

union-management co-operation and the difficulty we experience in discovering more than a negligible number of employe representation plans which are based on an actual program of collaboration in methods of production and distribution. Moreover, in only too many quarters we still have suspicion and animosity which evidences a spirit of jingoism among managers and owners as well as among workers. For example, at the recent annual convention of the National Founders Association the president of this association is quoted, in the New York Times of December 1, as stating that the history of trade unionism was one of "broken promises, intimidation, destruction of property and attempts to drive the owners of industry from immediate control of their own property," and as characterizing a campaign of the unions against communism as a cloak to cover the "unsavory" record of unionism. He also said that unionism in theory is one thing; but unionism in practice quite another matter, as though that were not true of employers' organizations, too, not to speak of civic, religious and political organizations!

On the other hand, some labor leaders and intelligentsia are just as narrow in their suspicion and condemnation of certain very laudable purposes and aims of employers. I should say that, although we have moved a long distance in comparison with the past and in comparison with many other countries where class antagonism is rampant, we have not yet produced enough examples of real collaboration in industry to deserve congratulations. An enormous amount of education of both managers and workers remains to be done to bring about that desirable recognition of "the interdependence of management and wage earners" which Mr. Green so ably advocates and which he wishes to see take tangible form throughout industry in the form of collaborative effort toward the elimination of waste.

In other words, are we Americans not a bit too inclined to boast of the phenomenal conditions which are amazing us, instead of sawing wood and waiting until we face the acid test of time and less marked advantages? Some of our individual plants have suffered from premature enthusiasm on the part of those of us who have watched their growth with pride and confidence. Yet keener competition on the outside and weakness in some part of the internal structure have exposed vulnerability and we have seen the folly of centering on the part

instead of the whole, of talking as though a thing is accomplished when it is only in flux and of failing to realize sufficiently keenly the interdependence of all units in any industry. This holds true of many of our industrial experiments. If we consider any one of them as having existed a sufficient length of time to be a *fait accompli* we are making a grave error. No matter what kind of an individual experiment is under way, I would warn the experimenter (and the investigator or researcher!) not to regard it as anything but in process. And so I would sound a warning note on the subject of our national inclination to pride ourselves on our achievements. In contemplating the general field of industry in the United States, are we justified in saying that, at the present stage, "the principles of scientific management and administration as developed by Frederick W. Taylor and his disciples have at length grown to dominate the American industrial scene" and that "this spirit is as potent in the little business as in the big?" If this were true, would our coal industry be in the situation it is in today, or textiles, or many other industries which could be cited? Would not employers in general be more concerned with the analysis of markets for the purpose of determining approximately the potentialities of consumption as compared with production? Yet, except in cases of trustification, and in one or two isolated instances, there is usually an individualistic policy in our American establishments which takes no account of co-operative industrial planning against overproduction and unemployment in an entire industry.

In other words, I would say that in spite of the increasing attention being paid to methods of control both in an industry and in an individual shop, we are still far from a state of deserving congratulations. I wish I could feel with Mr. Lewis that our present day prosperity were so largely the result of planning, of foresight, of scientific management instead of due to the favors of circumstance and the chance discovery that what brings prosperity to the worker brings prosperity to the country. Is it not possible that our wide home market minus tariff barriers, our easy credit system and the increasing extension of consumers' credit in the form of instalment selling, together with our relatively favorable position in comparison with the depressed European countries, should head the list as the really potent factors in improving the con-

dition of the working man instead of wise planning on the part of our industrial leaders? If this is so, are we not in danger of being too self-assured and of thinking we are "sitting pretty" on the ground that we are superior beings with an unwonted amount of intelligent direction? I would say that we still have a long way to go, considering the pictures presented by the textile and mining industries, for example, before we have much to write home about.

Moreover, until we become not only nationally but internationally minded in our industrial outlook; unless we see the relation between our economic prosperity and that of the rest of the world, and until we realize the value of such work as that of the International Labor Office in raising the standards of working conditions all over the world, we have no reason for being too vain of our isolated glory.

A. J. Muste.¹ I content myself with raising certain questions that are suggested by Mr. Lewis' paper without attempting to answer them.

In the first place, certain questions occur with regard to the "prosperity" to which attention has been called. There is no doubt that the real wages of American workers are higher today than they were a generation ago and doubtless are higher than the wages of workers have ever been in any other time or country. However, can it be said that the American worker is well paid today if his output today is compared with his output of a generation ago? Can it be said that the American worker is prosperous if his output is compared with that of the European worker; if account is taken of the strain to which he is subjected by speeding up, intensification of the drive for output, etc., which are characteristic of American industry and to which perhaps workers at no other period in history have been subjected? Can it be said that America is prosperous if consideration is given to the rate at which consumption must take place in this country if it is to keep pace with increasing production and if the whole economic machine is not to be thrown into disorder?

Doubt rises in one's mind also in connection with the so-called "soft spots" which exist in our economic system on the admission of even the most optimistic. There are, for example, the textile in-

dustry, the garment trades, the bituminous coal industry and agriculture. Among them, these industries employ a very large proportion of our workers. One wonders just how many "soft spots" there can be in an economic system before the system as a whole must be declared unsound.

Much of the discussion with regard to the prosperity of recent years, flattening out of the business cycle, etc., appears to proceed on the assumption that the present situation is practically certain to continue. That, it seems to me, is an assumption which may well be questioned. Is not the burden of proof, as a matter of fact, upon those who think that the experience of other periods in our economic history is not to be repeated? It seems to me at any rate that this is a subject requiring most careful study.

While we proceed with our discussion of improving the machinery of production and so increasing output, prosperity, etc., do we take sufficient account of certain larger factors such as the American tariff system, the reparations and international debt situation, the imperialistic adventures of the Great Powers, including the United States, possibilities of war, etc.?

It seems to me that if consideration is not given to these larger factors we are likely to be in the position of people enthusiastically engaged in furnishing and decorating the room they live in while the house is burning down over their heads.

It is confidently asserted that more of a co-operative attitude is developing in industry in the relations between employers and employed, "the point of view of both management and men is changing for the better."

Here again it seems to me that very serious questions may be raised. When it comes to deciding the wages and the profits that are to be paid is there any indication that this question is being settled on any other basis than the amount of organized force that each factor can bring to bear? The fact that statistics of strikes are low over a period ought not to blind us to underlying realities in this connection. In international relations, nations may for a long period prefer to settle their disputes about markets, colonies, etc., without actually going to war, but this does not signify that these disputes are being settled on the basis of co-operation rather than competition, and reason rather than force. The same may be true in industrial relations.

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