatest possible completeness, from unquestionably competent authorities, to whom the Executive Committee feels bound here to tender its sincere acknowledgments. We have, among others, the British Foreign Office to thank for useful help very kindly rendered, and no less the Austrian Ministry of Commerce and the various Austrian

*Landesausschüsse*, the French *Office du Travail*, the British Board of Trade, the Government of Württemberg, the Government of Luxemburg, and the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry, in addition to many private persons whose contributions have proved most valuable.

The first subject dealt with, namely, the establishment of distributive societies in rural districts, has a special significance for Hungary and Eastern countries; but, in view of the opposition offered to the formation of such societies by various Continental Governments, it is of general importance as well.

The second, relating to the admissibility or non-admissibility of State or other outside aid to Co-operation, and, should such be judged legitimate, to the proper measure and the most expedient form which it should take, has in view of the assistance meted out by certain Governments with steadily increasing generosity, become one of the burning questions of the day. Opinion is much divided upon it, and on both sides feeling runs so high, that useful discussion, though greatly needed, seems out of the question in purely national congresses or congresses of distinct unions, in which opinion is apt to be prejudiced. The question accordingly appears specially marked out for discussion at an international congress like that of Budapest, at which every variety of opinion is represented, and where there is no *parti pris* in the collective gathering to bias judgment. The discussion, free and unrestrained as it was, maintained generally speaking by excellently qualified speakers, ought to help to clear the issue.

On the third question, that of Central Banks, which is likewise at the present moment of signal importance, since great changes have recently taken place in the position of one or two Central Banks—in addition to which a controversy has been newly aroused between Central and State Banks—and since credit co-operation keeps steadily extending to new countries, exceedingly instructive reports will be found among the Congress papers.

The discussion of the fourth point, that is, the causes of backwardness of Co-operation in various countries, and the best measures to be taken for coping with it, promises