

News and Views

Planning in Industry

PLANNING in industry was debated in the House of Commons on April 3, following a motion by Mr. A. H. E. Molson calling for the establishment of a Departmental Committee to consider the measures of industrial reorganisation necessary for the fullest use of modern methods of production and distribution in Great Britain. Mr. Molson urged the necessity for dealing with the industrial position of the country as a whole and not by Departments of State or the like singly, and referred particularly to the reduction of costs of production and the question of cheap distribution. Organisation of industry on a national basis was regarded by Mr. C. U. Peat as essential, both for the older and the newer industries; thus organised self-government would have avoided the present desperate redundancy problem in the canning industry. The essence of the proposal was that the majority of an industry should have the opportunity of putting their case before an independent tribunal, and on satisfying the tribunal that re-organisation was in the interests of producers, consumers, wage-earners and other allied industries, statutory authority should be given to the reorganisation scheme without delay, so that the industry should be organised on the most efficient basis it could suggest. Mr. H. Macmillan said further that the question was not one of Government interference with industry but the giving by Government of certain rights to industry by permissive legislation to undertake its own reorganisation. Under certain safeguards, majorities should have the right to govern.

DURING the debate, Mr. G. Le M. Mander advocated the establishment of a committee of national development to formulate a consistent and comprehensive policy for the development of our national resources and to co-ordinate the work of different Departments of State. Sir Herbert Samuel, referring to the dangers of bureaucracy, emphasised the importance of management. The ablest leaders of industry, he said, are themselves in favour of larger measures of reorganisation for the industries in which they are engaged. The opposite point of view was voiced by Mr. R. Assheton in a brilliant plea for independence and the adventurous spirit in industry on which progress primarily depends, and which is liable to be stifled by rigid organisation. The dangers of eliminating small enterprises were real and Mr. Assheton feared the effect of planning on business confidence. Mr. W. Runciman, for the Government, emphasised the success of voluntary schemes of industrial reorganisation and referred to some of the failures in rationalisation. He expressed the opinion that the reorganisation of all the great industries of Great Britain cannot be achieved by one and the same effort. The motion was by leave withdrawn.

Development of Colonial Forest Resources

THE Secretary of State for the Colonies has set up an organisation under the Colonial Office for the

development of colonial forest resources. By consent of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, two of its technical officers have been transferred to the new organisation, namely, Major F. M. Oliphant, lately assistant director of the Forest Products Research Laboratory, Princes Risborough, and Major J. R. Cosgrove, lately in charge of the Section of Utilisation at the Laboratory. Major Oliphant, as forest economist, will deal mainly with the organisation of production, and will spend much of his time in the Dependencies concerned, while Major Cosgrove, as market development officer, will be engaged in market promotion work, with reference to the United Kingdom market and other markets, both British and foreign. The organisation will be chiefly concerned with timber development, but will also interest itself in other forest products, such as wood pulp, fibres, gums and resins and the like. In both directions it will co-operate with the Imperial Institute. It will also work, of course, in close co-operation with the Forest Products Research Laboratory. The Laboratory, as a research institution, will henceforward confine itself to questions involving scientific investigation and tests, while the new organisation will take over the market promotion work, including commercial service trials, which the Laboratory formerly carried out under temporary arrangements on behalf of the Empire Marketing Board. The organisation will for the present be quartered at the Imperial Institute. Inquiries should be addressed to the Colonial Forest Resources Development Department, Imperial Institute, London, S.W.7.

Statistics of Industry in England and Wales

STATISTICS of industry derived from the 1931 census of England and Wales have recently been published (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 32s. 6d.), and as the analysis is on a more comprehensive scale than any hitherto published, the volume is of exceptional interest. A valuable feature is the rough comparison with previous censuses, examples of which are given in the following table:

Industry	1911	1921	1931
	Persons (in thousands)		
Coal Mining	971	1,133	1,030
Iron and Steel	166	239	198
Building, Decorating	861	758	1,048
Agriculture	1,230	1,124	1,018
Cotton	628	596	571
Electrical Apparatus, etc.	80	166	268
Chemicals, Paints, Oils	133	198	211
Hosiery	59	80	110

In certain industries, for example, coal mining, iron and steel, engineering and shipbuilding, exceptional expansion took place during the War, but this was followed by a considerable readjustment during the last decennium. In others, for example, building, personal service, boots and shoes, there was a marked decline, but recovery followed after the War. The numbers engaged in agriculture, cotton and lace have declined in each census since 1911, though in poultry