

John Tusa is Managing Director of British Bata. He took over this post in 1939 in the very critical opening days of World War II.

He has spent his life in the Bata Organisation, first being trained at Zlin and then going overseas.

Under his leadership and guidance, British Bata has been built up to the commanding position it holds today in the domestic and export shoe markets of the world.

He is married, lives close to East Tilbury at Horndon-on-the-Hill, Essex, and has three children—two boys, George, who is completing his studies at Oxford, and this summer is taking part in the Universities' Expedition to Spitzbergen; John, a Lieutenant in the 12th Light R.A. Regiment serving in Germany with the British Army; and a daughter, 13-year-old Victoria.

‘Thoughts
on a
Day of Reckoning’

BY JOHN TUSA

ROLL OF HONOUR

ARCHER, ALBERT
ASHDOWN, STANLEY
BARRETT, ARTHUR
BELEC, JEROME
BLOOR, RICHARD
BRADD, DENIS
BRANDON, HENRY
BURCH, GEORGE
CHAPLIN, GEORGE
COLE, JOHN
COUVES, WILLIAM
CROOKS, STANLEY
CROOKS, LEONARD
DAWSON, RONALD
DORRELL, STANLEY
FAIRCHILD, HERBERT
FARAWAY, ARTHUR
FOLEY, WILLIAM
FROST, JOHN
FROST, WILLIAM
GAME, GEORGE
GARDINER, LESLIE
GARRAD, ERIC
GILES, LESLIE
GOLDING, ROBERT
HAMONIAUX, GORDON
HARVEY, JOHN
HAWKINS, GEORGE
HOOKLEY, LESLIE
HOLLINGTON, HORACE
HUGHES, RONALD
JACKMAN, PETER
KING PETER
LEGG, HENRY
LINDSELL, FRANCIS

LYNCH, JAMES
MANSFIELD, SYDNEY
McLEARY, THOMAS
MERIDITH, FREDERICK
MERRIFIELD, KENNETH
MILLS, THOMAS
NORMAN, EDWARD
PAGE, HORACE
PHILLIPSON, JOHN ROSS
PRATT, DONALD
PRITCHARD, RONALD
RAYMENT, MAURICE
REYNOLDS, SYDNEY
RICHARD, WILLIAM
ROMPEN, LEONARD
SANDWELL, JOHN
SAPSFORD, LESLIE
SAWKINS, HERBERT
SHINWELL, HARRY
SHORT, HENRY
SMITH, EDWARD
SMITH, FREDERICK
SMITH, LEONARD
STAMMERS, ERNEST
TANN, HORACE
THOMAS, DAVID
TUCKER, KENNETH
TURNIDGE, FREDERICK
WEBB, ALAN
WELLER, JAMES
WILLIAMSON, MAURICE
WINDLEY, JOHN
WRIGHT, ARTHUR
WRIGHT, JOHN

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Unveiling of the War Memorial

to those employees of the Company who paid the supreme sacrifice in the Second World War by

Admiral of the Fleet, Sir John Cunningham, G.C.B., M.V.O.

On Monday, 11th July, 1955, at 4.30 p.m. at the Park, East Tilbury

and immediately thereafter the

Unveiling of the Memorial to the late Thomas Bata

Founder of the Bata Organisation (who lost his life on 12th July, 1932) by

Major-General Sir Edward L. Spears, Bt., K.B.E., C.B., M.C.

Dedications by the Lord Bishop of Barking

THE War Memorial and Statue unveiled today more than honour the men from British Bata who fell in the Second World War, and the Founder of the world-wide Bata Organisation: they stand as permanent tribute to the ideals of fellowship, achievement and sacrifice.

Those 69 men whose names are commemorated, helped to create the structure of the British organisation at East Tilbury; each contributed his skill and craftsmanship; each has left behind some memory for his colleagues and workmates to cherish.

Thomas Bata—he founded our business; founded, built it and inspired it.

This is one of those significant days when it is good for the mind to cast one's memory back 22 years, when the first Batamen landed at Tilbury, and to consider what has been accomplished.

The story of the Western Bata Organisation is that of a far-flung association of independent companies operating under the democratic laws of their respective countries—and Independent BOARD OF DIRECTORS, but sharing the benefits of their joint talent and research and, as far as possible, their wealth of machinery and raw materials.

British Bata is an integral part of that organisation. From small beginnings—a single storey building on the Essex Marshes—it has over the past two decades grown and flourished so that today it has factories at Maryport, Cumberland, and Netherton, Worcestershire, in addition to the main plant at Tilbury. The company also owns a tannery at Leicester and a textile mill at Adlington in Lancashire. Its employees number more than 5,000.

The company is now—

- (1) The largest manufacturer of footwear in Britain;
- (2) Britain's largest footwear exporter;
- (3) One of the largest shoe retailing organisations in the country.

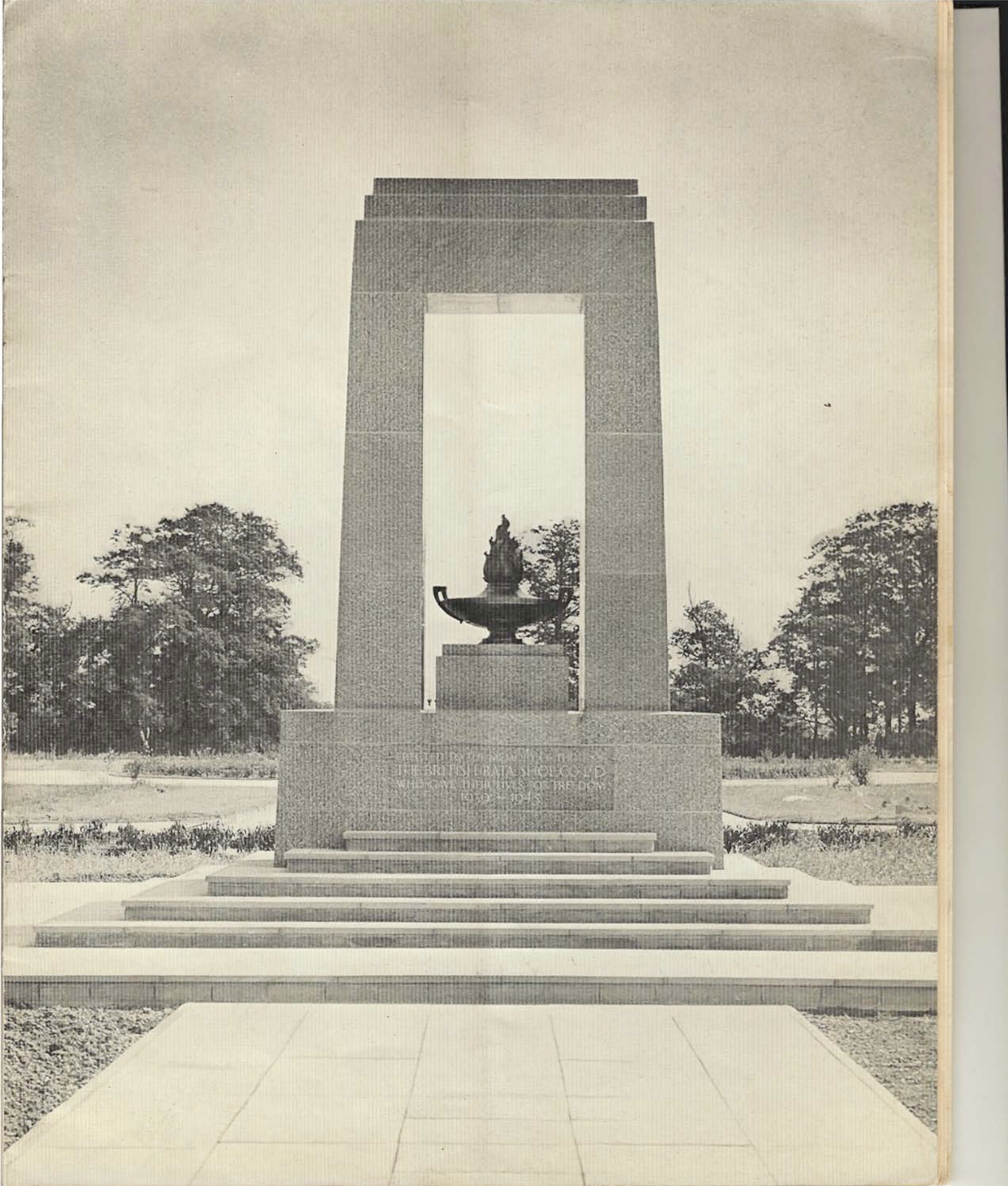
From that original small building has grown a huge, modern plant, an industrial enterprise adjacent to a garden village which contains more than 300 houses, a 5-storey hotel, four dormitory buildings, a cinema, a social and recreation club, swimming pool and many other amenities.

The garden village, with its avenues lined with trees and flowers, is notable for its English atmosphere; the plant for the immediate impression of airy spaciousness. The walls are almost entirely of glass and stands of gay flower pots are found in corners and on stairways.

But the Essex Marshes looked bleak and colourless that day in May, 1933, when the party of Batamen from Zlin, Czechoslovakia, landed in England. As they left Tilbury riverside and looked for the Bata factory, all they could see were hedges and fields.

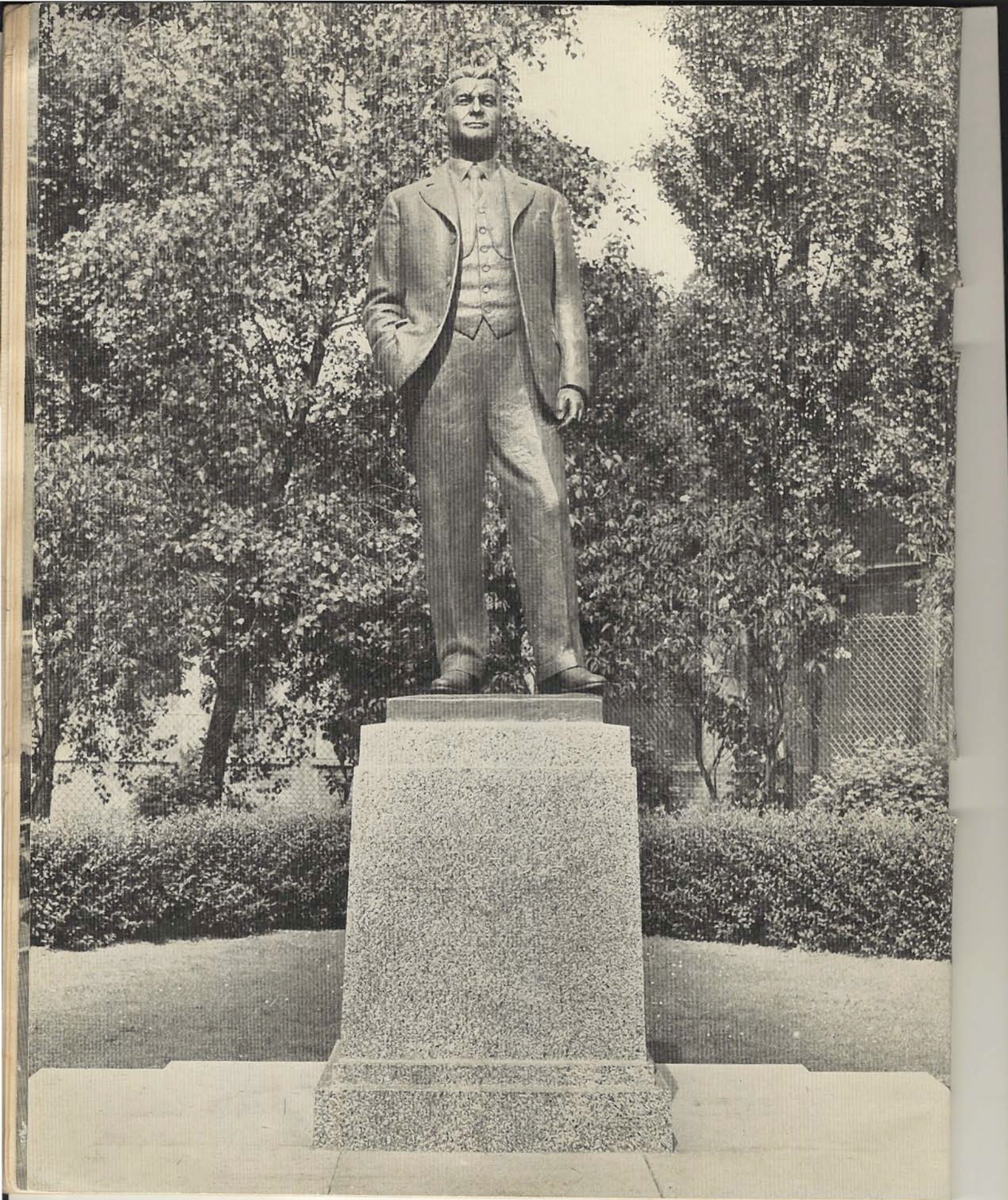
At last they arrived at St. Clere's Hall, the home of Mr. W. W. Wilson, a potato grower, who had sold 520 acres of land a year earlier to Mr. Thomas Bata—the Founder. They were shown the factory, a small building in a lane between fields of corn and potatoes.

In the party was the present chief engineer of British Bata, Mr. A. Marcanik. He looked at the factory, learned that the machinery had been delayed, and went shopping. The first thing he bought in England was a football. His first job? Erecting goalposts. Goal-posts still stand









there today on the well-tended Bata sportsfield.

The first Batamen lived in the farmhouse and did their own cooking on a paraffin stove. New arrivals today are more fortunate. They are accommodated in the community's modern hotel or dormitories, and enjoy food from its own 300-acre farm.

The Bata factory caused a tremendous impact in the area long before the first brick was laid. It was the time of the great depression. The whole of the Thameside industrial district was a vast distressed area, with thousands of young people out of work and no hope of getting jobs.

Most manufacturing concerns were retrenching; some were having to close. The dark cloud of economic depression hung over industrial Britain. It was at this period that Thomas Bata, the Founder, came to East Tilbury.

News of his mission leaked out soon after the deal was settled. Through the farmlands, along the deserted docks and into the villages went the message of hope that a new factory was to be built. At first light for days on end, men, women and boys could be seen trekking the roads to the farmhouse among the potato fields. Some cycled, but most of them walked on empty stomachs.

The farmer spent many hours away from his fields to speak to each of the callers. Diligently he entered their names and addresses in a book. Happily the callers thanked him and walked eight or nine miles back to their homes—and waited. Several months later a number of them—all could not possibly be absorbed—received the glad call to work. Some had not worked for years and there were youths who had not known a job since they left school.

"I thank God for the day when Bata came to East Tilbury." Thus, ten years later, declared the late Rev. W. C. Bown, Parish Vicar.

Bata, too, can thank God for the late Vicar. Realising that work meant not only bread for starving parishioners, but would teach unemployed youths the benefits and discipline of honest labour, he became a potent force in the early development of British Bata.

When necessary permits were not forthcoming because of bureaucratic fumbling, the company was afraid it would have to abandon its plans to set up a factory. Without an appointment, the Vicar—"just a tinpot parson"—went off to see the responsible Minister. Within two weeks of that interview, the necessary permits had been granted.

With the labour force being readily recruited, Bata began to think not only of training bench and machine hands, but of the skilled craftsmen, foremen and managers who would be needed later. Likely Tilbury boys were recruited straight from school and given the opportunity of going to Zlin for specialised training.

Soon rumours became current about alleged hardships they were suffering in Zlin. The Rev. W. C. Bown decided to go and see for himself. He received a warm invitation from the company, but at Zlin he met a hostile reception among the boys from his village. They thought he had arrived to take them back to England! The Vicar returned to Tilbury alone, reassured the parents, telling them the boys had a great opportunity and promise of real security.

Security enough. Three of the original party of boys are still with Bata at Tilbury, while others have been able to apply their skill elsewhere in the industry. The three

are: Tim Readman, foreman of the machine overhaul shop; Allan Cossins, floor manager of the upper clicking room; and Jack Symons, a sewing machine expert.

To Tim Readman, with the British Army in Burma during the war, it must have seemed there was no escaping Bata even in the jungle. When the army were eventually equipped with special-type jungle boots, the craftsman from East Tilbury immediately recognised that they had been made in the Thameside factory.

Of the first party of boys who were trained in Zlin, the name of Richard Bloor is permanently inscribed on the garden memorial. He lost his life with the R.A.F. during the war.

It was a great day when the first machinery for the new factory arrived at Tilbury. Villagers hurried down to the docks and helped to unload the plant and put it into position. There was no tackle with which to handle the cases, some of which weighed as much as five tons, so that all the machines had to be man-handled into position.

Then, at the end of July, 1933, the first shoes came off the machines. British Bata had begun to operate.

It was not long before a rubber shoe factory was opened and the foundations were laid for the first five-storey building. A canteen was also opened.

All this was accomplished in the first twelve months. People were talking of the amazing progress of the new company. Meantime, the first silver lining of greater prosperity could be seen on the horizon. Tradespeople began to do better, people even had a little over for entertainment, and East Tilbury became a prominent landmark on the map.

When the factory opened in 1933 the nearest railway station was Low Street, more than half-an-hour's walk away. Buses were infrequent. It was not long before the railway authorities were asked to build a station at East Tilbury. Industry had come to the countryside.

Towards the end of 1935, a good-looking youth with an engaging smile joined the staff at East Tilbury. He was Thomas J. Bata, son of the Founder. Young Tom was learning his trade. His father had died in an air-crash three years earlier, but before the son and heir could properly take over his inheritance, he had to go through a very complete training. When he knew everyman's job he would be better equipped to handle the people who one day would look to him for guidance.

The principles by which he must rule and live were summed up by the Founder in these words:

"The first principle for the prosperity of our works is that you should not consider that the works are only for you or exist only for your sake.

Our organisation has not been built up with the thought of providing a safe livelihood only for its founders. There are higher motives which have led us to suppress our own passions and desires when we have seen these to be harmful to the works as a whole.

It has been our desire to create, to offer to an ever larger number of people a share in the privileges which our concern has brought, both to our employees and to our customers.

As long as you continue to serve this great ideal, you will be in accord with the laws of nature and humanity.

As soon, however, as you begin to think only of yourself, as soon as you cease to serve the general community through your factory, your hour will have struck and you will inexorably sink to your doom."

So expressed is the philosophy of Thomas Bata, the Founder. It was a philosophy born out of poverty as well as wealth, of struggle as well as triumph; above all out of love for his fellow man.

Thomas Bata, son of a cobbler, was born in 1876 in the village of Zlin, 200 miles south-east of Prague. Apprenticed in his father's shop at the age of 14, he ran away a year later to Vienna where, with money borrowed from a sister in domestic service, he began to make cheap house slippers in a back room. He failed, went back to his father, but in 1894 he broke away again and founded his own concern in partnership with his brother and sister. Their capital was the entire maternal inheritance of £40. Soon they had 50 men working for them, and ten years later they built a small factory.

In 1904 he went to America, taking three of his young workmen with him. He worked as an ordinary factory operative in order to learn how the operatives there developed an output three times that of his own workers.

When his brother died in 1908, Thomas Bata was left in sole charge of the business which, despite setbacks, grew and prospered. By the late twenties the major part of the company's output was being exported to all parts of the globe. A chain of shops encompassed the world while several independent Bata Factories had been established in various countries.

Thomas Bata died in an air crash on July 12, 1932. He had taken off from Zlin Airport in bad weather to fly to Switzerland on a tour of inspection.

Thomas Bata II fell in love with England long before he became a Canadian citizen after serving with the Canadian Army during the war. He spent much of his early childhood here at a boarding school. Taught at an early age how to

look after himself, he received his first lesson in self-sufficiency when only eight years old. His father sent him a set of maps and time-tables showing the route home from England to Zlin, and left it to young Tom to find his way across France, Switzerland, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Ever since that day travel has become second nature to the present head of the Bata Organisation. Asked where he spends most of his time, he is likely to answer: "In an aircraft."

Tom Bata describes his four years at East Tilbury, before he went to Canada to set up a factory there, as the happiest of his early working years. He had certainly been through a hard apprenticeship up to that time, working at the home factory for two years at a machinist's wage, learning to operate all the key machines at normal speed, and then graduating as a shoe salesman in Switzerland.

Perhaps the biggest change in the operation of British Bata then and now has been in the cost of materials, despite which the company contrives to keep prices to a minimum.

Before the war British Bata were buying rubber at 4d. a pound. Now it is 3 shillings. Finest calf leathers which pre-war cost 9d. or 10d. a foot is now priced at 5s. Yet British Bata make a particularly fine working man's boot, waterproof and of the strongest leather, for only 29s. 11d.

How, with such phenomenal increases, do Bata keep up the fantastically low prices and high standard of quality and design? The answer lies in the *Bata Plan*.

This involves the breakdown of an entire operation into foolproof timing. The whole thing starts with the Six Monthly Estimates—when the company decides what shoes it will make over the next six months. That decided on, the company starts with the Production Plan,

which sets out three weeks in advance exactly which shoes will be made in which workshop and in what materials. That is the Master Plan. It is then broken down into individual plans, of day-to-day activity, which is the foundation of the whole structure.

The Production Plan goes to the Efficiency Departments who break everything into material requirements, labour force, thread to the inch, needles, nails, and so on. This in turn goes to the Subsidiary Departments, who are responsible for delivery to the Receiving Room, or Central Collection Department, of all materials required for the daily plan *forty-eight hours ahead of time*.

A key figure in the administration is the manipulant, or progress chaser, who is attached to each three workshops and is responsible for seeing that all materials are where they should be at their exact time. Everything must be right: size, colour, length, thickness. If production starts on Monday, then the cutting of the soles, uppers, sides, etc., is worked on forty-eight hours in advance by the machinists concerned, so that immediately on Monday morning, when the girls sit down at their sewing machines or the men at their clicking machines, the plan goes into action with its schedule of 800 to 1,200 shoes a day according to its design.

So accurate are the Batamen estimates of these Six Monthly Plans that they can judge up to 70 per cent. of their requirements and buy without hesitation on 70 per cent. of the estimate without fear of loss through inaccuracy.

Quality first is the dominant keynote of production. A rubber-soled sports shoe is given every bit as careful handling as a best leather model.

The research laboratories at Tilbury are among the finest in their field in Europe. Rubber boots are kept in refrigerators, for if there is too much sulphur in the compound, a bloom appears and it would give after a few days in stock. There is a rain-storm humidity cabinet to test leathers for wet weather. There is an automatic walking machine which subjects a pair of shoes in a day to the constant hard wear of a month. There are flexing machines, stretching machines, and instruments for testing raw materials before reaching the works for not only a whole day's schedule but an entire production plan can be put out of work by one faulty material.

It is little wonder that with such an operation that British Bata has made such a fine contribution towards Britain's export trade. The figures speak for themselves.

1949:	2,040,000 pairs;
1950:	3,540,000 pairs;
1951:	4,000,000 pairs;
1952:	4,205,000 pairs;
1953:	4,728,000 pairs.

Last year, 1954, would have set a new record had it not been for the dock strike in December which made it impossible to ship more than 4,430,024 pairs.

Complementary with its increased production and exports has been the growth in the distribution side. Throughout Britain is a chain of nearly 300 shops, striking for their modern design.

At one time an average of two shops were being opened a week. Everything was done to a strict time-table. The morning would be spent in preparing shoes for dispatch to the shop concerned; the afternoon would be spent in the docks, releasing furniture and fittings, and rest of the day, often up to midnight and later, in receiving the stock and furniture at the

shop. The staff of a new shop were always keen to open on time and would work all through the night.

On one occasion, the local electrical company had not connected the supply to the shop, so in order that the premises should be opened on time, no fewer than 80 candles were burnt during the night.

British Bata is proud of its wartime achievements. The Services were crying out for more boots more quickly. Mass production was the only answer, but manufacturers told the Army that this could not be done because of the type of material used in the army boot. British Bata accepted the challenge and found a way to mass produce the heavy boots. At the same time, its machine shops were being converted for the production of gun parts.

Although working with a depleted staff—60 per cent (more than 1,300)—were with the Forces, over five million pairs of footwear for the Services were turned out.

Overall, the Bata Organisation made a tremendous contribution to the Allied effort.

Even in enemy occupied territory, Batamen contrived to help the common cause. Employees of the Bata Shoe Company of Singapore and Malaya, after the Japanese occupation, became adept at sabotaging the enemy's attempts to set up production for his own use. For every pair of shoes that came into Japanese hands, four pairs were smuggled out for distribution among local inhabitants and inmates of internment camps. Finally, the Japanese made a mass arrest of Batamen and sent them to Singapore's most notorious prison.

In Java, the Bata plant was taken over by the Japanese and its workers brutally treated because of their non-co-operation.

After the war came rehabilitation problems. In London a statistician solemnly computed that the world needed 4,000,000,000 pairs of shoes each year, but was producing only 800,000,000 pairs. These figures—these unreal, hopeless figures, some said—sounded a new battle cry.

Orders for machinery were placed wherever early delivery could be promised. The engineering shops of Batawa in Canada were switched from war contracts to the manufacture of shoemaking gear and in 1946 Canada sent a considerable number of machines to other Bata factories. New and large factory buildings were constructed and Bata technicians designed and produced presses of an entirely new design for the rubber workshops and in the same year delivered sufficient to produce an additional 100,000 pairs of rubber shoes weekly. The engineers at East Tilbury started production of new machines.

The war had left its gaps and the division of Europe into West and East camps also meant the loss of valuable resources behind the Iron Curtain. There was an urgent need for new and young executives. It was resolved to recruit key men so far as possible from the countries in which they were to serve, or from Britain.

Into the Bata Industrial College at East Tilbury came young students from the United Kingdom, the Belgian Congo, France and Holland, etc. Tilbury, in fact, has become a Bata University and the successful graduate of the advanced training course receives a three-year contract and a chance to 'make his name'. Since 1951 no fewer than 498 students have graduated from the college and are now exerting their skill in all parts of the world.

Hand in hand with general rehabilitation has been the emphasis placed on all forms of welfare. Long ago, Bata pioneered a new system of industrial democracy

whose main features are now well known. There were many who derided the advanced social and welfare schemes and the system of profit-sharing. In East Tilbury in the early days profit-sharing aroused some distrust among older people until they found their sons and daughters were earning good wages even while they were learning their jobs. Bata novelties of the 1920's—social insurance, forty-hour week, holidays with pay and guaranteed minimum wage—have, now, become established practice in a majority of the great firms.

But the Bata Organisation is not content that others should merely catch up with them. It strives to keep in the lead of social welfare. Among the many services now in operation in Tilbury are the Pension Scheme, which operates for all grades of employees, Sickness and Dividend Scheme, a Benevolent Scheme, a Marriage Endowment Fund and Baby Bounty.

Benefit grants are not something accorded by some remote central control to an employee number on the payroll. Welfare is operated with an essential human touch. Managers and foremen are encouraged to take a personal interest in those who work under them, and to understand their problems. A daily welfare sheet is sent from each department so that the personnel department may deal with any cases of workers within the scope of the company's many welfare facilities.

Understanding of another's difficulties, when encouraged as an essential factor in human relationship, spreads its mantle. Not only the company but the workpeople gave unselfish succour to victims of the east coast floods of February 1953, who were given free board and lodging in the

company's hotel and dormitories, and in the homes of employees. Bata, where there was the need, provided new footwear for victims who lost their shoes in the floods, while housewives and others gave up clothing and blankets.

The aid and comfort so freely given received royal acknowledgement when, in Her Majesty's tour of the stricken and reception areas, the Queen visited the Bata community on February 13, 1953.

Big and successful commercial enterprises need a constant stimulant in a highly competitive world. Some find it solely in the urge for greater profit. The Bata Organisation is run on strictly business lines. Inefficiency and waste cannot be tolerated. But there is also the inspiration. It is expressed in this way by Thomas J. Bata:—'Twenty-five years ago my father said: "The world's population is over two billions—and barely half of them are shod, let alone well shod. Shoemakers everywhere—see what is your task and how little has been done about it yet." And his words still hold good. The world was better shod when my father left it, twenty-three years ago, than when he first took up the task of making shoes for the world at a price the world could afford to pay. The main reason for that was the tremendous impact of his personality and life's work upon the shoe industry everywhere. My father always considered we had a mission to perform. I have tried to operate in the same way.

'Work and progress give the greatest satisfaction. My favourite motto is that of Rotary: *He profits most who serves best*. I suppose everyone would describe progress differently, but my own idea of it is leaving something better than you found it.'