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CAN THE WORLD BREAK ITS SHACKLES?

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A DICTATOR WHO LOVES LIBERTY Freedom Returns to the People

This is the story of a Dictator who has led his country to prosperity, laid down his Dictatorship, and returned to the people their priceless gift of freedom.

It is just twenty years since Estonia declared itself an independent republic, and this year has brought to this little Baltic State high hopes of a prosperity it richly deserves.

A new democratic Constitution, drawn up last summer, has now taken the place of a kind of Dictatorship wielded during the past four years by Konstantin Pats, the President and Prime Minister. The world-depression had made parliamentary government ineffective, and a plebiscite of the nation taken in 1934 confirmed Konstantin Pats, the head of the Agrarian Party, as President with power to rule by decree.

The new Constitution still gives the Estonian President the right of dissolving Parliament and suspending laws passed by it, but it guarantees individual liberties and freedom of religion as well as the right of minorities (Russians, Germans, Swedes, and Letts) to be taught in their mother tongue.

The President is elected by universal suffrage every six years and the two Chambers for a five-year period. Both men and women aged 22 are entitled to vote for the 24 members of the First Chamber, while the Second Chamber is composed of 30 members nominated by corporations and of ten appointed by the President. This Parliament will

have full control over the Budget, which today can be easily balanced.

Owing to its situation with a good port at Tallinn (formerly known as Reval) on the Gulf of Finland, and to the high standard of education among its people, Estonia has developed its trade with Russia, Poland, and Germany, and from being an agricultural country it is becoming an industrial one.

In the past two years the value of Estonia's exports has doubled, an important increase being crude oil from her shale beds which is being bought by Germany. In 1936 the production of this oil was about 60,000 tons, whereas this year it will be 200,000. Labourers are leaving the farms for the industrial centres and Poles are arriving to take their place, for there is no unemployment in this happy country.

Estonia owes much to its President and former Dictator, for it was Konstantin Pats who was head of the provisional Government which proclaimed Estonia an independent republic on February 24, 1918, and led its people against both the Bolsheviki and Germans who were both trying to absorb it. He is a Dictator who has succeeded in leading his nation back to prosperity and democracy, and a man therefore after our own heart.

WILLIAM BLAKE'S DREAM COMING TRUE The Miracle of St Pancras

A SOCIETY going about quietly doing good broke out into thanksgiving on its thirteenth birthday, a Lucky Thirteen.

The modest little Association which chose this fortunate occasion for rejoicing is the St Pancras House Improvement Society, which in the thirteen years since it began has worked wonders among the slums behind Euston and St Pancras stations.

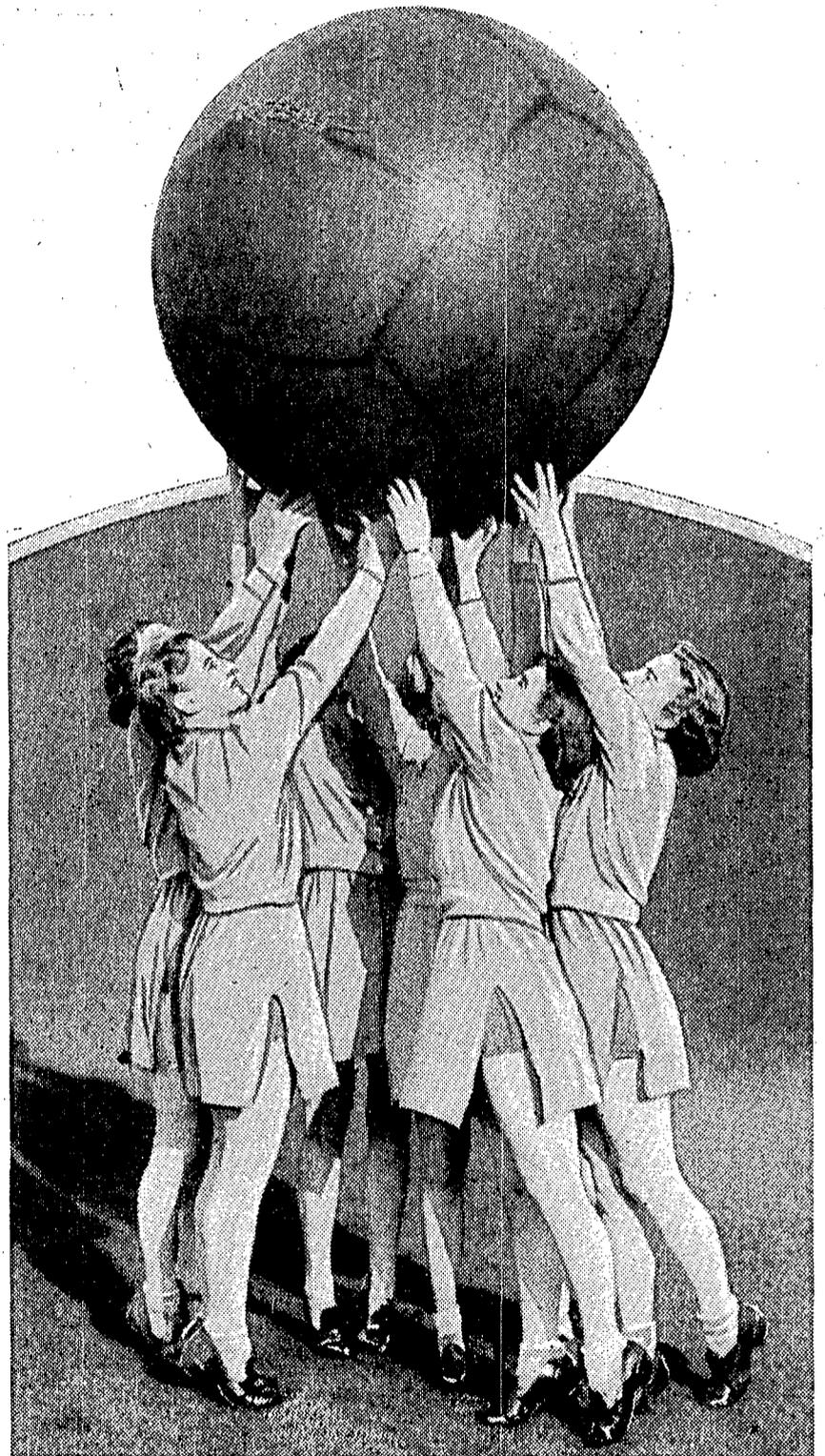
Only those who knew that area twenty years ago can realise the transformation that has taken place since the Society took it in hand. The streets were narrow, mean, and dirty. The alleys and the houses, bad to begin with, every year grew worse. To call some of them pigsties was to pay them a compliment. Parts of the area might well have served as a text for any reformer who declared that the cleaning up of the slums was the unfinished task that ought to lie heavier on the conscience of London than any other.

That was how it struck Father Jellicoe when he came from a country rectory and the loveliness of Oxford to work in

St Pancras. He was horrified at the houses some of his parishioners had to live in, and he was not content with saying how dreadful they were. He founded the House Improvement Society; he got the Archbishop of Canterbury to bless it, and he enlisted the support of the Health Minister. Father Jellicoe's death two years ago was a blow to his work, but no better tribute to his memory could be paid than the work his society has done, and is doing, and will continue to do.

One of the characteristic examples of it is Drummond Crescent, where Miss Edith Neville presided over the annual meeting held at the Basil Jellicoe Hall, not long ago. They bought the site eleven years since, and the purchase was a great act of faith because, as Mr John Barclay recalled, they had not at that time enough money to pay the ten per cent deposit. But they signed the contract and got the money. They pulled down the horrible, dirty, squalid old houses, and nearly everyone who lived there has now been rehoused. Then there was the evil Sidney Street

Toward the Goal of Health



Students of Liverpool Physical Training College at exercise with the pushball

area, where, in little dark houses, overrun with rats, infested with vermin, and with rain coming through the roofs, as many as nine people lived and died in one room. Building began there eight years ago and today the completed scheme has 230 flats, with a nursery school, a playground, and gardens.

The Duchess of Gloucester is to open this green oasis in May, when the Spring flowers will be blooming in the gardens; and meanwhile, unwearying in well doing, the Society is carrying on with Father Jellicoe's foundation. This year

the tenants displaced by the new Euston Station will begin to find new homes at the Society's site in Highgate Road.

Five blocks of flats are being built, the biggest venture so far. One block will be ready in eight weeks' time, the other four at six-weekly intervals. By the autumn the St Pancras slum-dwellers will hardly know where they are, in such cleanly, wholesome, healthy quarters. Even St Pancras will seem to them like England's green and pleasant land, and for them William Blake's dream is almost coming true.