



TRANSCRIPT

Article from St Michael News 1964 p.2

'WE CAN NOW MAKE IT BETTER'

This was the end towards which he strove: to bring ever-higher standards of living to an ever-increasing number of people

This was Lord Marks' philosophy in action. This was the ideal to which he dedicated his business life. Nothing excited him more than a new breakthrough in the technique of reducing prices while raising quality. "It's marvellous," he would say, "to be able to give people something they couldn't have before."

Marks & Spencer customers have been getting what "they couldn't have before" for many years now. Quality is what they have been taught to expect. And it was this passion for quality that led our late Chairman to pioneer the development of the quality control techniques that have made the St. Michael name famous throughout the world.

Not surprisingly, such continuing insistence on quality is reflected in the fact that our stores are now patronised by upwards of 10,000,000 shoppers a week.

Simon Marks was born in Leeds on July 9, 1888. His parents, Michael and Hannah (Cohen) Marks, had emigrated from Poland four years earlier.

Michael Marks, who is commemorated in the St. Michael trademark, laid the foundation of the chain store in 1884, when he set up a trestle table in the weekly market at Leeds.

Simon Marks was educated at Manchester Grammar School, and subsequently spent two years in Germany and France, learning French and German and studying business methods. He always made it clear, however, that his business philosophy stemmed from his father's inspiration.

When his father died, Simon Marks was nineteen and had just joined the business. In 1911 he became a director of Marks & Spencer Ltd., and in 1916 he became chairman of the company and joint managing director.

Simplicity in Management

Lord Marks made it dramatically clear that he shared his father's enthusiasm for simplicity in management and in record-keeping. "People in Britain," he once said, "will never know what an immense burden of rent has to be paid for the space used to store totally unnecessary records..."

So it was that in 1957 our late Chairman began to free the company from the immense burden of paper work and the multiplication of records and accounts. It was this policy of simplification (it now saves more than 26 million forms a year) that led directly to the "new lower price" campaign, which soon achieved world-wide fame.

Lord Marks was an inspiring leader. He was also his own severest critic. Daily he could be seen in one or other of our stores, discussing with sales girls the needs of the public and their reaction to the merchandise.



Sense of Urgency

About Lord Marks there was always a sense of urgency. On his desk stood the motto: “The day is short and the work is great, and the labourers are sluggish and the reward is much and the master of the house is urgent.”

For Lord Marks, the reward was indeed “much.” But his fortune was by no means the greatest part of it. “Money is no satisfaction,” he once said. “It comes and goes. It can be taken away.”

Happily our late Chairman could point to sources of satisfaction deeper and more enduring – like the happiness of his staff, the enthusiasm of his customers and the success of the company’s suppliers.

To Lord Marks of Broughton these were the *important* things.

Photograph Captions

Lord Marks relaxing on holiday with his wife, Miriam. This was one of his favourite snaps.

He enjoyed having fun with his adored grandchildren.

In happy mood at Bertram Mills’ Circus – two fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons. Lord Marks (Hon. Fellow) with the late Sir Archibald McIndoe, then Britain’s leading plastic surgeon.

A great family man, loved by all who knew him.

‘RICH MEN MUST LEARN TO GIVE’

To Lord Marks it was a creed. A doctrine he would never tire of preaching. And one that he himself constantly practised – with that generosity for which he was famous.

“What’s the use of being rich,” he would say, “unless you can do something with your money. ...Rich men must learn to give. For some it is the hardest lesson of all, and some of them never learn it.”

Lord Marks learned the lesson early in life. As a philanthropist, he was both generous and discriminating. And, modest, too.

Widespread Benefactions

He was far removed from the type of man who looks on money-making as a reason d’être. As one American journalist recently commented, “He was not only successful at getting rich, he made a success of being rich.”

Just how great Lord Marks was as a philanthropist can be gauged from both the character and extent of his many widespread benefactions. These included donations to the Royal College of Surgeons, to the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund and to Manchester Grammar School – his old school – for new science laboratories. And another beneficiary in the educational sphere was University College, London.

In addition, of course, Lord Marks contributed generously to the Jewish cause – and, in particular, to the development and welfare of Israel.



TRANSCRIPT

Article from St Michael News 1964 p.3

'IT IS PEOPLE WHO MATTER'

His staff, his suppliers, his customers – their well-being was his paramount concern

In a recent interview, Israel Sieff, the new Chairman of Marks & Spencer, declared that Lord Marks “infected us with the feeling that, as long as you put people – human beings – first, you couldn’t go wrong.”

In fact, this is how the whole St. Michael formula started – with people. Both Lord Marks and his brother-in-law, the present Chairman, felt that “making people happy” was the great thing in life.

“We discovered,” said Mr. Sieff, “that some of the girls were going without lunch when they were broke or busy. So we put in lunch rooms and saw to it that they got time off to eat the meal. From seeing them happy, it was just a step towards wanting customers to be happy.” Which meant setting standards with Marks & Spencer manufacturers – and making them happy, too.

It’s hardly surprising that Lord Marks liked to think of his staff as the “Marks & Spencer family.” It’s also not surprising that Mr. Sieff and his colleagues continue to take the same view. And will do so always, *however large this “family business” may grow.*

“It is people who matter,” said Lord Marks.

A fitting epitaph.

Photograph Caption

At staff parties Lord Marks thoroughly entered into the festive spirit. Always jovial, his warmth and gaiety gave an extra fillip to all informal staff functions.

Recognition of staff loyalties was always made personally. And consideration for his staff continued long after their retirement.

AND HERE ARE SOME OF THE MANY TRIBUTES FROM THOSE WHO KNEW HIM PERSONALLY – AND FROM THOSE WHO FELT THEY DID

from a CUSTOMER

“I cannot imagine there is another store proprietor whose loss would be so keenly felt by so many who have never even seen him. I suppose there are some millions of us, his completely satisfied customers, who had absolute trust in him and his doings. By any reckoning, he was a good man.”

Patsy Eccles, Balderston Lodge, Near Blackburn



from a SUPPLIER

“I was saddened when I was in London earlier in the week to read of the death of Lord Marks. ... We stand with millions of others in grateful thanks for his life. Of him it can be truly said, ‘If you would see his monument – look around’.”

Lloyd Owen, The Cocoa Works, York

from a DOCTOR

“I was discussing the *Daily Telegraph* obituary notice of Lord Marks with a general practitioner of wide experience, Dr. Fitzgerald of Teddington. We both agreed that he had done as much for public health in this country as any law or enactment.

“By his insistence on clean shops, careful wrapping of food and a no smoking in stores ... a very big step forward in public hygiene, for which we should all be grateful, was made. It would be of benefit to the public if many other shops followed his example.

“From the personal point of view, I agree completely with all you said about his ability, humanity, wisdom and charm.”

Gerald Slot, Harley Street, London, W.1, in a letter to the Daily Telegraph.