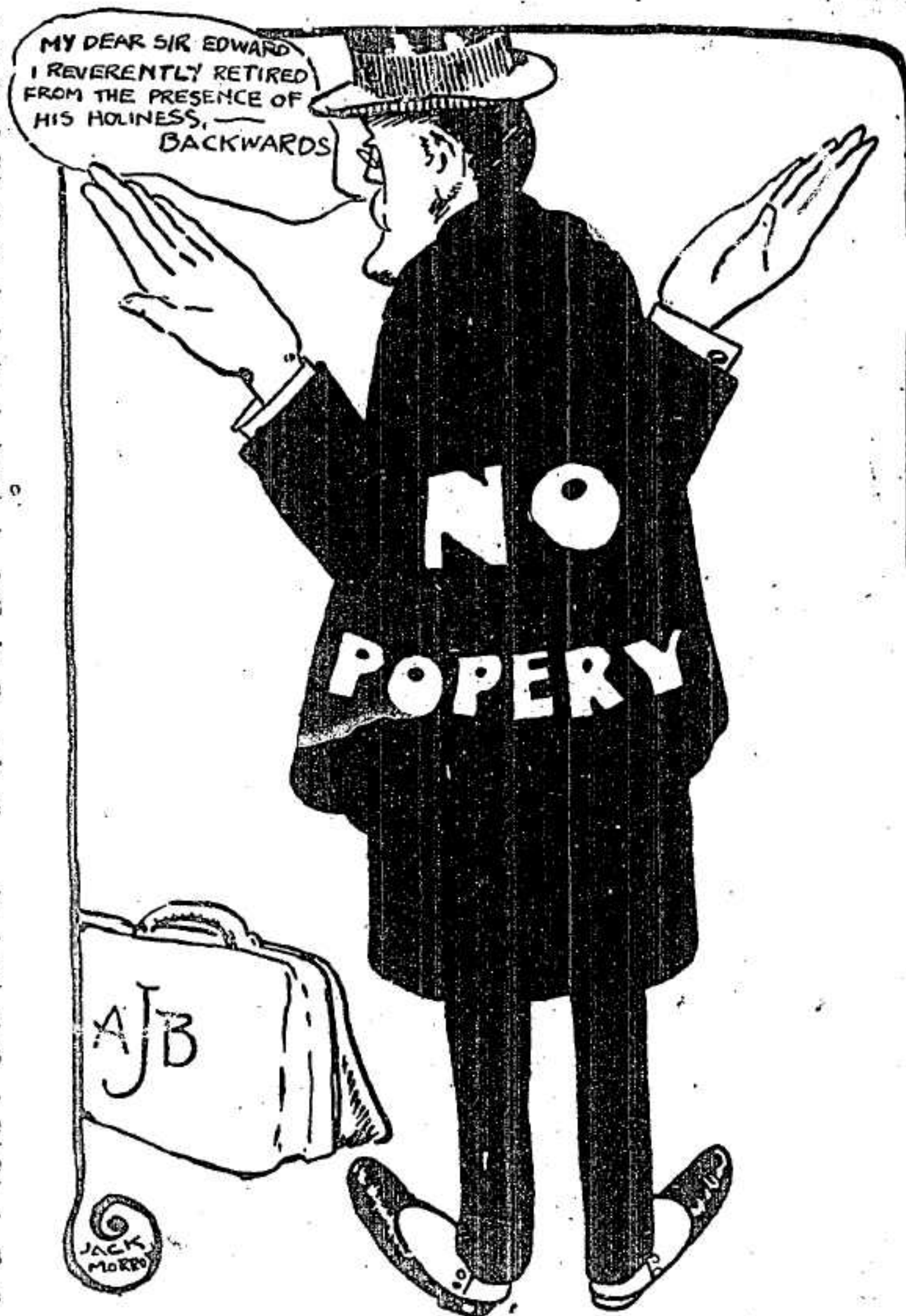


This rough outline may be considered worthy of debate. I would particularly like to get the opinions of some Liberty Hall men on it, and perhaps Father McKenna would favour us with his honoured counsel. But a certain important caveat must be made. Any scheme of "specialisation of function," such as the foregoing, must be considered in the light of social as well as economic circumstances. It is one thing to talk of a State-owned railway, but industrial control versus bureaucratic control opens a big range of differences. Also, State control will mean something very different from what it means now when revolutionary conditions come about. The State at present is an authority outside and above the community, created and maintained by the antagonism of classes. When ascendancy is destroyed by the victory of the masses over their exploiters, and class conflict comes to an end, the State as we know it will automatically disappear. No longer will a parliament or a government at the capital presume to legislate for the counties. No longer will we be governed by an external, remote authority. But a national executive to look after national affairs will still be required. How will it be formed?

In the first place it is clear that in a free country every interest will be self-governing and self-directing. Agriculture, education, industry, transit, etc., will each be directed by a College; or, if you prefer the word, a Guild—though Guild suggests things not here intended. The Department of Agriculture to-day represents the nucleus of an independent College of Agriculture. But the harmonising of these interests will require a forum, and here a Council of the Colleges will represent national unity and will constitute the State authority. In such a Council, not the victors in election campaigns, but the national leaders who have won their way in the great national services, will sit. The best farmers, the shrewdest educationalists, the cleverest industrial captains, the eminent and learned men of the Church, will come together and take counsel. The Council will have small coercive powers, its business being to advise rather than to compel the Colleges.

It will be seen, then, that some such body as the economic federation of the Co-operatives will become practically the economic executive of the nation, just as the Teachers and Learned Societies' Guild will become the controlling department of education.

It will also be noted that, since Co-operative organisation will be as natural to the free order as Capitalism is to ours, distributed property will be the general law, combined with the exploitation of such property on principles of association. There will be no compulsory communalisation of property, save in so far as that description may be applied to State-appropriation of great monopolies like railways and mines, or the assertion, where necessary, of the *altum dominium*. But voluntary communism will be encouraged, and as the communal sense revives in liberated humanity, the individualist will find himself pressed by public opinion, not by law or coercion, to the more civilised, more Christian, and more highly-productive practice of communal effort. As



ALMOST A BIRD: CAN NEARLY BE IN TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME

example demonstrates the workability and general advantages of combined effort—as in large-scale military-like agricultural operations—the old-fashioned individualistic mode of cultivation will die cut like the old-fashioned wooden ploughs.

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By what means are we to reach the Distributive Social Order? A worthy opponent of this program used this question as an argument against it, and I retorted on him: "How do you propose to reach the Marxian Social Order?" To reach the Distributive Order is no harder a task than to reach the Communist Order, but it is just as revolutionary an undertaking. Moreover, there is no reason why Distributivists and Communists should not work together in their efforts to end the reign of Capitalism. "The man who draws up programs for the future is a reactionary," said Marx, and so a loyal Marxian can admit that there is no reason why the revolution should not end Distributivism. It should be perfectly legitimate to advocate Distributivism.