

FUNCTION OF THE ELECTRICAL SUPPLY ENGINEER IN WARTIME

IN the War of 1914-18 the supply engineer put to the service of the State his knowledge of the habits and business of those who lived and worked within his area of supply, not only as an individual but also backed by all the resources of his undertaking. Faced to-day with a similar crisis, Mr. J. W. Beauchamp, of the Central Electricity Board, recalls in an article published in *Electrical Industries* of November, what the supply engineer did during 1914-18. His main object was to assist the Ministry of Munitions and the Coal Control by pooling stocks, giving help in repairing damage or speeding up power supplies and dealing with the more difficult problem at that time of retaining skilled staff. All these were the subject of collective action.

The work was done with few formal meetings, but a large amount of personal effort and attention was given on the part of the staff. To-day the maintenance of supply and safety of the staff offers a much greater preoccupation. There is little time for discussion or inclination to go far from one's base, but the industry possesses a central development organization uniting all together, and able to pool ideas and unify action. The Commissioners and the Central Board in their respective spheres have formed a bond between the undertakings, and the Ministry of Supply itself includes the first chairman of the Central Electricity Board, a man whose work has left a great mark on the electrical industry of Great Britain.

Although reticence has become a virtue, few can fail to realize the great difference now governing the supply of lighting material and those which had to be met and remedied in the early years of the last war. Great factories created solely for defence can be supplemented by many but little smaller, which can be quickly turned from their peace-time activity to the production of the commodities required to keep a fighting force in action and make up its wastage.

Much of the remarkable improvisation of 1914-18 can be avoided, but if and when it becomes desirable to enlist still more and perhaps smaller industrialists, it should be easy for authority again to utilize the local knowledge of the supply engineers and their staffs. In most cases they have the entrée to works of every kind in their areas and the confidence of the owners, and can often without delay suggest sources of supply and existing plant and labour easy to adapt to the mass production of simple items or components for use by more specialized manufacturers. The parcelling out of such work is not without benefit as it stimulates local interest, holds together business valuable in peace-time, reduces dislocation of local labour and trade, bringing with it opportunities of training unskilled persons, and as has often happened in the past, introduces into local works methods of production and degrees of accuracy which prove of value when normal labour is resumed.

In 1914 we had no experience of a contest between highly mechanized States. A thousand devices of attack and defence had been as yet unborn. Above all, there is the air menace which makes frontiers a plane rather than a line. In the electrical industry, the interval covers many changes, notably great collective control, administration by the Commissioners, operation by the Board, development and research by associations, and a close co-operation amongst those who produce and instal electrical appliances.

The outlook of the public towards electricity is now quite different. To-day all branches of the industry in combination provide the greatest public utility in the modern State, and the one in which the operators and their staffs have the most direct and frequent contact with the millions who use electricity for personal service or as a component in their trade or industry.

TRIBAL ORIGINS AND CULTURE AMONG THE FOX INDIANS

AN ethnographical account of the Fox Indians has recently been issued by the Smithsonian Institution. It has been edited by Margaret Wepley Fisher, and is based upon material which has an exceptional claim to authority. The author, William Jones, was born on the Sauk and Fox Reservation in Oklahoma in 1871. His mother was English, but his father was the son of a white man and an Indian mother. Up to the age of nine years, Jones was reared by his Indian grandmother, living the life of an Indian boy. On her death and after a period as a cowboy, he entered the Hampton Institute, passed to Andover and Harvard, taking the degree of M.A. at the latter in 1900 and Ph.D. in 1904. His intention

had been to study medicine; but under the influence of the late Prof. Putnam he turned to anthropology, spending his vacations in field work among Algonquian tribes and making a comparative study of Algonquian religions. This field, however, afforded little hope of a career in research; and in 1906 the Field Museum offered him the choice of three expeditions, of which he elected for an expedition to the Philippine Islands. In the spring of 1909 he was murdered by the Ilongots.

Before his departure for the Philippines, Jones had already published some of the material he had collected in the field, while other studies were issued posthumously. The greater part of his papers, however, and that containing what now appears to have been the more valuable results of his inquiries, was missing. Its whereabouts was unknown until, on the

* Ethnography of the Fox Indians. By William Jones, edited by Margaret Wepley Fisher. (Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. 125.) Pp. iv+156. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1939.)