

PARTNERSHIP FOR ALL

INFORMED, DEVELOPED AND EXPRESSED BY A

consisting of Articles secured by Settlement
All of the Partnership's

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

not less than two thirds elected yearly by secret whole Partnership, not more than one third nominated: disposes (subject to the narrowly the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee) direct Branch Councils of large funds for sick pay, special need, leaving gifts and anything else the unlimited right of criticism and suggestion: a three of five directors of the Corporate Trustee are directors of the Central Board: can in certain require Board of Corporate Trustee to displace chairman and appoint whomsoever that Board

**Most of these provisions have had some years impending Second Settlement in Trust*

Central (THE GAZETTE) and Local (the CHRONICLE) to the Partnership and within the limits of a Corporate Trustee.†

is responsible directly and solely to the Chairman

THE CRITICAL

The Heads of these five Departments are responsible to the man of the Corporate Trustee.†

THE GENERAL INSPECTOR'S	THE CHIEF REGISTRAR	THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR
Department secures that the Rules are properly effective: investigates and reports in certain cases: brings notice to merit as well as shortcomings.	with Registries in all large Branches and groups of small: has charge of all secretarial work: keeps the Principal Management in touch therewith and informs and advises enquirers.	provides contact with the Principal Management: the Chief accountant's department assists the Principal Management in some matters of accountancy

COMMITTEE FOR

(the Partners' Counsellor, the Chief Registrar, and of these three) from the Principal Executive Committee. The appeal goes to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee: disallows it unanimously.

†Until the impending Second Settlement in Trust the Central Board.

PARTNERSHIP FOR ALL

BY

JOHN SPEDAN LEWIS

FOUNDER OF

THE JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

A THIRTY-FOUR YEAR OLD EXPERIMENT IN
INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

"England is moving towards a classless society"

—WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

LONDON, 1948

CHART OF THE ORGANISATION OF THE JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP IN 1940

THE PARTNERSHIP'S GENERAL PUBLIC OPINION

INFORMED, DEVELOPED AND EXPRESSED BY AND THROUGH THE JOURNALISM, THE REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS AND THE CLUBS AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOCIAL CONTACTS AND OPERATING THROUGH THE CONSTITUTION.

THE CONSTITUTION*

consisting of Articles secured by Settlement in Trust and thereunder changeable only by agreement between the Council and the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee.†
All of the Partnership's Rules, Regulations and actions whatsoever have to be constitutional, i.e., in accordance with these Articles.

THE PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

not less than two thirds elected yearly by secret ballot of the whole Partnership, not more than one third ex officio or nominated: disposes (subject to the narrowly limited veto of the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee) directly or through Branch Councils of large funds for sick pay, help in other special need, leaving gifts and anything else they see fit: * has unlimited right of criticism and suggestion: appoints yearly three of five directors of the Corporate Trustee and five of twelve directors of the Central Board: can in certain circumstances require Board of Corporate Trustee to displace that Board's chairman and appoint whomsoever that Board think fit.

*Most of these provisions have had some years of trial that has been lengthened by the war. They are to be fixed by the impending Second Settlement in Trust but that has still to be done. See paragraphs 494 and 531 of this Book.

THE CENTRAL BOARD

(the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Corporate Trustee, five Directors nominated by the Chairman of the Central Board and five Directors nominated by the Central Council)* operates the Partnership's system of budgetary control of the whole of its affairs down to the residue available for immediate or ultimate distribution in cash or kind to the Partners themselves individually or collectively through the Pay roll or the Free Insurance against Exceptional Need or the Partnership Benefit or the Pension Fund or the collective Amenities (Clubs, Social Arrangements, etc.). Disposal of this residue is in part the function of the Central Council and in part that of the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CORPORATE TRUSTEE†

appointed until his seventy-fifth birthday or earlier resignation or disablement: removable in certain circumstances by the Corporate Trustee Board at the instance of the Central Council but entitled otherwise to nominate his own successor: decides on behalf of the Partnership directly or indirectly who of those willing to join it or to stay in it shall be invited to do so and on what terms and conditions: consults regularly but is not bound to adopt the opinion of a conference consisting of the Deputy Chairman, the five Heads of the Critical Side, the General Editor of the Journalism, the (Executive) Directors of Maintenance & Expansion, Personnel and Financial Operations and the General Secretary.

THE JOURNALISM

Central (THE GAZETTE) and Local (the CHRONICLES) playing the part of the Free Press in modern British democracy and bound to publish anonymous enquiries and criticisms of sufficient concern to the Partnership and within the limits of utterance on public affairs permissible in the House of Commons. The General Editor is responsible directly and solely to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee.†

THE GENERAL SECRETARY

is responsible directly and solely to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee:† operates the Managerial Committees, the Chairman's Regular Conferences and similar group-work above a certain level.

THE CRITICAL SIDE

The Heads of these five Departments are responsible directly and solely to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee.†

THE GENERAL INSPECTOR'S DEPARTMENT secures that the Rules are properly effective: investigates and reports in certain cases: brings to notice merit as well as shortcomings.	THE CHIEF REGISTRAR with Registries in all large Branches and groups of small: has charge of all secretarial work: keeps the Principal Management in touch therewith and informs and advises enquirers.	THE INTERNAL AUDITOR provides proper contact between the Principal Management and the Chief Accountant's Department and assists the Principal Management in some other matters of Accountancy.	THE FINANCIAL ADVISER advises the Principal Management in all matters of finance and watches all such matters for them.	THE PARTNERS' COUNSELLOR takes care of the interests, actual or potential, of the individual Partner as against those of the Partnership as a whole.
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COMMITTEE FOR APPEALS

(the Partners' Counsellor, the Chief Registrar, the Internal Auditor or deputies of any of these three) from the Principal Executive Committee or from other authorities. The appeal goes to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee, unless this committee disallows it unanimously.

THE EXECUTIVE SIDE

The Heads of these four Departments are responsible directly and solely to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee.†

THE DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION takes charge of any section too far out of order and sets it right and starts new enterprises till they can stand alone or are ready to be passed over.	THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL directs all personnel administration on the Executive Side except in Departments of Maintenance & Expansion, Financial Operations, Chief Accountant and General Secretary and in fields of the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee† and the Principal Executive Committee. Personnel Administration includes Medical Service, Education, Vocational Training and financing of Amenities, Clubs, Music, Dancing, etc.	DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL OPERATIONS obtains capital and secures the Partnership's procedure is correct from that standpoint.	CHIEF ACCOUNTANT has executive charge of production of all statistics and accounts.
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THE PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(the Director of Maintenance & Expansion, the Director of Personnel, the Director of Financial Operations [at present combined with the Directorship of Maintenance & Expansion], a Buyers' Counsellor and the Sellers' Counsellor or deputies of any of these five) deals with concerns of the Executive Side outside the field of any one Department but not matters for the Principal Management: deals, for example, with such Central Departments of the Executive Side as Legal Advice, Research, Credit Management, Building, Estate Agency, Services (Plant and Stores, Transport, etc.) and so on. If this Committee are not unanimous, the question goes to the Chairman of the Corporate Trustee.†

THE BUYING SIDE

THE BUYERS' COUNSELLORS (at present two).
DIRECTORS OF BUYING at head of teams of Buyers of varying degrees of responsibility. Manufacturing is and some wholesale selling may be a function of the Buying Side.

THE SELLING SIDE

THE SELLERS' COUNSELLOR.
MANAGING DIRECTORS of large Branches (modern equivalents of owner-managers of Department Stores).
REGIONAL DIRECTORS of small Branches (modern equivalents of owner-managers of chain stores).
GENERAL MANAGERS (under direction) of Branches.
MANAGERS OF DEPARTMENTS of Branches (modern equivalent of owner-managers of small specialist shops).

The Director of Maintenance & Expansion and also the Directors of Buying and the Managing and Regional Directors on the Selling Side are the Partnership's entrepreneurs, its main source of initiative and vigour, and should make as large incomes as any of its members without exception.

*Printed and produced in England by
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and published for the John Lewis Partnership by
the Kerr-Cros Publishing Co., Ltd., London, W.C.1*

Preface

1. THE subject of this book includes many matters that at their cores are easy to distinguish but at their edges melt into several others, so that they are difficult to keep apart and to arrange satisfactorily. At least I have found it so. But I hope that the book will serve well enough its two main purposes, first, to answer certain questions that after my own time may arise within the Partnership and, second, to answer questions outside the Partnership in the minds of those considering whether to join it or how to advise someone else about that or who are for some reason students of such matters. Some of them perhaps may be thinking of starting other partnerships or may have already done so.

2. I hope the index will prove good. Paragraph-numbering has been used in case further editions of all or some parts of the book may have a different size of page. The plan is set out in the Table of Contents.

The book describes an experiment of which the design was complete by October of 1910 and has been developing ever since, that is to say for nearly forty years.

The experiment may be summed up as an attempt so to organise and conduct a business that all the advantages whatsoever of owning it shall be shared as fairly as possible by all who are working in it and that the qualification for having a position in it shall be ability (without overstrain) and will to fill that position in a way reasonably first-rate for the service of the general community, the service by which the business has to live.

OPINIONS OF PARTNERS

3. The experiment had been in progress for a good many years before, in March of 1920, the organisation, to which step by step it had given rise, was first called a partnership and its members partners. That name was welcomed with a promptitude and unanimity that seemed to me highly significant of the strong desire of the Managed in the modern business-world for such a change of status, standpoint and mental atmosphere.

What impression the Partnership makes on some of its members may be judged from this passage from a letter written by one of them in 1942 when he was going on War Service. The writer had

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graduated at Cambridge with first-class honours and, before his eight years in the Partnership, had spent four in another large organisation in the retail drapery trade.

"I have been really happy, as I never previously thought it was possible to be in business life, from my very first days in the Partnership but at first my feelings were, so to speak, passive. I was happy because I seemed to fit and liked the work and because everyone with whom I had to deal was pleasant and congenial, in much the same way as an adopted child will from the first feel happy in a really kindly family.

"But, as I grew to be and feel part of the family, the nature of my feelings has changed, without my realising it till I stop now and look back, with the growth of an intense and I hope active affection, not for any particular person or persons but just for the whole thing, the entity we call the Partnership, not only among ourselves but to outsiders, in a way that confidently assumes that there exists no other partnership worthy of the name.

"I am grateful not only for this happiness but also for the intellectual stimulus and satisfaction I have derived from increased perception of all the implications of your great experiment. I read Professor Barker's book 'Reflections on Government' and in at least two places he might have been writing about the Partnership in the ideas he puts forward of how democracy may hope to meet the challenge of these times."

1932 At least equally significant, at least it seems so to me, was a remark made before the war by a middle-aged salesman. A special committee had been appointed to collect opinions and ideas upon the perennial problem of the pay of the Selling Staff. Should it be a fixed rate or should there be some system of incentives and, if so, what?

Among the thirty-nine witnesses, to whom the committee gave a hearing, was this particular salesman because of his many years of experience of similar employment in the West End of London.

The member of the committee, who told me of this, said that the witness appeared to be the sort of man who rather prides himself on being hard-headed and not easy to humbug. At the close of his talk with the committee he said that he would like to take that opportunity to express his personal opinion that the system of the Partnership affects really importantly the happiness of the worker by the feeling it gives him that he is not suffering the humiliation of being exploited but really is getting the whole fruit of his own work.

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The speaker said that he for his own part would hesitate to leave the Partnership for other employment in which he had a good prospect of making another ten shillings a week but in which he would not have the satisfaction of feeling that whatever he was getting was really all there was to have. That is to say that he was not being exploited.

I am quoting from a conversation of quite ten years ago and my informant is dead. I am not suggesting that the word "humiliation" was used or that the speaker had that idea at all clearly in his mind. I dare say he himself would have said that the word "annoyance" would better express his feeling. But for my own part I have very little doubt that the discomfort of what is really a sense of humiliation was the true cause of his saying, as to my clear recollection I was told that he did, that to him this consequence of the system of the Partnership was "worth ten shillings a week".

Here it seems to me we have the real core of the problem of getting rid of ca'canny so as to achieve the enormous increase that is now so desperately needed in our national income.

Feelings of this same kind are shown in the fact that more than one newcomer with experience of the general business world has said after some time in the Partnership that he had "never known before what it was to be glad that it was Monday morning".

GENERAL FRIENDLINESS

4. Another thing, that very commonly strikes newcomers, is what they feel to be the remarkable general friendliness that they encounter, the general atmosphere of welcome. A couple of years ago a particularly well qualified judge told me that in comparison with his previous experience of the business-world he had been struck by the Partnership's freedom from an atmosphere, to which he had been accustomed, of jealous competition. I have heard this before but the friendliness of reception of newcomers is mentioned much oftener. In literally, as I hope, my last hour of work upon this book, that has taken most of my leisure for several years, I feel that I must insert here a quotation from a letter that reached me less than a week ago. The writer, a graduate of Cambridge, is in his late thirties and newly retired from the Indian Civil Service. In his letter he was telling me that in the course of an experimental start in the Partnership he had made up his mind to join it. He says: "My provisional decision to join the Partnership has been a good deal strengthened by what I have seen in the past ten

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days—and not the least by the universal and apparently instinctive ability at all levels to make a newcomer feel welcome”.

Another frequent comment is that the Partnership strikes newcomers as remarkably free and easy but also—and for this last reason surprisingly—hard-working. We do, of course, avoid regulation as far as we can. Fixed hours of attendance, for example, are never required in cases where there seems to be no real need.

EFFECT ON MINDS

5. Another comment, that is made now and again and that was made to me once with great seriousness by one of the Partnership's ablest members, is that its supreme attraction for the most intelligent and cultivated of those, whom it does in fact attract, is not its social and political implications or the intellectual interest of business upon such a scale “but simply the extraordinary number of extraordinarily nice people that there are in it”.

When that was first said to me, I heard it, of course, with acute pleasure but I said then and I have thought ever since that, so far as it is true, it is certainly not wholly and perhaps not even largely the result of any exceptional efficiency in recruiting. To at all events a substantial extent the real explanation, I believe, is that a great many people have it in them to be thus pleasant and prefer to be so but ordinarily in the business-world certain vexations and apprehensions draw out and develop their worse side, primarily in mere self-defence, though with, in many cases, a more aggressive intent as habit grows.

Of course there are people who will allow themselves to be pushed to a very great extent to the wall rather than forgo what are to them the pleasures of courtesy and of generosity. Presumably an organisation, that tends to be specially congenial to such people, will rarely lose any of them whom it has the luck to get and, since birds of a feather certainly do tend to flock, the proportion will gradually grow.

When however, this was first said to me a good many years ago, I thought and to-day I think still that what those speakers were saying (and it happens to have been written again very lately by a lady who with considerable experience of the world came into the Partnership for a short time and wrote this upon her marriage and retirement) was and is true but that the main cause was and still is that in a profit-seeking undertaking, in which there is no exploitation and a constant aim to achieve in all things as much fairness as possible, there develops to an important extent a general good temper and kindness that draws out and fosters the

better side of those who in very different conditions would be to a really important extent very different persons.

These things are perhaps worth mentioning here, though it is obviously possible to doubt their genuineness and also to doubt whether, even if they are genuine, they are sufficiently typical to have real importance.

POSSIBLE VALUE TO THE NATION

But suppose for a moment that upon these lines it is really possible to have enough of the psychological advantages of small-scale ownership and yet to have at the same time genuine teamwork on any scale necessary for efficiency. Might that not increase enormously the efficiency of British industry, enlarge its output, diminish the wastage and altogether raise the national income as that income must be raised if we are to have henceforward a good living?

A FRESH TRY AT AN OLD PROBLEM

6. As the ideas indicated by the adoption of this word "partnership" arose and their implications were gradually worked out, it became plain that the undertaking had developed into one more of the many attempts, that there have been and still are, to make a practical success of the idea of the Self-Governing Workshop or Cooperative Society of Producers.

Of those previous attempts one of the most famous was Robert Owen's a hundred and forty years ago. His early results at New Lanark attracted world-wide notice but in the end they came to nothing.

This present experiment owes nothing to Owen or to any other practitioner or theorist. The main lines of the plan were completed with no knowledge of that kind either from books or from personal contacts. This is not said for the sake of claiming originality but to make plain the fact that the whole thing has been a gradual, natural growth from practical efforts to solve the problems of one particular business. Many at all events of the ideas, that the experiment embodies, are very obvious and, if in the whole thing there is something of real importance, that something must presumably be original, for otherwise one or more of the previous ventures of the same sort, Owen's or another, would presumably have succeeded. This is not to say that all of them have come to nothing. "A survey of profit-sharing and co-partnership schemes in industry" published very lately with the title "Co-

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partnership To-day" mentions several such organisations of which the scale seems to be large.

But it is an obvious fact that as yet the idea of the Self-Governing Workshop or Cooperative Society of Producers or, as we call it in our own partnership, the idea of Partnership on the Scale of Modern Industry, has had no results at all comparable with those of the idea of the Cooperative Society of Consumers.

ENDING CA'CANNY

7. Opinions will of course differ whether the written constitution, as it stands at present, of this particular partnership goes about as far as at present is really possible towards reducing in modern large-scale industry excessive inequality in the distribution of power, income, sense of security and the other satisfactions of ownership.

But it surely cannot be denied that genuine adoption of these proposals themselves would be a considerable step towards a world far more reasonable, more decent, better for the real happiness of all of us? Perhaps it might suffice to produce such a general inclination to do one's best as we have now got to achieve somehow if the productive work of our country is to give us all a good living or even any living at all. In these, however, and in a multitude of other respects the system, that this book describes, for substituting partnership for exploiting employment, can be varied according to the ideas of those who create particular partnerships or come somehow into control of one. As I have repeated here and there in it, this book does not contend that the John Lewis Partnership is the best or one of the best of the forms that might be given to the general conception of partnership for all. Our particular venture has been and is still truly experimental. Its aim has been and is still simply to find out and to demonstrate what happens if certain things are done.

A SEVERE TEST OF TOUGHNESS

8. I have been trying to give some idea of what in this particular case has happened so far but perhaps enough has not been said upon one point, the toughness and resilience that the Partnership showed under the test of this war. That test was searching. The Partnership was bombed very severely indeed. Its achievement under that test and certain other symptoms, such as the type of recruit whom it has long shown and still shows itself able to attract, may perhaps be thought to indicate that the general plan is sound.

ABOVE PARTY POLITICS

9. How far, if sound, it is in harmony with the ideas of our time was shown amusingly in an item headed "Politics" in *THE GAZETTE* of 1946, reprinted here under "Journalism" (paragraph 644). It indicates incidentally the length to which the Partnership is able without any disadvantage—indeed, I believe, with substantial advantage to discipline and general efficiency—to carry a democratic freedom of speech but it is reprinted in this book as evidence that partnerships of this general type are agreeable to the ideas of members of all of our four political parties, Conservative, Liberal, Socialist and Communist.

IRREVOCABLE SETTLEMENTS

10. By April of 1929 this experiment had reached the stage of giving rise to what lawyers call an irrevocable settlement in trust but this was not in itself a complete foundation for the Partnership. It secured that, so long as the business should not be wound up, its profits must go to its workers but I felt that, until the results of this first step should seem to be solidly satisfactory, I must retain power to bring the whole experiment to an end. There had to be some years of further development before that first settlement could be supplemented by a second. That maturity was really reached somewhere about 1940. But for the war, the making of the second settlement and the writing of this book would have come then. Difficulties, that have hindered now the making of the second settlement, are indicated in paragraph 502.

RESULTS PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE

11. On the latest count the present number of the Partners, that is to say the whole-time workers in the Partnership's business, is almost exactly twelve thousand. The Partnership would have been well worth creating if it had merely made the working lives of a good many of that community as happy as I am told and believe that it has. But some of us, who have devoted to it our working-lives or a considerable part of them, have hoped that it would do more than this. We have hoped that upon some problems of great urgency and importance in our modern world it would throw light useful in the development of public opinion and perhaps to legislators. Whether that hope was well founded must be judged from this book. The financial consequences to the Partners are given at the end of Part III.

COPYRIGHT AND AUTHORSHIP

12. The copyright of this book belongs to the Partnership and I wanted the authorship to be ascribed to its Council.

A time may come—and perhaps quickly—when partnership of this general type will be an idea so familiar and a practice so general that there will be little need of care lest any particular venture of that kind may be supposed mistakenly to be a partnership in name rather than in reality.

But at present it seems desirable to be extremely careful of everything whatever that may contribute appreciably to prevent any such mistake and on the other hand to build up and maintain a general sense of team-work, a general feeling that the Partnership does not depend upon any one person or group but is a true democracy, a true community of all its members.

In the course of years the John Lewis Partnership has come to be the work of many minds and of many hearts and I hoped that a special committee of the Council could play in the production of this book a part that would justify that ascription of its authorship. Such a committee did collaborate with me for a considerable time and gave valuable help but in the end they felt so strongly that the book, in ceasing to be my own personal utterance, lost vitality that I felt that I must give way.

The writing has taken some years. It has had to be done largely from memory that has kept on suggesting additions awkward to fit into the text as by then it stood. The work needed continuous effort from a fresh mind. It has had to be done at odd times and with a tired mind. My own share in the management of the Partnership's business has always been very much a whole-time occupation and this book has been written in fact in irregular snatches under the strain of the position of chief individual responsibility for such a business in the latter years of the war and in the hardly less harassing subsequent conditions up to this present time.

SOMETHING TO SHOW

13. The publication of any book was delayed deliberately until the Partnership should be able to show such results as now it can. Because of the war they are far smaller than otherwise they might have been by this time but even before the war, when they were very much smaller still, they seemed to be already just about large enough. The distribution of Partnership Benefit had exceeded a quarter of a million pounds. The number of members exceeded five thousand. The total capital ran into millions and the system

seemed to be sufficiently mature, sufficiently completely and firmly settled.

In 1938 a large publishing company suggested that some such book as this should be written about the Partnership and but for the war this book would, I think, have been in existence upwards of five years ago. It was of course always obvious that, if the experiment persisted, a book about it must be written sooner or later. Delay, however, until actual results should have reached the general scale, that I have mentioned, seemed desirable. Ideas of this kind must have some savour of Utopianism and have generally come to nothing. For this as well as for other reasons they are apt to encounter a rather too ready scepticism, a rather too prompt and obstinate confidence that "it is too good to be true". In our own partnership it has happened repeatedly that newcomers, especially if they had joined *en masse* and, as it were, involuntarily by reason of our taking over some business in which they were already employed, have, upon finding themselves getting what they felt to be "something for nothing", enquired at once "What's the catch?" They could not believe that this was not a new device for exploitation. Such scepticism tends of course to secure its own fulfilment. If the minds of those, whose co-operation may be necessary to the success of an innovation, are closed against it, it may come to nothing not inevitably but because they do not take it seriously.

Accordingly in this case publication was delayed deliberately until the innovation could be put forward as a matter not of theory but of practice, not as a plan, an intention, but as something that in actual experiment had been tried out sufficiently.

14. The 22nd of next September (1948) will end the forty-fourth year since on my nineteenth birthday I entered my father's business. For over forty of these years I have been consciously thinking out this set of ideas and trying to build up from them an organisation that would be really a living thing, capable of maintaining itself and of growing quite independently of any particular person or family.

The work has always seemed to me to be really a new form of political career. As a matter of fact in my own case it involved declining in my early twenties a number of invitations to stand for Parliament, including a very attractive one from the Whips of the Government of the day. I had no financial motive for remaining in the business-world. My father had given me already a handsome independence. Moreover, he told the Whips in my presence that he was sure I should find it impossible to combine

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a public career with retention of the business but that he was entirely willing that I should accept their invitation and I felt no doubt that, if I did, I should inherit a great part and very probably the whole of so much of his fortune as he had not given by that time to me or to my brother—between whom and my father there had been subsequently a complete breach.

Passionately fond, as I have been, of various sports I should rate above all others the fun of speaking upon matters on which feeling runs high—especially of impromptu speaking and of repartee—and I have never ceased to feel wistful hankerings for what might perhaps have been. But I felt then and I have felt ever since that there is in the modern world very great need of far-reaching practical experiment to show what does in fact happen if certain things are done, experiments that in some cases, as in this one, may be upon the scale of thousands of workers, millions of money and perhaps more than one lifetime.

I felt that the supply of such practical experimenters was as yet too small—indeed, so far as I knew, there were as yet hardly any—while on the other hand there was no shortage of theorists or of publicists and advocates of theories or of people willing and more or less well qualified to serve as legislators, seeking to coerce others to proceed in certain ways. The results of any particular experiment may be merely negative but, even so, they may still be very valuable light to other experimenters or to theorists or to legislators.

A LONG SLOW JOB AND AT BEST A GAMBLE

15. My father reached the age of ninety-two and never retired. That exceptional chance crippled for upwards of fifteen years this partnership's development. Ten years later the approach and advent of this war crippled it again for upwards of seven years more, to say nothing of all, that we lost and are losing still, by our special bad luck in being so heavily bombed. But for these happenings our present stage, that barely amounts to maturity, would have been reached long ago and we should have made much further progress towards strength of every kind.

All living things, however, even the toughest, are at the mercy of chance. Only within narrow limits can they survive calamity. Time alone can show whether this particular partnership has already, as I hope, become independently alive or at all events will do so.

Whatever its vitality, whatever its toughness, it may of course

encounter calamity that it will not survive as it has survived the tremendous disaster of its bombing in 1940.

Even if in its design or otherwise it has no fatal flaw, it may be overwhelmed nevertheless by some mere mischance. In either case it will not be, as I have always hoped and as I hope still, a fairly impressive demonstration of certain possibilities, a practical example of which the influence may be perhaps strong.

IF THIS EFFORT FAILS LET OTHERS BE MADE

16. But, whether or not that particular hope is disappointed, there should be, I believe, much further experiment in this general direction, the direction of the Self-Governing Workshop, the Producer Cooperative, the direction in which Robert Owen achieved for a time so much and in the end so little.

Partnership is justice. Better than justice, it is kindness. It is harmony with what some people call the Nature of Things and some the Will of God. All civilisation is movement this way. The goal seems very far off but let us make here and there whatever beginnings we can. If, as our scientists tell us, we are still in the very early infancy of mankind, we must have patience and hope.

FOUR INVITATIONS

17. Criticisms and suggestions, either for the development of the Partnership or for a possible re-editing of this book, will be welcome. They should be addressed to the Editor, THE GAZETTE, John Lewis and Company Limited, Oxford Street, London, W.1, or to me at the same address.

Enquiries from anyone, who may be inclined to offer to join the Partnership or to advise someone else to do so, should be addressed there to the Director of Personnel.

Enquiries from anyone interested in the financial structure of the Partnership should be addressed there to the Director of Financial Operations. The Stock that has been distributed to the Partners as Partnership Benefit is the $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ Cumulative Preferred Ordinary Stock of John Lewis Partnership Limited. In recent years each unit of this stock has been issued in respect of 30/- of new capital and the Stock is entitled in certain circumstances to 30/- a unit in a winding up. Some amendments to the Trust Settlement of 1929 will come before the Court of Chancery in October 1948. If they are approved by the Court, the Stock will be issued thenceforward at 5% instead of at $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ and each unit of Stock will be issued in respect of 20/- of capital instead of 30/-. Many of the recipients want to sell it, so as to use the capital in

P R E F A C E

some other way. It is a great feature of the whole plan that they shall be quite free to do this. The Stock was created in 1929. For the next ten years the dividend was paid punctually each half year. The flow was stopped by the war and the bombing of five of our businesses including the largest and most important but the dividend was cumulative. Payment began again in 1944 and by 1945 all the arrears had been paid off. We hope and believe that the half-yearly payments will be as punctual henceforward as before the war they always were.

Enquiries from anyone, who is connected with a business of almost any kind and of almost any size and in almost any country and who may be able and inclined to bring that business into the Partnership, should be addressed there to the Director of Expansion. In such cases the Partnership's main principles must of course be accepted. Among other things this means that the operations of its Branches must be combined to any extent that may be of important advantage to the quality and value of the goods to be produced or distributed or to the service that can be given in other ways. But within these limits there can be a very high degree of local self-government. Present leaders of any business brought thus into the Partnership could probably continue as long as they liked up to seventy-five years of age, the Partnership's limit for any tenure of authority. But any such arrangement must be terminable from the side of the Partnership by the payment of a definite sum of money. The sum may be large but to that extent the Partnership must be safe against finding that it has got into its team one or more people with whom that team as a whole cannot work satisfactorily.

J. SPEDAN LEWIS.

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