

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1918.

PRINCIPLES OF RECONSTRUCTION.

NOW that the armistice has been signed and the prospect of peace in the near future is happily assured, it is inevitable that the whole nation should be impatient to get back to its normal activities. Four years of interruption in the ordinary life of a community is a serious break in the regular and ordered continuity of its existence, but whether it is an unmixed evil will depend upon the lessons and experiences to which it has given rise, and upon the extent to which those lessons and experiences are heeded. There has necessarily been a great dislocation of industry, and the forces of production have to a very large extent been made subservient to the demands of war. The immediate problem before us now is how to divert, with the least amount of friction and in the shortest possible time, the enormous amount of energy which has been devoted to the prosecution of war into the manifold channels of civil life and peaceful occupation.

"Business as usual" was a silly and futile cry at the beginning of the war, uttered by thoughtless people with no conception of the grim reality of the struggle into which we had been forced. In a certain sense the cry would be scarcely less futile now, since it is absolutely certain that business in the future will be very different, in many respects, from what it has been in the past. The centre of gravity of the whole system of international trade has been changed. Many years must elapse before the nations of Central Europe will be able to exercise any very great influence upon the world's commerce, and the present chaotic condition of Russia affords no hope that she can resume her pre-war position as a trading nation for some time to come.

The prestige and commercial credit of the larger part of Europe have, in fact, been so profoundly shaken that it is well-nigh impossible to forecast the trend of the world's trade in the immediate future. The plight of Germany and Austria is, of course, further aggravated by the political upheaval which has followed hard upon their military collapse. In such times of social and political stress it is not to be expected that their workers will settle down to the peaceful pursuits of production. The relations of capital and labour, already strained before the war, under the democratic rule which is now supreme in the shattered Empires will probably end in open rupture. The victorious nations, on the other hand, have an opportunity which, if they are wise, they will not be slow to seize. We did not desire this war, and

we certainly did not enter upon it with any idea of commercial supremacy, but it would be the veriest folly not to attempt to realise the advantages of the good fortune which our triumph has placed within our reach. Prudence, indeed, should compel us to take occasion by the hand, and grasp the skirts of happy chance. We have spent our treasure without stint in the effort to crush one of the greatest conspiracies against humanity of which history has any record. We have saddled ourselves with a stupendous debt as a consequence, which no indemnity that we are likely to get or any increase of Colonial territory that may fall to our share as an Empire will adequately liquidate. Our only method of meeting the pecuniary obligation we have incurred is by augmenting our wealth by means of trade and commerce, and this can best be done by increasing our production, both in variety and amount.

The future, in fact, rests with labour, and it is upon the sanity and prudence of the workers and their employers that everything depends. The war has been attended with much social unrest, even in those nations which have come out victorious. The workers everywhere demand better conditions of life, a wider intellectual outlook, and a higher standard of comfort, and the nations which have fought the great fight in the interests of humanity sympathise with them in their demands. But as the world is constituted these can be secured only by a better organisation of our economic forces, by increased efficiency in management, greater skill, knowledge, industry, and marketing ability—matters in which the employers are concerned no less than the workers. It will be unspeakably sad if the nation should now throw away its golden opportunity in an internecine strife between capital and labour.

There are anarchical forces at work among us which are bent upon provoking this conflict, and it will require no little ability and courage on the part of labour leaders to counteract the mischievous efforts of those who would take a demoniacal delight in wrecking the industrial welfare of this nation. We believe the great mass of the workers in this country have too much sense to let themselves be infected by the spirit of Bolshevism, which leads to nothing but social chaos. But just as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, that pernicious spirit may be very troublesome before it is finally exorcised. What, therefore, is wanted is a reasonable spirit of conciliation on the part of employers and employed, and a determination, honest and sincere, on both sides to find an equitable solution. The spirit should be that of the King's message to his people, delivered on Tuesday in reply to addresses from both Houses of

Parliament. "We have," the King said, "to create a better Britain, to bestow more care on the health and well-being of the people, and to ameliorate further the conditions of labour. May not the losses of war be repaired by a better organisation of industry and by avoiding the waste which industrial disputes involve? Cannot a spirit of reciprocal trust and co-ordination of effort be diffused among all classes? May we not, by raising the standard of education, turn to fuller account the natural aptitudes of our people and open wider the sources of intellectual enjoyment?"

The labour aspect of the matter was touched upon by the Minister of Reconstruction in the peroration of the statesmanlike pronouncement in which he explained to the House of Commons and the country the plans of the Government for the demobilisation of the Army, the re-settlement of officers and men in civil life, and the re-establishment of industry on a normal basis. Lengthy as the statement was, Dr. Addison could only deal with broad general principles, leaving the details to be worked out by the various administrative bodies which are charged with the duty of demobilisation and re-settlement. Considering the suddenness of the chief enemy's collapse, the Minister is to be congratulated on the comprehensiveness of his survey, and on the thoroughness with which the main features of the problem have been thought out in the comparatively short time that his department has been in existence. It says much for our business ability as a people, and for our powers of organisation in a national crisis, that a scheme so elaborate and so far-reaching should have been launched so promptly when the need for it had arrived.

We are, however, only on the very fringe of this great problem. There is still much to do before it is finally solved. However expeditiously the work of demobilisation and re-settlement may be done, the business will necessarily occupy considerable time. It will doubtless tax the energies and the patience of all concerned, and we must be prepared for the "grousing" which is a national characteristic, and not infrequently at times when there is really the least occasion for it. It may be pardoned, however, as one sign of reaction from the intense strain which the nation has suffered during the long and weary years which are past. When a patient begins to grumble, the tactful nurse is assured that the crisis is well past, and that renewed vigour has set in. And this observation reminds us that in the scheme of re-settlement Dr. Addison made no reference to the special case of the medical men. During the four years of war the country has suffered no small amount of inconvenience owing

to the calling up of large numbers of medical practitioners for service in the Army. This was inevitable, and as it was necessary the deprivation was borne with patience and resignation. To what extent the national health has suffered it is impossible to say, but there is good reason to believe that the great mortality from the recent epidemic of "influenza" might have been largely obviated had medical advice and skill been more readily available. It is notorious that in some districts medical men were utterly unable to cope with the outbreak, owing to the fewness of their numbers. Its virulence would appear to be declining, but it is only scotched, not killed, and with much of the winter still before us, with food and fuel still short, and with the consequent lowering of the general vitality, it is a paramount necessity that the medical men should be released and re-settled as promptly as possible.

AN AMERICAN CHEMICAL DIRECTORY.

Annual Chemical Directory of the United States. Second edition, 1918. Pp. 534. (Baltimore, Md.: Williams and Wilkins Co., 1918.)

THE present issue of this work, of which the first edition appeared in 1917, differs only in certain minor details from the plan and arrangement of its predecessor. Its contents are grouped under nine main divisions or chapters. Chap. i. contains a list, in alphabetical order, of all chemical substances, made or imported, necessary for laboratory, technical, and industrial purposes, with the names of manufacturers and dealers placed geographically, first by States, and then by cities, and grouped alphabetically. The retailers, dealers, and agents are distinguished, so far as possible, from the manufacturers by an asterisk.

Chap. ii. consists of an alphabetical arrangement of the names of manufacturers and dealers under the alphabetical order of the States and their cities. Chap. iii. gives a list of chemical and chemical engineering apparatus, mechanical equipment, and machinery used in chemical works, arranged alphabetically and in general accordance with the method adopted in chap. i. as regards chemical products.

Chap. iv. consists of an alphabetical list of manufacturers and dealers in such apparatus and machinery, arranged on lines similar to those of chap. ii. Chap. v. gives the names (1) of American analytical and consulting chemists, and (2) of chemical engineers, listed geographically and grouped alphabetically as in the preceding chapters. Chap. vi. is a list of (1) industrial laboratories, (2) institutional laboratories, (3) Federal and State laboratories, (4) municipal laboratories, and (5) commercial laboratories. Chap. vii. gives the official names, arranged alphabetically, of technical and scientific societies concerned with the study of pure and applied chemistry, both in the United States and abroad. Chap. viii. deals with publications relating to