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## Nation-Wide Co-Operatives Accepted Calmly in Sweden

By ROBERT BALL  
Special Correspondent for The Eccentric

Editor's Note: The following article is the first of two presenting both sides of the rivalry between cooperative stores and private retailers in Sweden. Next week the standpoint of the private retailers will be defended.

That a fine new super-market, shining with chrome and cleanliness, has opened for business in Stockholm would probably surprise no American. That the store is owned by its customers, might.

The Swede on the street, however, would not wrinkle his brow for a second. He knows from the "Konsum" sign over the entrance that the Stockholm's newest super-market is one more link in the nationwide chain of co-operative stores, over 8,000 strong. The name of "Kooperativa Forbundet" organization embracing all local cooperative societies standing behind the stores, is a name to conjure with in the Swedish grocery business. The private grocers would much prefer to conjure without it.

In KONSUM headquarters in a startlingly modern office building (one of Stockholm's many monuments to consumer cooperation) I listened to Director Albin Johansson relate some highlights from the fifty year cold war between the co-ops and the retailers and manufacturers. An article in the retail grocers' trade paper had put him in fighting mood. They claim that we had pensioned off the manager of the Henkel soap produce plant which we own because he refused to carry through a

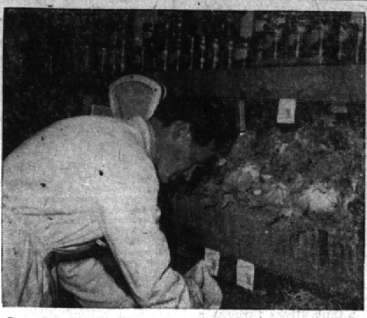
secret lowering of quality. Absolutely false, of course, and we are going to print the manager's denial in our own paper. He proffered a copy of the weekly paper "We," and I noticed that it contained a circulation of 600,000 and contained advertising from private firms.

"Actually, they are angry because he lowered the price of all soap products soon after taking over the plant," said Johansson. "They also claim that our factories sell cheaper to us than to others. Just as we are, we have one price for everybody." Relaxed conversationally in high, they ought to remember that they forced us into the manufacturing field with boycotts and artificially high prices. In every instance we have lowered prices, to the benefit not only of our members, but of the general public as well. We are not empire builders, but we think private industry should be able to face competition."

HOWEVER BUILT, KF's 98 factories might well be called an empire. One of the group, a vegetable oil plant, supplies 90 per cent of Sweden's needs for that product. "You can look at the books if you would like to," offered Johansson. "Our books are open to everybody all the time."

I declined with thanks and went back to the other end of the KF supply line, Stockholm's newest super-market, where I found young manager Oden bending over his beans. "The society hires me," he said, "and it can fire me any year I don't do a good job. I haven't been fired yet—started out as errand boy in a Konsum store and worked my way up."

I INQUIRED how I could become a member of the co-op and



Co-op manager weighing out beans for a customer.

**Book Jacket Exhibit Opens Tomorrow**  
Third annual book jacket exhibition, sponsored by the Book Jacket designers guild, and circulated by the American Federation of Arts, will open tomorrow at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. The 96 jackets to be exhibited were chosen from more than 1500 jackets of books published in 1949. The exhibition will be in the lower galleries until Sept. 30. A showing of the works of Marianne Strengell will open Sept. 12.

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**Local Pharmacists Pass State Exams**  
Three employees of local drug stores have received word that they passed the State Board of pharmacy examinations and are now registered pharmacists. They are Richard Wilson, 384 Hamilton, Wilson Drug Co.; Horace Cole of Royal Oak, Wabeek Pharmacy; and Edward Parish, Detroit, Shain's Drug Co. All three men graduated from the college of pharmacy and chemistry of the Detroit Institute of Technology this spring and took the state examinations the latter part of June.

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