

most credit-worthy industry in every country, a truth that it is convenient for a credit system that looks for immediate and mass-produced profits to ignore. Small landholdings, too, make for greater individual security. As Pius XI teaches, 'the agricultural classes . . . find in their occupation the means of obtaining honestly and justly what is needful for their maintenance' (*Quadragesimo Anno*). Leo XIII showed that if work-people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, 'the gulf between vast wealth and sheer poverty will be bridged over,' and there will also be a 'greater abundance of the fruits of the earth' (*Rerum Novarum*). The same encyclical teaches that the working-man should be enabled to invest savings in land and that his 'little estate thus purchased should be as completely at his full disposal as are the wages he receives for his labour.' It goes on to state that a man has a right to possess 'that portion of nature's field which he cultivates.' And the Pope asks: 'Is it just that the fruit of a man's own sweat and labour should be possessed and enjoyed by any one else?'

In order that the worker may acquire and enjoy property of his own there must be no banking monopoly that periodically deprives him of the means of earning; that deprives him of his savings when through unemployment he is forced to draw on them; and that can, if he has already acquired property, deprive him of it when he is unable to meet the repayments on his loan. The natural right of the workman to a fair wage must be Christianised. He has no guarantee of a living without credit reform; to which must be added the restoration of the small business and a return to the land.

C. J. WOOLLEN.

ECONOMICS AND REFORM

THE Brains Trust once set the following question: Would the nation be better governed by men of science and great thinkers rather than by professional politicians? The problem is of paramount importance in these days when civilisation, as we know it, totters on the brink of destruction and when thinking men of every party and creed are endeavouring to find a sure basis for post-war reconstruction. According to Professor C. E. M. Joad, the man of science is certainly not fitted to guide the destinies of his country. In his specialised capacity he is as methodical and as efficient as the worker bee, but out of his laboratory he appears as stupid as the insect

on the window pane. This view was severely criticised. Surely, it was said, the training of the man of science, his careful weighing of facts, his patient analysing, his impartiality, should fit him more nearly to approach the ideal legislator than his unscientific fellows. Are not the scientists the 'disinterested men' of J. B. Priestley—men dealing in hard facts without prejudice? Professor Joad's reply pointed to the heart of the problem. He showed that the politician, too, was dealing in hard facts—the facts of human welfare—but, whereas the scientist was faced with the problem of yes or no, the politician's job was a question of right or wrong. In other words, moral value was the primary consideration of the politician and morality was beyond the field of science. It is true, of course, that the scientists have contributed greatly to the potential welfare of man as they have also (for example by the invention of the internal combustion engine) contributed to his doom. They have enabled man to achieve material wealth, but they have not shown him how it should be distributed or used. Every politician should be something of a great thinker. He should combine ethical philosophy with political economy, for, to attain good government, the two are inseparable. Too long have the economists contented themselves with puristic research, with the over-elaboration of intricate side-issues, with the terminology of their training. They have solved problems of their own making, problems set in intentionally unreal conditions and hedged about with that apologist phrase 'other things being equal.' Economics must again become Political Economy—it must base its tenets of material efficiency on the ethical philosophy of the politician. It will then play an important role in the post-war planning of Britain.

Mr. Geoffrey Crowther, the editor of *The Economist*, has defined the imperfections of our economic system as 'the evil trinity—poverty, inequality and irregularity.' In other words, our system does not produce enough; it distributes what is produced unjustly and inefficiently, and it is unstable in time—the feverish activity of the boom alternating with the degenerate idleness of the depression. The apathy of the orthodox economists, faced by this triple problem, has induced men of renown in other studies to attempt a solution. The works of Major Douglas, Sylvio Gesell, Irving Fisher and Frederick Soddy have had considerable influence on modern thought. Without exception their solutions lie in the reform of the monetary system. Obsessed by such news items as the burning of Brazilian coffee and the releasing of caught fish, they have coined the phrase 'Poverty in Plenty' and pinned their theories to it. Apart from the manifest imperfections of their economic analysis, their fundamental

premise is unsound. Poverty in Britain is due to general insufficiency due to misdirected efforts. Our resources are limited. If we consume a large part of them in the production of wasteful luxuries for a fraction of our people, we deny ourselves the plenty which science has made possible. If we choose extravagant and wildly competitive variety rather than standardised abundance, we must expect twenty millions of our people to suffer from malnutrition. Our first problem, then, is to produce the right goods in the right quantities. The scientist and the economist can tell us how—but the definition of 'right' must come from the heart in accordance with Christian principles.

The second problem is one of distribution. Gross inequalities in material wealth are not compatible with the theory of the greatest good for the greatest number. After maximising production we must maximise the satisfaction it can afford by equitable distribution. This principle is tacitly recognised in our existing system of taxation, but progress towards the desired end is disappointingly slow. It is still much too easy to obtain an inordinate share of the common fund and to enjoy, parasitically, the fruits of the labour of others.

The third problem concerns that disastrous phenomenon known as the trade cycle. Its origin has been variously attributed to sun-spots, the bank-rate, crowd psychology, increased spending, increased saving and the profit instinct. Whatever its true cause, it is inevitably associated with those other evils, poverty and inequality. If the members of a state could enjoy material security in comparative equality there would be no reason in speculation, hoarding, usury and wasteful spasmodic effort, and it is these tendencies assisted by monetary manipulation that induce the ebbing and flowing of trade prosperity.

Post-war planning and control must be a joint effort. Our scientists alone cannot do more than provide the physical basis of prosperity. Our economists cannot do more than to harness and organise this physical power. A third category of workers is required to direct the efforts of scientists and economists. In a democracy this power must ultimately reside in the people. If we are to make ethical philosophers of our people the time is ripe for a spiritual revival.

A. BERNARD HOLLOWOOD, M.Sc.