

The Wisdom of the East

The Vice-Consul General for Japan, Mr. Kijiro Miyake, speaking at a dinner at the Hotel Australia, is reported to have said: "When all nations are able to buy and sell in peace on fair terms, war will cease and pass like a nightmare from the memory of man."

We welcome so sane and sensible a remark from a person holding a responsible position. We have again and again stressed this point, that all wars have their root in economic injustice and stupidity. If the money systems of the world made it possible for nations to produce to the optimum amount, and to exchange their surplus goods for the surplus goods of others, we might reap some of the advantages which applied science has made possible, and we could enjoy social intercourse and amity with other peoples, irrespective of the state of their trade balances with us. It is not much to expect, for that was originally the purpose for which money was invented.

Until we, as a nation, realise the absolute truth of Mr. Miyake's statement, and proceed to establish in Australia the monetary machinery which will make it possible as far as we are concerned, our problems, political and social, will remain, and will continue to be as at present, hopeless of solution.

Do not be misled about the matter. The present turmoil in Europe is intimately bound up with matters of trade and commerce. If Germany and German goods had not been boycotted after the war, there would have been no Hitler to sway Europe with his insane dreams. If ever we find ourselves in conflict with Japan, it will be due solely to the trade barriers which in our blindness we erect against a friendly people from whom we can gain much, both culturally and materially. It is idle to maintain that our standpoint is dictated by the rules of the money game as now played all over the world. The rules are out of date, unworkable, and the prime cause of misunderstanding, enmity and war. They must be changed before it is too late.

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"ALL ASSUMPTION"

A Judge Who Refuses to Believe What He Sees

A Letter to the Editor, from BRUCE H. BROWN.

Sir—Last week we gave some consideration to the declaration of Chief Judge Dethridge that "It has been proved that there is plenty," and that the claim that we live in a land of actual and potential abundance "is all assumption." Evidence was given showing that with fewer workers on the land our production in 1934 was greater than in 1930, and that because our people have not been supplied with sufficient buying power, we have goods destroyed and production restricted. The evidence referred to was described as "documentary" proof because it may be verified by reference to the bulletins issued officially by the Commonwealth Statistician.

Visible Proof

This week we want to have a look at what might be described as the "visible" proof in the shape of the remarkable developments during the past 100 years or so. These developments led to the adoption of a significant resolution by the 13th Congress of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire in London, as follows: -

"This Congress, recognising the immense changes in the social and economic conditions of the world brought about by the application of scientific discovery to agriculture, industry, and means of transport and communication, deplores lack of corresponding advance in the monetary system both national and international. It calls upon all the Governments of the empire to concentrate upon finding a monetary system, which would enable the people of the world to enjoy THE VAST ABUNDANCE which technical improvements have made available. Further, the Congress representing the producers of REAL wealth, wishes to place on record that it is strongly opposed to all measures purporting to bring about prosperity by THE CREATION OF SCARCITY through artificial means." Note particularly the words printed in capital letters. Despite abundance, the powers that be are creating scarcity, and the powers that be are the controllers of our money supplies. How remarkably similar these conclusions were to the historical utterances of his Majesty George V. and his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as quoted last week!

Boards to Stifle Production

Notwithstanding the developments referred to, we are faced with an increasing number of Boards, brought into existence for the express purpose of stifling production and punishing citizens who seek to charge prices for the necessities of life within the limited and decreasing incomes of the great mass of the people. Who has not heard of the Onion Marketing and the Egg Marketing Board? These Boards are springing up not only in Australia, but throughout the English-speaking world. Only last week I read that in Kenya a thousand African natives commenced to lie down in the road in protest against the cutting down of their stocks of cattle. In England they have Boards to cut down the stocks of potatoes, the catches of fish, the supply of milk and the production of many other things. This reference to Kenya was followed by the appropriate comment: "The natives of England also take these stock reducing schemes lying down." So do the natives of Australia. And, to some extent their attitude excuses remarks of the kind made by Chief Judge Dethridge, for, if we destroy and then prevent goods from coming into existence, the plenty vanishes by methods of the criminal abortionists.

The "Disaster" in U.S.A.

The United States of America is no different. The *New York Times* has summed up the position in that country as follows: "America this year is being blessed—beg pardon, cursed—with plenty. There are bumper crops all along the line. All of them will exceed the average crop of the ten years from 1927 to 1936. Prices will be low enough because of this plenty, so that more people can buy more of everything to eat. What disaster! But the miraculous Farm Act, passed last winter, may yet save us from this situation. If it is too late to bring shortages of everything this year, the law will certainly do so next year." If there is not plenty, why the law to restrict it? And if there IS plenty why deny it?

W. M. Hughes Knows

One of our very own leaders, William Morris Hughes, has made the admission that "Improvements in the means of production result in one man to-day producing as much as 1000 men produced a century ago. An ever-increasing quantity of goods is being produced by an ever-diminishing number of men." Mr. Monk might with advantage call Mr. Hughes to give evidence to this effect before the Court. It is true that he did not offer detailed proof at the time, but a body of men known as Technocrats HAVE given the proof. They show that if the manual work of the world were divided among the men of the world, there is sufficient to occupy only the able-bodied of from 25 to 45 years of age working sixteen hours per week. But then, of course, the idea of a 40-hour week is a fetish and a religion! Sure enough, that's just what it is—a fetish and a religion to those with the under-standing of the stone

What Can Be Proved

Mr. Monk and other responsible officials professing to care for the interests of the rank and file should get in touch with the Technocrats and put the results of their researches before the Court as evidence. These Technocrats are members of an organisation founded in 1920, comprising scientists, technologists, physicists, and bio-chemists. They will prove that whereas the total adult working population of the United States has a capacity equal to 3,600,000 horse-power, four modern turbines have a greater energy capacity than all the workers put together. This shows that the importance of man as a power unit has gone. The highest number of workers employed in the United States was reached in 1918. Since then production has consistently mounted upward, while employment has fallen downward. The Technocrats can prove that the faster we make hats, pants, cigarettes, electric light globes, or motor cars, the fewer men we need to do it and the less mechanical power per hat, pants, cigarette, etc. More important still, they will also prove that the merchants who trade in

DEBT— namely, the bankers—are now the rulers and regulators of commerce, and are the men who prevent the community from enjoying the benefit of these wonderful achievements.

Australia the Same

Even in our own comparatively undeveloped country we have evidence of the same trend in development. In the small State of Tasmania they have established one of the best hydro-electric systems in the world by making use of portion of their remarkable water resources, but in doing so they have gone further and further into financial DEBT. The same sort of thing has happened in other States. In Victoria for example, we have the wonderful works at Yallourn where, by merely moving a switch, a man at a switchboard releases power equal to the work of a million men. Here, again, we have built this wonderful system of light and power only to sink further into financial DEBT. Whatever we do puts us into the clutches of the DEBT MERCHANTS.

Consult the League of Nations

If the learned Chief Judge is not satisfied with this, he might be brought face to face with the official records of the League of Nations, which show that while the population of the world has been increasing by 10 per cent., food production alone has increased by more than 16 per cent. Notwithstanding this, suicides and starvation have increased through economic stress because of the dishonest and increasingly discredited money system which controls distribution.

What Even the Blind Know

Or, perhaps the judge would be more impressed by the facts which have been assembled by C. Marshall Hattersley M.A., LL.B. in his splendid book, "This Age of Plenty." By using our eyes in conjunction with the records of the past, we find, as he found, that since the beginning of the 19th century we have advanced from the horse to the bicycle, the steam engine, the motor car, and the aeroplane; from the goose quill to the fountain-pen and the typewriter; from the scythe to the harvester and binder; from the hand loom to the factory; from the tallow dip to the electric light; from flint, steel, and tinder to matches; from the signal beacon to the telephone and wireless; from the sailing vessel to the ocean leviathans; and from the leather fire bucket to the modern fire engine. In addition to these, the same period has produced lithography, the camera, X-rays, the dynamo, anesthetics, the cinema, television, and hosts of other things. Water-power has been harnessed in an extraordinary way in almost every country, and in Canada alone water-power is already being used equal to the energy of nine hundred million men.

Sheer Lack of Mental Effort

After calling attention to these things, Hattersley quotes Dr. Esme Wingfield-Stratford as follows: —
"The power of man to appropriate to his use the kindly fruits of the earth has gone on increasing and multiplying, and if man has failed thereby to increase his capacity for leading a noble and beautiful life, that must be the fault of his own blunderings. By sheer lack of any mental effort to take control over his destiny, he has made a shameful waste of his resources, or even allowed them to be turned to his own destruction. By a dreadful paradox, every increase of power leads to an increase of misery and brings him nearer the abyss."

What Hattersley Says

Hattersley himself then goes on to say this: "Looking around, what do we see? An amazing poverty existing in the midst of a well-nigh incalculable possibility of plenty; the majority of persons spending the best portion of their lives, week in, week out, in humdrum if not actually brutalising conditions—many engaged on work that could be usefully dispensed with; thousands more 'out-of-work' and consequently, subject to all the poverty and indignity that to-day follow in the wake of unemployment, even though it be involuntary. . . . The reason why so many industrial concerns are to-day closed or working short time is not the lack of human skill or energy to work them, nor yet a scarcity of mechanical resources or of raw materials. Still less is it due to a lack of desire for goods. No: what is needed is more orders. An order for goods implies two things: it implies a desire for the goods, and a promise to pay for them. There is no question about the desire for day: what is missing is the talisman that turns a desire into an order. That talisman is money."

Position of Stalemate

"...To-day, therefore, we find ourselves in a position of stalemate.

On the one hand, we find would-be purchasers waiting for the wheels of industry to start revolving, and for the flow of wages, salaries, and dividends to recommence so that they may buy the goods they need. On the other hand, we see manufacturers with idle plant, equally with work-less men, clamouring to be allowed to produce things but compelled to wait until the consumers have, through the process of industry, acquired sufficient money to place the orders.

Idle Debate Useless

"It may be as well if we pause here to realise that Poverty and Unemployment are a monstrous contradiction, and that the former at least is an anachronism in this age of scientific production. It is not necessary to indulge in idle debate as to whether the workers are better or worse off than they were in the past. In some respects they are better off, in others they are not so well off. This much is certain, that their lot has not improved at all in proportion to the increase of productive power. Inventions and discoveries have already brought us to the stage when we could quite easily produce all that we can reasonably want. Yet, it would be frankly absurd to say that there are not at the present day large numbers of people who draw nothing from the productive system beyond a meagre subsistence minimum. The problem of the machine age is not so much that of producing the goods men need, as that of enabling the persons who need goods to obtain them. The problem is, in short, a money problem . . . Money is simply a social mechanism designed to facilitate orderly production and distribution. The money system is to all intents and purposes merely a system of tickets entitling the holders to goods and services. Above all, money as such is not a commodity: it has no intrinsic value apart from the function it performs, and to regard money as a commodity is proof of a radical misunderstanding of that function."

Chambers of Commerce Waking Up

All of this is confirmed by the Southampton Chamber of Commerce, which has officially issued a statement containing the following: "On the one hand we have the vast army of persons capable of producing, but rendered impotent to do so, and existing in bitterly impoverished conditions through their inability to obtain employment. On the other hand, we have almost limitless resources for supplying the full wants of every human being in the civilised world made available by machinery. The position of an unemployed person is, indeed, strikingly paradoxical. Either he is without work because we are producing sufficient without his services being required, in which case he is poor because there is an abundance of services and goods available, or he is in want because the available wealth is not sufficient to provide for the satisfaction of his needs, in which case it is difficult to explain why his services are not being utilised to produce more. Thus, from whatever angle it is viewed, we have the situation of widespread industrial trade stagnation, with producers capable of production, and millions in want of the very things that can be produced in abundance. On the *prima facie* evidence, the fault in the economic system lies in the machinery responsible for the transfer of goods from productive industry to individuals of the community. This link between production and distribution is MONEY."

And the Court Knows, Too

These are facts; they are not matters of opinion. All except the blind can see that they are facts, and yet Chief Judge Dethridge actually helps to maintain the conditions of poverty in the midst of this plenty. He also knows that the harder we work and the more we produce, the further we go into DEBT to the debt merchants—the bankers. This is confirmed by reference to the judgment of his Court, which was delivered on January 22, 1931. That judgment contained the following:

"There was almost unanimity in the opinions of witnesses that in some form banking policy should be changed."

In view of this, combined with the experience of the workers at the hands of the Court since then, it is clear, as pointed out last week, that a frontal attack of Dethridge or "Dethridgeism" will get us nowhere. What we have to do is to awaken the people at large to the fact that the power to rectify these criminal conditions rests in their own hands, and that consequently they should immediately get in touch with and help any organisation established for the purpose of uniting the people to this end.

Yours faithfully,

BRUCE H. BROWN.

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MADNESS OF PARTY POLITICS Government Baiting as a

Profession

By SIDNEY R. CAMPION. Condensed from "Parade," London.

The recent decision to pay to the Leader of his Majesty's Opposition the salary of £2000 a year must seem fantastic to people living under dictatorships. But throughout British Parliamentary history there has always been some kind of Opposition. At one stage the King provided the necessary check, and at other stages the barons landowners and industrialists.

The Official Opposition in the House of Commons to-day is the Labor Party, with 160 representatives. The other two opposition units are the Liberal Party, with 20, and the small Independent Labor Party, with just four. The Government's own representation, however, numbers about 420, which means that the Government can always rely upon a majority from one to more than 200.

"Oppose Everything"

The Opposition's main function is to oppose everything brought forward by the Government of the day, and to work unceasingly to obtain power to direct the affairs of State. Two principal methods are open to help in achieving this purpose: (1) by campaigning in the country on its own behalf and attacking the Government; (2) by concentrated and sustained attack in the House of Commons.

A maximum of five years available to the Opposition in which to convert the nation to its point of view, and to render the Government unsafe and afraid of its own existence. The struggle comprises votes of censure and motions for the rejection of Bills, motions for the adjournment of the House and debates thereon, and questions and supplementaries.

The Whips

The Government can only counter Opposition tactics by eternal vigilance. Like the Opposition, it relies on its Whips to produce a full showing of Members whenever an Opposition motion looks dangerous. The Whips are the Party managers.

The Government Chief Whip (at present Captain David Margesson) is really the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury. On major questions affecting Parliamentary business he confers with the Opposition Chief Whip, and between them they come to an agreement concerning the amount of work to be done. Otherwise Parliament would be in an almost constant muddle.

The term Whip is borrowed from the hunting-field. During a debate in the House of Commons in 1769 the Government were in a certain amount of danger. To save their skins the Ministers tried to get as many of their supporters present as possible. Edmund Burke remarked that Ministers had their friends to the North of England and to Paris, *whipping* in the absent M.P.'s. The phrase has been in use ever since.

Planning Parliament

Practically the whole Parliament's life is planned by the Whips. Time-tables and schedules are fixed, lists of speakers arranged, adjournments for the holidays agreed upon, and every detail of the routine which makes it possible for the 800-year-old Parliamentary machine to run smoothly. On the Government side of the House the Whips are paid officials, with official titles. Chief Whip Margesson is a Secretary of the Treasury. Others are Junior Lords of the Treasury, and one of them often holds a post in the Royal Household. They have two sets of rooms—one in Downing Street, the other in the Palace of Westminster.

Opposition Whips are paid out of Party Funds.

"Catching the Speaker's Eye"

Before an Opposition Member can badger a Minister it is necessary for him to "catch the Speaker's eye." But the "Speaker's eye" is nowadays "caught" long before the debate has begun. When a full-dress, debate is being staged the Whips give the Speaker a list of M.P.'s who wish to make a contribution.

When a Member sits down after having made his speech a score of others usually jump up hoping to catch Mr. Speaker's eye. The Speaker then looks around the House, consults his list, and announces "Sir Edward Black." The others resume their seats and wait until "Sir Edward" has finished, after which they again give a semblance of truth to the fiction of "catching the Speaker's eye" by standing up again.

"Pairing"

A most important part of a Whip's duties is the maintenance of Party discipline, other-wise a government would be completely at the mercy of a well-trained Opposition, and would incur public opprobrium by a neglect of Parliamentary business. Hence, whenever an M.P. wants to leave the House, he can only go, as a rule, with the permission of the Whip, and by "pairing." Thus, a Government supporter, wishing to absent himself from a Division, arranges for an Opposition member to be away at the same time. By this system the relative strength of each side is maintained.

The Opposition frequently attempts to have a Vote of Censure passed on the Government. The Whips then send urgent messages to all their Members, underlined three times, to emphasise its importance, drawing the Member's attention to the debate, the probable time of the Division, and urging him to be in his place. A censure motion is effective in bringing a record attendance to Westminster. There is never the full 615 members present at one time. Some are abroad, some are ill, and some seats are vacant owing to death or retirement. But a gathering of more than 500 M.P.'s is sometimes seen.

Questions

Question time is one of the most important periods in the life of Parliament. It lasts for only one hour on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, but in those hours history is made much more rapidly and decisively than at any other time in the Parliamentary day. Members make the fullest use of question time. Labor's Colonel Harry Day asks the maximum of three every day of the year, and has broken all question records. Any member has a right to address a question to any Minister of the Crown about public affairs for which he is responsible, but notice of any question must, except in special cases, appear on the Order Paper of the House at least one day before the answer is to be given. This is to enable the Minister to prepare his reply.

Furthermore, all questions handed in to the Clerk at the Table have to pass a scrutiny test, and for various reasons questions can be refused, for instance, because they do not involve the Government, or because they might be offensive to a friendly Power.

Every question costs £2 to answer. Approximately 100 are answered daily, either verbally or in writing. A large body of men and women is kept busy throughout the year collecting material for question replies. Cablegrams to the farthestmost parts of the earth, and long-distance telephone calls are some of the aids to rapid and precise answers.

But when "supplementaries" are asked, and the Minister has no expert to consult, he must be extremely careful about what he says lest he commit the Government to something which they are not prepared to accept. Opposition M.P.'s use these to embarrass the Government.

"Superb Tactics"

It is generally agreed that the Conservative Opposition was much more effective than the present Labor Opposition. Perhaps this was because the former have more Parliamentary experience, but their tactics in harassing the Government were superb. Snap divisions were a favourite device, with large numbers of M.P.'s in hiding ready to rush into the Lobbies at the right moment.

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