

lot of devoted civil servants. But politicians come and go and you can never tell who the new men will be. This may lead to unexpected dangers. Europe should certainly be more united. The process, however, should start at a lower level — that is with the individual. As a first step we should get rid of passports to encourage people to come together."

In March, 1957, before the Common Market was established, we commented: "*For the rising class of bureaucrats, the scheme must appear most attractive: it is going to require hordes of experts, economists and planners of every description.*" Subsequent events have proved that to the hilt. A return to free trade would return power to the people. The Common Market, and all other protectionist devices, concentrates power in a few hands. Tens of millions of people are made the helpless pawns of politicians, bureaucrats and monopolists.

STRANGER THAN FICTION

FOR selling two overweight loaves the Co-operative Wholesale Society was fined £2 at Bolton, Lancs. Under the Bread Order, 1953, loaves must weigh up to 10 ounces or in multiples of 14 oz. The offending loaves weighed 11 ounces each. "Probably through artistry", a foreman baker had added a little dough to them to form perfectly shaped loaves. He has been instructed not to let his artistry run riot in this fashion. If the loaves had been too light the society would not have broken the regulations.

This extraordinary incident recalls the case of the "cut price" coal sold in Gainsborough noted here last month.

From Hull there comes a similar sorry tale. Customs officers have been prowling round the largest self-service store in the city because prices there appeared to be too low. Four years ago the proprietor, Mr. Clifford Dunn, and his wife were selling cut-price groceries from an open-air market stall. In July he bought for £40,000 a former cinema to open the biggest super-market in Yorkshire. He has 20,000 customers and employs 70 people. Mr. Dunn said that because of his cut price policy 20 suppliers have refused to accept any further orders from him. "At least three of the largest stores in Hull have complained about my prices," he said, "That is why the customs officers came." Mr. Dunn said that he was not worried about supplies being stopped. He believed that competition was so great that in a few months time suppliers would be glad to sell to anyone.

By his actions and his reported remarks, Mr. Dunn shows himself to be of the free trade breed engaged, like us, in the never-ceasing battle against restrictionism, scarcity and the trend to monopoly. Cheap prices are true "social welfare"; they give value to our depreciated currency and help pensioners and others on low incomes far more than the political doles to which each of the parties is committed. Mr. Dunn deserves to pros-

per. We wish him well and we are delighted that there are in Hull at least 20,000 people who, despite the protectionist propaganda which daily assails their intelligence, are practising free traders.

FREEDOM'S HALLMARK

CONSERVATIVE Ministers no less than the Socialists have dealt the free market economy some savage blows and more are yet to come. But with the return to office, as Minister of Health, of Mr. J. Enoch Powell, economic freedom has at least one highly placed champion. Evidence is provided by his speech at a Mansion House banquet on October 28:—

"The existence of free markets is the hallmark of a free and just society, which cannot exist without them," he said. "Too long it has been fashionable to decry the function of the market. A whole generation or more has been brought up to think of it as a cold abstraction of the economist, or even as something inimical to the well-being of society and the realisation of justice. Never has there been a greater error. If men cannot take their own decisions on the use of their money, their labour, or their talents, then the decision will be taken for them by the State. They become its puppets and its slaves. Such decisions men can only take rationally if there is an open market for their money, their labour or their talents." Mr. Powell said that the City of London provided the nearest thing to a perfect market that humanity has seen, a place where people could "compare the advantage of saving with the pleasure of saving, the benefits of caution with the rewards of risk."

Mr. Powell is what Socialists call a "hard-faced Tory". Even if, as probably is the case, he does not realise that the law of rent is as delicate and beautiful a mechanism as the free market, and that those who oppose or ignore the taxation of land values are in no better case than those who denigrate market forces, we are glad to see him back in office. He showed political courage and personal integrity in January 1958 when, with Mr. Peter Thorneycroft, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Nigel Birch, Economic Secretary, he resigned rather than agree to further increases in Government spending. Mr. Thorneycroft now holds Cabinet rank as Minister of Aviation; Mr. Birch remains a backbencher.

"DEAR LAND HAS GOOD EFFECTS"

MR. Henry Brooke surpassed himself on November 2. Addressing the Federation of Registered House Builders, he said "High land prices have good effects as well as bad. They discourage wasteful use of land such as we have known in the past and cannot afford. They encourage people to look more closely at the possibilities of buying up old areas of towns covered with obsolete buildings and putting up new buildings in their stead."