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A CHANCE FOR EVERYBODY

A CHANCE FOR EVERYBODY

A Liberal Basis for the Organization of Work

by

Hyacinthe Dubreuil

With a Foreword by

Aldous Huxley

1939

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All that is founded on force is fragile and denotes poverty of genius.

CHARLES FOURIER

Contents

FOREWORD BY ALDOUS HUXLEY		*Page* ix
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE		xiii
INTRODUCTION		1
CHAPTER I	The Workers' True Road to Freedom	11
CHAPTER II	The Problem of Remuneration—Its Close Connection with the Problem of Freedom of Labour	32
CHAPTER III	A Pioneer's Experiments	65
CHAPTER IV	Subdivision of a Business into Autonomous Groups	76
CHAPTER V	Some Applications of the Idea of Subdivision and Autonomy	112
CHAPTER VI	A Living Experiment	145
CHAPTER VII	General Consequences of Group Work	
Part 1	Work and Intellectual Development	159
Part 2	Equality, Selection and Promotion by the Group	177
Part 3	The Workshop of Tomorrow—A School of Life	197
APPENDIX A	*The Bakers of the Co-operative Society of Caudry* (*Nord*)	217

		Page
APPENDIX B	*Example of Apportionment of the "Mixed or Quoted Commandite" (Commandite cotée)*	224
APPENDIX C	*Workers' Documents—Report of the Eight Hours' Committee to the Congress of the Metallurgical Workers' Federation*, 1905	226
APPENDIX D	*Co-operative Contract Work in New Zealand*	242
APPENDIX E	*Co-operation in the Non-subdivisible Business*	247
SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY		266
INDEX OF NAMES		269

Foreword

THE history of political reform has been a history, among other things, of successive disillusions. "Joy was it in that dawn to be alive." The words were written of the French Revolution, but are equally applicable to all periods of intellectual and political change. Old people prefer the familiar night of custom; but to the young in spirit every dawn seems intoxicating simply because it is a dawn. The sunrise excites them; and they proceed to rationalize and justify their excitement in terms of Utopian prophecies. The particular dawn in which they happen to find themselves is the beginning of a radically new day—a day of justice, happiness, liberty and peace. Time passes; the dawn ceases to be a dawn; the young in spirit grow old; and the day, as it advances, turns out to be new all right, but not new in the way foreseen at sunrise. It is now that disillusion sets in. We have the spectacle of the revolutionary of the Romantic Revival living through the hideous morning-after, which succeeded the Terror, and being driven by the contemplation of war, imperialism and impoverishment into despair or reaction. We see the hopeful Radical, the cocksure young Utilitarian surviving Reform Bill after Reform Bill and coming mournfully to the conclusion, as John Stuart Mill records in his Autobiography, that the prophesyings of the Benthamite dawn were false. Then there was a joyous dawn of Popular Education—a brilliantly hopeful dawn, succeeded by a new day of Hearsts and Northcliffes and, more recently, Goebbelses, a day of the mass

production of commercial and political lying, a day of the indefinite multiplication of the worst that has been thought and said. Since the dawn of Popular Education, there have been several technocratic dawns, in the course of which enthusiasts have prophesied that the millennium would be ushered in by bigger and better machinery, more intensive centralization and a more minute division of labour. Unfortunately, the new day in which we now happen to be living is a day of armament races, unemployment and the progressive collapse of agriculture as a way of life. The passion for dawns is so strong in the human mind that even the World War was made an excuse for exultant anticipations of a happier day. Those war-time prophets would have done well to remember that "red in the morning is the shepherd's warning".

Joyous dawns and hideously disappointing days, illusions and disillusions—are we for ever doomed to oscillate between these alternatives in a condition of collective manicdepressive insanity? The answer to this question is conditional. If we choose to pursue our ideal ends without troubling to discover appropriate means for realizing them, then we shall without any doubt continue in our present course. If, on the other hand, we choose to think carefully about the best ways of relating means to ends, then it may not be necessary for us to go on being alternately elated and disappointed. A further condition of escape from our present predicament relates to the ends themselves. The highest ideal is that of enlightenment, or liberation from personality. All ideals falling short of the highest are valuable only insofar as they are instrumental to it. If they are pursued as ends in themselves, the result, in the long run, is disaster. The ideals of pure humanism pursued for their own sake, as ultimate goods, are self-stultifying. It is impossible in a brief foreword like the present to

develop this point. Let it suffice to say that dismal days will succeed joyous dawns for just so long as we choose to pursue other ends than that of enlightenment and to use means which are incompatible with the realization of that end or of the subsidiary ideals instrumental to it.

M. Dubreuil's book deals with a very important problem in the field of means. By what means shall we implement the ideals of democracy and personal liberty? (We may remark incidentally that these ideals are valuable only insofar as they make the pursuit of enlightenment easier than it is where the individual is enslaved and forced to worship the state as though it were God.) This is the question at issue. Let us see how it has been answered in the past. Radicals and Utilitarians imagined that the franchise would provide the means for realizing democratic control and personal liberty. Their disappointment began with their first victory—the passage of the Reform Bill of 1832. The early socialists, co-operators and communists were not slow in pointing out the reason for this disappointment. Political liberty is not the same as economic liberty, and in an industrial society the average individual spends more time in the guise of an economic man than in that of a political man. Therefore, they argued, you must produce co-operatively; or alternatively, you must deprive the capitalist exploiters of their ownership of the means of production and hand it over to the State. Time has shown that the first solution is not entirely satisfactory and that the second is entirely unsatisfactory. In capitalist countries the men and women who work for co-operative societies are not conspicuously freer or more self-governing than those who work under a good private employer. Now consider what happens in the countries where the means of production are either wholly, as in Russia, or partly, as in Germany and

Italy, the property of the State. In these countries the workers are conspicuously less free than the workers in liberal-capitalistic countries. They are less free, because their employer is so much more powerful than any mere capitalist. Ford cannot shoot a troublesome employee, or reduce him to slavery, or dismiss him and make it impossible for him to get relief or another job. Stalin, on the contrary, can and does. So can and do Hitler and Mussolini. All of which shows that the public ownership of the means of production is no guarantee of liberty or self-government for individual producers. Individual producers will not have freedom and self-government until and unless there is devised a form of organization expressly calculated to give them freedom and self-government. In other words, the ideals of democracy and personal liberty cannot be realized except by the appropriate means. What are the appropriate means? This is the question which, in the following pages (as well as in his still untranslated books, *L'Exemple de Bat'a* and *La Fin des Monstres*) M. Dubreuil undertakes to answer. The answer he gives is thoroughly practical and is illustrated by concrete examples drawn from history and his own experience as an industrial worker in France and America. To this concreteness and practicality the work owes its special value. It is one of the books that will have to be read and digested by any reformer for whom the long prosaic day is more important than the romantic dawn, solid well-being in the future more desirable than the pleasures of a passing intellectual intoxication.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Translator's Note

In his *Ends and Means* [1] Mr. Aldous Huxley rightly remarks that

> "Among the writers on industrial organization Dubreuil occupies a place apart; for he is almost the only one of them who has himself had experience of factory conditions as a workman. Accordingly, what he writes on the subject of industrial organization carries an authority denied to the utterances of those who rely on second-hand information as a basis for their theories."

Nor is this Norman die-maker's experience of the workshop confined to his own country. In order to get first-hand knowledge of the true significance of the industrial changes inspired by the work of the late F. W. Taylor, the "Father of Scientific Management", Dubreuil, having grounded himself in the English language by the reading of children's books, made a lengthy excursion into American industry, not as a conducted tourist, but by securing spells of employment as a skilled mechanic in a variety of famous plants, including those of Dennison, Ford, White and General Motors. Returning to France, he set down his experiences in his now famous *Standards*,[2] which has since been translated into seven other languages and has run through some fifty editions in the original tongue. The English version, done at the request of the Taylor Society by Frances and Mason Merrill, was published in New York

[1] Chatto & Windus, London, 1937.
[2] Grasset, Paris; Harper, New York.

under the title *Robots or Men?*: although widely read in the United States, its important message for Europeans seems to have been but little noticed in Britain.

In the hope of arousing the interest of a few responsible industrial managers in this country, the writer persuaded Dubreuil in 1930 to meet and address the then Labour Section of the first British *Management Research Group*.[1] In the following year Dubreuil delivered a paper "Concerning the best means of obtaining the unreserved collaboration of workpeople in production"[2] to the Department of Industrial Co-operation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at its London Centenary Meeting. A second paper on "The use of the experimental method in the field of 'Industrial Relations'"[3] was read to the same body at Aberdeen in 1934. The present book may be regarded as an expansion and development of these two papers. He was a guest of honour of the Anglo-French Luncheon Club (in 1935), with Sir Walter Citrine as his Chairman.

Dubreuil's advocacy of co-operative contract work by autonomous workmen's teams has been the subject of considerable discussion at the two most recent Oxford Management Conferences. At a session on *The Function of Democratic Leadership in Industry* the Chairman, Dr. G. E. France, a Halifax industrialist, paid a striking tribute to this method of organization, which has grown up spontaneously on his own premises in connection

[1] A private association of large-scale manufacturers in different trades for comparative study of methods of organization and management, founded by Mr. B. S. Rowntree, C.H., in 1927 and first organized by Mr. L. Urwick. The prototype was the Manufacturers' Research Association formed by Mr. H. S. Dennison at Framingham, Massachusetts.

[2] Published in *Business and Science*, Edited by R. J. Mackay, The Sylvan Press, London, 1932.

[3] See *Labour Management* for November, 1934.

with large-scale engineering erection.[1] The method has also been found of very great value by Mr. Peter Scott and his colleague, Mr. W. H. Butler, in their organization, for the Society of Friends, of "Subsistence Production" among groups of unemployed. Such examples as these are, perhaps, isolated precursors of a new phase in British industrial relations.

It may be a happy accident that the rather long-delayed appearance of an English version of *A Chacun sa Chance* should synchronize with a period of noticeable growth, particularly in Technical Institutions, of the study and teaching of the principles of organization, administration and management, and with a welcome increase in the actual and impending facilities for research in the Social Sciences in some British Universities, including even the older ones. Moreover, recent investigations of a genuinely scientific character in industry itself, both in the United States [2] and in England [3] have tended to focus attention upon the importance of the small group as a working unit. With the Hawthorne and York experiments, which related to groups of female wage-earners, it is interesting to juxtapose and compare Dubreuil's observations on his relatively "liberated" groups of men-folk. Experimental psychologists, too, who are concerned for the future of vocational selection and guidance, may perhaps be stimulated into action in answer to the implied challenge to their methods on page 180.

Apart from its probable influence upon long-term trends in the re-moulding of industrial relations, the

[1] See the *British Management Review*, Vol. IV, No. I, for January–March, 1939, pp. 97–9.

[2] See Elton Mayo: *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization*, Macmillan, New York and London, and T. N. Whitehead: *The Industrial Worker*, Oxford University Press, 1938.

[3] See Patricia Hall and H. W. Locke: *Incentives and Contentment*, Pitman, London, 1938.

book contains valuable pointers capable of immediate application to certain burning questions of the present critical years. Those concerned, for example, with the problem of so-called " dilution " of skilled labour may be referred especially to pages 112–13, and 187–8. Another pressing problem relates to large-scale administration, not only in " big business ", but also in State Departments. If once " free " Britons are to be saved from the status of official-ridden " robots ", not only must the growth of State Bureaucracy be curbed, but the minimum necessary organizations must be rendered swift-moving and efficient. A review of symptoms and an indication of the cure are to be found on pages 21–4.

Acknowledgments are due to Miss Mary B. M. Sands, who collaborated with the present writer in previous English translations of this and another work of the same author [1]; these versions were lost in the course of their search for American publishers. Although unable to take part in the preparation of the present version, Miss Sands is kindly assisting with its passage through the press.

R. J. MACKAY

[1] *Les Codes de Roosevelt*, Grasset, Paris.

Introduction

If questions relating to organization of work do not come exactly first among the great changes which are now being rough-hewn across the face of the world, that they hold an important place amongst them is nevertheless a certainty.

Such is my reason for reverting here, with fresh arguments and more recent evidence, to a proposition that I put forward ten years ago in my *République Industrielle*, the application of which has never ceased to appear to me as not only possible but even necessary.

Whatever may be the future in store for this proposition, and however slow its realization, I am more than ever convinced that no radical change in the relations which must necessarily be established between men upon their working occasions can ever be brought about without the fundamental notion which will be developed in the course of this book.

It is the very nature of these relations that will have to be changed, and it is a striking fact that all the experiments that are being tried here and there in connection with organization of work are being directed more and more towards forms of collaboration in gradual replacement of the old orders of subordination.

I tried in 1929 to draw the attention of Albert Thomas, first Director of the International Labour Office, to this aspect of labour problems, and he was good enough to take a personal interest in my ideas. To a letter in which I told him of my preoccupations he replied

with some reflections the general bearing of which will be understood from the following lines:

> ". . . I am no less interested in those ideas you have expressed to me. I believe that at the present time they are, if I may say so, central ideas. Upon them depend such forms of social progress as can be accomplished in the near future. Upon them depends the renewal of the confidence of the workers, of the enthusiasm that questions of wages or of material conditions of work pure and simple will never contrive to quicken. Since the war it is those problems of industrial relations, in whatever form they may appear, from the American Committees, the Whitley Councils, the Works Councils of Central Europe, to the demand for participation in management or the idea of workers' control, which give the necessary stimulus to a new effort. We are entirely in agreement on this point."

This extract, if short, is none the less interesting, and when Albert Thomas declares that the ideas around which are grouped the various attempts made at organizing relations of a new character between workers and business firms are *central* ideas, he shows how well he had understood the importance of these problems. His remark that " questions of wages or of material conditions of work pure and simple " are not enough to quicken the enthusiasm of the workers, also shows to what extent the burning idealism that he had maintained must have suffered from that kind of indifference with which the masses seem nowadays to be benumbed. He saw that we must discover new motives and restore the bases of a confidence which the war and its sequels seem to have dissolved.

This task is obviously a difficult one, and it will be so much the more so if we remain under the influence of the wrong ideas created and spread by a certain class of literature on the subject of mechanization, which is accused of brutalizing the workers.

Great progress has been realized in the technical organization of industry, which has now taken on such an aspect that we now speak of " scientific " organization of work.

Now the mistake made by those who propagate those wrong ideas just mentioned is to believe that the present organization of work, even if it be " scientific ", offers the last word of a completed evolution. Very much to the contrary, I think that organization of work has only reached a sort of Middle Ages. There has been no real progress realized save in a kind of mechanical functioning of human activity : it has still great steps to make from the point of view of the individual man or, in current parlance, of the " human factor ".

I would also lay down in principle that scientific organization of work will only have completed its evolution when it has succeeded in bringing into play not only the worker's physical capacities, but also the totality of the intellectual and moral forces that a man can develop when he works in a state of perfect freedom. Incidentally it is encouraging to record that evolution of such a character as I have shown to be necessary is already in progress, although very timorously, towards such a liberation.

It is always worth while to look back into one's own past so as to judge in what way one's experience might have modified its orientation and outlook. When ten years ago I wrote *La République Industrielle* I was under

the influence of a recent reading of Ruskin, who might indeed be taken as a model by those who preach the horrors of modern technology. Thus I have not neglected the arguments of the authors who voice the fears I have referred to on the subject of a possible degradation of the working-class intelligence.

But I may add that even today it is among considerations of this order that I take my starting-point, in order to examine how we can meet the apparent dangers of mechanization. Thus my ideas have not changed since the time when I read Ruskin. I can recapture the same pleasure in listening to his merciless railleries against the economists who imagine that some day they will be able to make the world go round with their calculations, and especially when they believe it possible to use such calculations as a basis for determining the output of labour.

> ". . . It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism, gravitation, or any other agent of considerable force. But he being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist's equations, without his knowledge, and falsifies every one of their results. The largest quantity of work will not be done by this curious engine for pay, or under pressure, or by help of any kind of fuel which may be supplied by the chaldron. It will be done only when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel; namely, by the affections. . . ." [1]

[1] *Unto This Last.*

May I say that I remain entirely faithful to these ideas and that I keep them as my programme?

But, and it is here that I part company with Ruskin and those who nowadays attack mechanization from a superficial standpoint, I do not consider that it is possible to realize this programme apart from practices and processes created by the experience of work. I repeat, and will go on repeating, that it is neither processes nor machines that we must attack in order to transform the working régime.

The real problem that we have to tackle is the transformation of the relations that men maintain among themselves, and not the relations between a man and his tools.[1]

These relations which nowadays, for most of the time, have only a mechanical appearance, must evolve along organic lines.

Finally, beyond this objective, there is no reason why we should not dream of that "poetic idealization of industry" of which Carlyle said that we should never despair.[2]

[1] We know that this problem of relations is the subject of careful and methodical research in the United States, and that it is specially treated there under cover of the expression *industrial relations*, of which the translation *relations industrielles* is far from satisfactory. It is curious to recall, however, that this expression was used word for word, probably for the first time, by Auguste Comte in the 57th lesson of his *Philosophie Positive*. Here is a fragment of the text in which it is found:

"In a word, this philosophy will enable us to understand that *industrial relations*, instead of remaining at the mercy of a dangerous empiricism or of an oppressive antagonism, ought to be systematized in accordance with the moral laws of universal harmony."

[2] Talk recorded by John Stuart Mill. Letters of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte: Letter of 23rd October, 1842, Lévy Bruhl (Alcan, publisher).

Many thinkers of the first half of the nineteenth century, to their credit, made much of the idea of the rehabilitation of labour, and if I may confess here to an ambition, it is to contribute to the limit of my powers to the preservation of their hopes from oblivion.

I will therefore try to show how, without interfering in any way with the technological structure of industry, it would be possible to direct progress in the working life towards freedom and happiness. To attain these ends there is but one road : it is the one leading towards the imitation of the natural equilibria of organized life, or even towards those cosmic equilibria of which Fourier thought in such daring terms.[1]

When, between the forces and drives which nowadays jostle each other in industrial life, we have learnt to establish the laws of reciprocity which will harmonize their oppositions, then order will no longer result, as today, from the silence of the party that has been crushed, but will finally assume the aspect of a *human equilibrium*.[2]

The possibility and the superiority of this internal and organic equilibrium particularly deserves to be emphasized, in fact, at this moment when, throughout the world, the belief exists that social peace may be finally attained by means of systems inspired more or less by the Italian " corporatism ".

But any system based upon the permanence of the

[1] A recent work written by an engineer, M. Edouard Boutry, also traces a curious outline of a " planetary " conception of the organization of a business concern. *Le Solfège du Travail Industriel*, Figuière, publisher.

[2] The phrase of Charles Fourier's that I have used as the motto for this book was discovered by Charles Gide in the Fourier Manuscripts, 1851 edition, page 66. He quoted it in the introduction to his *Pages Choisies de Fourier*, published in the Receuil Sirey.

division of the producers into masters and workmen is incapable of resolving their antagonism. It cannot do so because it organizes this antagonism. It is not by substituting continuous and regular " corporation " contacts for the intermittent meetings that usually occur after strikes that we can hope to bring the fight to a final close. At the most, by such means, we shall only bring about a sort of crystallization of antagonisms.

Finally, let us say it once and for all, any system of organization which transfers this quest for order outside the workshop, instead of establishing it on the site of the work itself, is bound to take the wrong road. No "*joint*" discussion is ever anything other than an attempt to reconcile opponents *after differences have arisen.* The very term *joint* establishes a state of discord or better, perhaps, of *duality*, and any discussion which takes place on a basis of organized and contrary forces can well result in peace treaties, in the form of *collective contracts*: these contracts will never establish more than a provisional, that is to say a precarious, peace. Instead of pursuing the chimera of an order along the road of this dualism, we must search for the new structure which could make an *organic unity of the concern*, that is to say, a new form of human group, in which there will no longer be masters and workers quarrelling over a profit, but an ensemble of men possessing various kinds of knowledge, some administrative, and others technical, co-operating to make provision in common for the various *tasks* and *services*, the performance of which is necessary to social life. When this state of collaboration is realized, and when the price of the work or the service rendered has become the subject of a division based upon the value of the contribution of each participant, we

shall have brought into being an industrial régime that will be far superior to a corporative régime: it will be a co-operative régime.

I know from experience to what I am exposing myself in giving forth such ideas on the inadequacy of the existing forms of organization, and especially on the inadequacy of the practical and day-to-day objectives of organized labour. But what fundamental changes can be brought about in conditions of work, and particularly in the *state of dependence* of the workers, by the ordinary agitations relating to raising of wages or reduction of hours? A grave question, this, to which I have no hesitation in replying that they will no longer be able to change them very much. Far be it from me to make a total denial of the utility of such claims. I must, however, add that this utility has been mostly historical: when the workers laboured for fifteen or sixteen hours a day for such low wages that they should have had their names inscribed, even while they were working, on the books of charitable institutions, and when they were for the most part illiterate, there was no more urgent need than to improve their material situation at any price. *One must live first of all.* This achievement has been the work of a century, and today, no matter what may be said about it by a sort of obstinate politician's pessimism, we cannot deny that the condition of the workers has made considerable progress.

So I render homage to the long effort that has given such results. But I also say that the time has come to broaden the objectives that sufficed well enough for the campaign of the nineteenth century, but which are not enough for today, as Albert Thomas has so justly remarked. We must now go further, and have the

courage to advance along a new road, no longer that of mere material well-being, but of freedom.

I am under no illusions as to the length of the time that this new effort will certainly require. If it has needed a century to reduce the length of the working day from fifteen to eight hours, how long will it take to introduce the manners and atmosphere of liberty into the life of labour? No one would dare to answer such a question, for its solution depends upon a work of education, in which there are no more non-stop runs than in any other kind of apprenticeship. That is why we ought to start upon it without delay and begin, as in all forms of instruction, with the most elementary exercises, such as I sketch out in the course of this book.

Lastly, although my object may not be to add yet another "plan" of economic reconstruction to so many others, I wish nevertheless in a few words to draw the reader's attention to the possible consequences of the system of work which I propose in generalized form. The most clear-seeing minds now know that we have definitely lost the greater portion of our overseas customers. The extra-European peoples that our industry used to supply have learnt to do without us, and this new situation is going to compel us to find our customers on our own soil. That means that consumer and producer will be mingled more and more in one and the same person or, if you prefer it, the producer may be in a position to buy back what he produces. But that will be impossible if we retain a mode of remuneration of labour arbitrarily based only upon the elementary needs of the individual—what is called the "cost of living" —instead of restoring to the producer a *real wage* which could be justly proportionate to the value of his output.

When one thinks of it, one of the great dilemmas of so-called " overproduction " is there. It will compel us to abolish the modern wage system, to return towards a more equitable method of remuneration.

When we talk, in fact, of some kind of return to the working conditions of the Middle Ages, might it not be said that reward for work then appeared to approach nearer to a just *apportionment* than the wage that is so bitterly haggled over with the humble " collaborators " of modern capitalism? I cannot insist here on this aspect of the plan. It seems to me nevertheless to indicate a probably efficient means of restoring to the worker the necessary purchasing power for the maintenance of economic activity.

Chapter One

The Workers' True Road to Freedom

> It is the property of democracy not to search for its saviours from afar. It must find them within itself.
>
> Ferdinand Buisson

The workers' reaction to the conditions they endure is a more complex phenomenon than it seems and I have spent enough long years in the life of workshops and workers' unions to have been able to observe its various currents from the inside.

Two main phenomena are to be found. First of all, naturally enough, there is the reflex that sets up the worker's resistance against the more intolerable working conditions. Next there follows, on the part of a portion at least of the more active elements of labour, an absorption of ideas that are entirely foreign to the worker's whole life.

The reflex of resistance is a perfectly characteristic organic phenomenon. Reacting to his immediate working environment, he may gradually change in disposition and character. In the field of human relations it is analogous with organic phenomena of adaptation. At the same time we must not mistake the sense of this latter term. It is not that the workers merely adapt themselves to their surroundings, for their reaction evidently has the additional effect of adapting the external conditions, within the limits of such capacity for action as they are able to command.

However, the importance of these phenomena of the working environment has not failed to attract outside attention, notably among men for whom social progress could never be confined to the elementary features of labour's struggle.

The workers have then been approached by allies of a more generalizing type of mind, to whom the methods of warfare used in this struggle soon appeared too ineffective and above all too slow for the realization of plans for the transformation not only of the work-place but of all social life.

I need not emphasize the profound differences existing between the respective cultural backgrounds of the elements thus brought into contact: on the one hand we have the workers, generally ill-educated but possessing funds of experience peculiar to those whose life is spent in the midst of the realities of work; on the other, we find "intellectuals" [1] gifted with a different kind of sensibility—I deliberately say different, not finer—prone to wax enthusiastic over mentally constructed abstractions, scarcely ever having undergone the moderating effect of some practical activity, and always ready to move with ease amongst the fireworks of theory.

No doubt it is necessary to be born and to have lived long in a working-class environment properly to appreciate the advantage of prestige, among the common run

[1] And, alas, worse still pseudo-intellectuals or even sick persons. A medical man who has long been directly and intimately occupied in circles which it is customary to describe as "revolutionary" told me that it was surprising to find so high a proportion of consumptives and various types of psychopaths among their numbers. He attributed this fact to the attraction exercised by "revolutionary romanticism" upon the feeble-minded or the emotionally unstable.

of the workers that we call " manual ", enjoyed by the bourgeois intellectual who comes to show them sympathy and to announce that his services are at their disposal. After having been so despised by these " bourgeois ", the whole thing is such a novelty for them that they forget to verify the efficacy of the ideas and propositions that are thus put up to them. And besides, even should they wish to do so, it would be difficult enough for them in any such discussion to draw upon the same dialectical resources as are possessed by the friends who come to them in this manner.

Side by side with auxiliaries of this kind the militant workman, fresh from his toil and anxious to maintain contact with the facts that he feels to be important, can hardly be expected, obviously, to cut a brilliant figure. As he knows better than anybody what are the limits of working-class ability, he cannot so easily produce platform effects about the fast-approaching future of unalloyed bliss with the descriptive facility of one who is unembarrassed by the contemptible details of reality.

This influence of men who are strangers to a life of toil has mostly been unfortunate. Through this means there have been introduced into the workers' surroundings various ideas and claims which are far more expressive of the intellectuals' distaste for the sight of work that they do not understand, than of the workers' own intimate feelings.

In reality, no matter how violently the workers may protest, it is extremely important to notice that they never complain about the work itself, but about the conditions under which it has to be carried out. And it must have been through the influence of these foreign elements that notions of distaste for work and what it

involves have crept into discussions of the social order. I cannot too strongly emphasize this fact, which I have already pointed out elsewhere, that so long as the workers have expressed only their own ideas, we can search the documents emanating from their organizations in vain for any trace of hostility towards their work. They were not deceived, not they, about the nature and origin of the troubles from which they suffered. When they had emerged from the state of ignorance in which the workers of Jacquard's time still wallowed, they were not such fools as to take technical invention as a scapegoat for the sins of their masters. It required the influence of a literature emanating from outside to cause a few of them to fall back into this old mistake. In this matter the interference of the intellectuals has been unfortunate and destructive, and it is because of them that the worker's consciousness is often disturbed and divided between its own natural tendencies—the real-life issues of the workshop—and the recollection of fascinating visions offered by orators or writers whose imagination is tempered by no sort of practical consideration.

I have obviously simplified this picture, which in reality is less precise. For all that, its main lines are such as I have depicted.

I do not pretend to suggest, on the other hand, that the ordinary labour movement, whatever may be my natural sympathy for it, really satisfies my ambitions. While I do not believe that the " conquest of the State " as usually preached by the intellectuals could suffice to transform the workers' conditions in the way I am envisaging, I do not consider either that the traditional lines of labour's demands are any more likely to bring this about.

As I intend later on to examine this aspect of my position at greater length [1] I will merely affirm here, in face of those whose whole attention is absorbed by the problem of the " conquest of the State ", that no modification of social conditions can be as important for the workers as a transformation on the organization of work, and especially of the internal régime of the workshop. No transformation of the bases upon which the State is constituted, nor even of the institution of property, would serve automatically to put a stop to the evils that the workers endure, and which have another origin.[2]

Evidence of the truth of this statement is afforded by certain facts which anyone can verify for himself. Even now, in our present society, in capitalist society, there are workers or employees who can no longer say that they work for the enrichment of a capitalist. We have the workers and employees of the governmental or municipal services working for the public, and thus for a community which might be exactly the same under another social régime. Another example on a smaller scale but perhaps more striking is that of the employees and workers of the Co-operative distributive organizations, who work only for their fellow-members. There are likewise workers in the Co-operative manufacturing

[1] See the chapter on the importance of remuneration for work.

[2] Apart from this idea of the " conquest of the State ", we must mention also the new conception arising from Fascism, which tends to set up a corporative State in which masters and workers, compulsorily organized in separate unions, are required periodically to adjust their differences. But this means stopping half-way towards the peace that we are looking for. In reality corporatism organizes and, so to speak, consolidates the antagonism of capital and labour, instead of bringing about their unification. The order of the workshop should be sought in the workshop and not outside it.

societies who are the legal owners of the enterprise in which they work.

Let us carefully examine these various kinds of enterprises. It does not seem as if the absence of the capitalist has made much difference in the atmosphere of work in these places. The great symptom of internal labour trouble, the strike, still appears there periodically, and even in the workers' manufacturing co-operatives we sometimes find internal conflicts of the same nature as those which are endemic in capitalist concerns.

An English observer, Mr. T. W. Mercer, has formulated in this connection some most interesting remarks derived from his long experience of the Co-operative movement in England:

> " The vast majority of these workers are still wage-earners employed by co-operative societies. As wage-earners, they enjoy good conditions; none are badly treated; the lot of most is much superior to that of the vast majority of their fellow-workers who gain their bread elsewhere. But co-operative employees do not yet represent emancipated labour. Their industrial status is unaltered. They can, if they so please, become co-operators and enjoy the common rights of membership. As workers their own relation to the movement is in no true sense co-operative: it is purely economic. Their only real connection with the consumers' society for which they work is the old ' cash nexus ', unmodified and not changed in its essentials. . . ." [1]

It will be agreed that these observations point to the fact that labour problems are not essentially modified

[1] *First Essentials of Co-operative Industry*, London, 1930.

when the ownership of the concern becomes collective instead of individual. I would further add that the ordinary apostles of the " conquest of the State " seem scarcely to care about problems of organization of work and never mention it in their writings and speeches except by way of allusions of a very general character. When the famous " day " comes they will content themselves with an appeal for that " iron discipline " which soon comes to the lips of these theorists when they remember that after all some kind of order will be necessary. But so far as discipline is concerned, what the workers already have to put up with is enough, and there is no need whatever to dream of anything stricter.

Nevertheless this lack of clear conceptions upon so important a question from the workers' point of view is disquieting enough, showing as it does that the majority of those who talk so easily of getting away with dictatorial methods really have no notion of a free society.

I would even add another series of observations that have been brought to my mind by the general nature and *realpolitik* of men who are striving to reform working conditions through progressive interferences on the part of the State.

This political *reformism* has in fact a strange resemblance to all the *paternalism* that we condemn when it comes from the initiative of the employer. But no matter whether the paternalism comes from the employer or from the State, its character is always the same, and thus it is that a large proportion of our legislation introduced by those who proclaim the theory of the *class struggle* can have in reality no other result than to consolidate the division of society into classes, by fixing in the workers' minds the idea that they are, as it were, minors

who will always require the guardianship of the State. In other words, all this movement only aims at securing comfort for the *state of working-class dependence*, instead of bringing about its necessary destruction.

Naturally, I hope that nobody will accuse me of repudiating all ideas of protection of this sort.[1] That would be an absurdity, for it is obvious enough that in numerous cases there is unquestionable need for relief. When a house is on fire it is not the moment to study how to make its materials fireproof, nor to build emergency stairs. The first thing is to save the occupants and put out the fire. But it is no less true that the most effective means of reducing the number of fires is not to multiply the pumps but to construct fireproof buildings.

I think that it is just the same in social matters. Unquestionably, we must organize necessary relief, but having done this, we have only completed the half of our job. I will even say that this part is of a very secondary order compared with the general changes which may have to be brought about.

It is not enough merely to improve material conditions of life by measures of *protection* and *assistance*; a spiritual raising of the masses must also be realized, i.e. they must be given the means of attaining to the combination of satisfactions that makes life worth living.

Discussing proposed legislation for the organization of relief, Jaurès[2] wrote: "The right to existence is quite another thing than the right to 'subsistence'. The

[1] I have learnt by experience in recent years how the original words of an author can be twisted in such a way as to seem to express the exact opposite of his intention!

[2] *Histoire Socialiste: la Législative.*

right to existence, to life, implies the safeguarding and development of all the faculties, of all the forces possessed by an individual. The right to subsistence implies merely the exercise of the functions of nutrition." And when Jaurès says that according to these proposals "every man has a right to his subsistence only", he declares that this axiom is "impossible to defend", adding that "every man has the right to such share in human activity as his personality can develop".

It is from this broad and lofty statement that I intend to draw my inspiration for studying here the practical nature of an organization of work that would be capable of attaining such an objective.

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All those people who hypnotize the masses with the problem of merely political change do a great wrong in distracting their attention from the personal effort that each man can make if he wishes to see a better world come to life. If the workers of today are bent under the wage-system, they would be just as badly off under no matter what new political régime provided that no fundamental changes were carried as far as the internal régime of the workshop.

In a book containing passages which should be pondered by all who are interested in the upward progress of the workers [1] Gabriel Séailles makes numerous references to the disastrous illusions of men who believe in revolutionary miracles.

"Just as we have disguised Providence, we disguise

[1] Gabriel Séailles: *La Philosophie du Travail*, Presses Universitaires.

the miracle, we secularize it, we call it the Revolution, and we imagine some theatrical 'stunt' or some *coup d'état* which, with the splendour of an apotheosis, will suddenly reveal, ready made for us and without us, the better society. We no longer gaze towards the sky for the coming of the Messiah borne upon the clouds amidst the tumult of angels' trumpets: we stare instead at the dusty road, looking for the cloud of golden dust in which justice and fraternity are to arrive astride the legendary horses."

If it is no longer possible to expect the miraculous appearance of a better society, what then must we do?

"To educate the people we must not, as its leaders too often do, flatter its instincts and its pride, blame society for all of its faults, complacently ascribe to it virtues and abilities which it has not got, which it ought to acquire. . . .

"If we desire justice it is entirely vain to cry aloud for it, and still more vain to shake our fists with threatening gestures in the void. If we desire justice, let us create it. And to create justice means first to conceive it, to define our idea of it, and to translate this idea into the complex facts that should be ordered by it, to discover its many and various applications, to sort out our problems and endeavours, and to expect always to be faced with new difficulties presented by new facts. He alone, cries Faust, who has come through his testing period deserves liberty which, like life, must be conquered afresh each day."

As early as 1847 John Stuart Mill observed that the progress of the masses "is not achieved by passive qualities only, and in general what we do for people

is no use to them unless it backs up only what they do for themselves ".[1]

Oh, no doubt, to draw the workers' attention to their duties and to the efforts they have to make would be a bad line of talk for an election address. Nobody would ever get elected on such a programme, and one would have to be a Jaurès to dare to say that " History will never excuse men from courage and individual nobility of character ".

There are other reasons than those just indicated for not cherishing too much enthusiasm in favour of the idea of the " conquest of the State " as a solvent of the problem of the workers' freedom. At least, I should say, by the conquest of the State " from above ", for we have yet to learn whether a line of conquest " from below " cannot be found, by setting up new social cells of the most elementary nature for the transformation of the State from the inside.

I wonder in fact whether the politicians' dream of the conquest of the State from above would not tend to spread an evil which has already done only too much damage, that of nationalization (étatisme), whose development so many persons view with apprehension.

M. Emile Vandervelde once wrote [2] that he was disturbed at the prospects of the development of the State. " It is incontestable ", he says, " that we are witnessing, alas, in all countries, in Germany as much as in France, in England, in Italy, in Russia and even elsewhere, an hypertrophic development of nationalization (étatisme)."

[1] *Lettres de Stuart Mill à Auguste Comte, Collected by Lévy-Bruhl*, Alcan, Paris.

[2] *L'Europe Nouvelle*, 24th December, 1932.

M. Vandervelde then recalls the well-known predictions of Marx on the subject of "capitalist concentration" which one day should enable socialism to succeed it as a natural heir.

> "But", he adds, "Marx seems to have made a mistake in saying that socialism ought to arise as a kind of apotheosis of this evolution towards state control (étatisme). One could perfectly conceive, alas, of a social order in which the State would be master of the great means of production, where all industrial activities would be regulated, where the citizens would be numbered as if they were in a barracks, and where the ideal would be realized that Flaubert once lent to the policeman Sénécal: a society which would resemble at one and the same time a dairy-farm and a spinning-mill."

This criticism of "étatisme" from the pen of an eminent socialist will already have helped to rectify certain ill-informed opinions. But I will take the liberty of following it with a few reflexions expressed by an expert of another kind, so that these two criticisms taken in conjunction may help us to get a clearer picture of the evil to which we have given the most unsuitable name of "étatisme".

In a brochure on "The optimum size of business concerns",[1] M. Paul Maquenne records "the progressive inertia of the administrative function in an expanding business, and also the waste if not the muddle that is generally to be found".

[1] *La Taille Optimum des Affaires.* Offprint of an article in *l'Economie Nouvelle*, April–May, 1930, published by the Fédération des Industriels et Commerçants Français.

" To remedy this situation ", he adds, " the Management is always obliged to multiply the organs of control, the audits, to seek the semi-automatic operation of these checks ; but then we come upon this other obstacle which we have termed inertia and all the inconveniences of a red-tape administration. It is just here that all those who have had business relations with firms that are growing beyond normal size have had occasion to complain and lament the old days when the ' master ' took personal charge of his concern and was accessible to his customers, to his suppliers, and to his workpeople. The ' Departments ', apart from their necessary slowness, have an impersonal character which generally does not help their relations with the outside world, and they have sometimes been known to operate in an inopportune and clumsy manner. This is one of the most vexatious disadvantages of these firms that have overshot their optimum scale of operation ; it is especially noticeable when prompt decisions have to be taken owing to a sudden and unforeseen change of circumstances. It still further aggravates the already painful situation created by lack of suppleness and adaptability."

M. Maquenne's observations have the great interest of helping us to understand how the evil of " étatisme " or, in other words, bureaucracy, has fundamentally nothing to do with the fact that the enterprise is in the hands of the State, for it is found just as much in the big organizations created by private monopolies when they have contrived to grow to the dimensions of public services. This evil is simply caused by a vice of organization which, as we see, applies equally to State and to

private enterprises. It springs from the fact that *pari passu* with the extension of the business no steps whatever have been taken to distribute and decentralize responsibility. Introduce responsibility into the functions of the State with some system of sanctions operating as automatically as those which hit a business man who makes a mistake, and at the same stroke you will restore life and activity.

What I am saying now is not intended, by the way, to launch a movement here for administrative reform, which is outside my competence, but rather to insist on the need to base all organization of work, at no matter what level, upon the sentiment of responsibility.

Let us hear M. Vandervelde again, for after having criticized " étatisme " he tells us how to avoid its evils : " *If it is to be otherwise* ", he added after the preceding lines, " *the workers themselves must begin a reaction in the direction of freedom, initiative and human dignity.*"

We can scarcely exaggerate the importance of these last words, of which the italics are mine. They will inspire every line of this little work. We must give the workers a taste for freedom, a sense of initiative, a sentiment of dignity. But these are qualities which will not be won through electoral channels. They will only be forged in the fire of workshop responsibilities, when their work will have passed from the passive to the active stage, from obedience pure and simple, from compulsory output, to the independent enthusiasm of the entrepreneur.

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Certain persons already interested in the great problem of " reconciliation of man with work " have wondered

whether the moment has not arrived to grant the workers a share in the management of the firms that employ them.

This proposition has received so much attention that it has already given rise to an abundance of literature.[1] It has even led in certain countries to special legislation, such as the law on Works Councils contained in the German Weimar Constitution. Other countries have followed the same line, but after more than ten years' experience it does not seem that we have yet reached the solution.

Everyone knows that the law on Works Councils applied in Germany has given but few results: on the other hand a similar check befell a French initiative whose authors expected much good from it, and which is specified in the text of the law of 26th April, 1917, completing the provisions of the law of 24th July, 1867, on Companies, by the creation of *labour shares*.[2]

However, these kinds of participation might seem to be of such a nature as to satisfy the labour demands. Here was the advent, some thought, of industrial democracy, giving the workers at last a means of representation analogous and parallel to their means of political influence.

But there is no absolute analogy between the inner life of a business concern and the social life in which the workers mingle outside of it, and if we are to fulfil the idea of democracy in work we shall doubtless have to reach it through channels other than those which serve for politics.

[1] See especially Roger Picard: *Le Contrôle Ouvrier dans la Gestion des Entreprises*, Rivière, 1922.

[2] Consult on this subject Et. Antonelli: *Les Actions de Travail*, Alcan.

These other channels, it seems, will be two in number ; and the Works Councils emerging from recent legislation follow neither the one nor the other ; hence their lack of success hitherto.

Underlying these two means of participation in the management of business concerns there are questions of competence which must first be answered.

What are the workers' abilities in this respect ?

They may be of two kinds, and to discover them we must examine the realities of the workers' situation.

The workers themselves have introduced into our modern vocabulary a significant expression that is going to help us to find our road. They declare that the man who joins a corporate organization is a " conscious workman ".

Why is this worker described as " conscious " ?

It is because he has ceased to be an individual who is indifferent to the general conditions of life in his occupation. Instead of submitting passively to these conditions, he wishes to react towards them, and for that purpose he associates himself with other workers who share the same desire.

From that moment onwards he takes part in discussions in which he enjoys the right to speak and to vote, with an authority which no exercise of his political rights would give him. In attempting to control the general conditions of life in his occupation he exercises influence which extends beyond the limits of the business in which he is employed. In a certain degree he contributes towards the administration of his occupation or his industry, at least so far as conditions of work are concerned, and evidently with a degree of effectiveness proportional to the power of the organization that he

has created. This man becomes, from the industrial point of view, a different being from the one who remains passive and unorganized; thereafter he is always learning, and even begins to develop a particular kind of administrative competence. This is apparent when a workman, on becoming a union delegate, concerns himself with the differences which arise between employers and workers. He can also become a member of a board of arbitration (*conseiller prud'homme*). He can sit on all sorts of committees in which the preparation of new legislation requires the presence of a workers' delegate. At the head of a trade union he discusses the clauses of a collective contract with the employers of a locality. He is consulted by parliamentary commissions which prepare the social laws.

As these kinds of mediation multiply every day, we may say that the trade-union delegate who treats with a group of employers for the adjustment of an industrial question exercises an effective part in the management of that industry. That is regular and normal, and it is a share in management which we must prepare to develop. It is a share in the management of the *general* interests of the industry such as is outlined, for example, in the Economic Council.

Such is the first regular form of what has been termed *workers' control*—an expression that has created much confusion. There is nothing utopian or abnormal about it. It has a sure basis in the particular kind of competence that I have just mentioned, and nobody would suggest that this first outline of industrial democracy is of such a nature as to bring disorder into industrial management.

The second form of " workers' control ", in which it

is proposed that the workers should intervene directly in the management of business firms, is much less logical and, above all, much less practicable.

Those who have launched this phrase—and often very lightheartedly—into the current vocabulary of workers' demands have confused rather than illuminated this very important question, for by calling up the idea of a control exercised by the workers over the business in which they work they have soon set all the business leaders' backs up in an attitude of hostility. These latter, knowing naturally enough the difficulty they most frequently have in keeping their businesses going, are bound to think that the workers' interference in their domain could only have bad results.

If I say then that their fears are not unfounded, it is because I know perfectly well that as a workman I have neither the administrative nor the financial competence, nor experience of the all-inclusive outlook that a man must have to ensure the ordinary management of a business.[1]

Mr. T. W. Mercer, whose judicious remarks I have already quoted, confirms this point of view when he

[1] I am pleased to find the same idea expressed by an English workman, H. Gosling, at the Trade Union Congress of 1916:

"We workmen do not ask that we should be admitted to any share in what is essentially the employer's own business—that is, in those matters which do not concern us directly in the industry or employment in which we may be engaged. We do not seek to sit on the board of directors, or to interfere with the buying of materials, or with the selling of the product. But in the daily management of the employment in which we spend our working lives, in the atmosphere and under the conditions in which we have to work, in the hours of beginning and ending work, in the conditions of remuneration, and even in the manners and practices of the foreman with whom we have to be in contact, in all these matters we feel that we, as workmen, have a right to a voice. . . ."

recalls that the administrators of Co-operative (Distributive) Societies, when these latter have developed sufficiently to own their own factories, have sometimes been called upon to deliberate over industrial processes and exercise the functions of an employer. He then very justly observes that for most of the time these administrators are not really competent to play such a part.

> "The Boards of Administration elected by the members of the Societies," he says, "although invested with full authority, generally act in a sphere which does not show their competence to advantage, in which they are only amateurs, figure-heads, who have had no special experience; and nobody, whatever his qualities can, without special training, be perfectly competent outside his own trade."

Although I shall return later on several times to the experiments of Godin, the celebrated founder of the *Familistère de Guise*, I would like to add to Mercer's evidence a factual observation drawn from the operation of the *Familistère*. Godin not only introduced there a system of profit-sharing which still exists, but he inserted in the Statutes of this Industrial Society a clause according to which the workers could nominate each year three of their number to sit on the Board of Directors. This clause being still in actual operation, it is interesting to know to what it has led.

Imbued with Fourier's idea that the profits of a business should be shared proportionately between the three principal elements constituted by the personnel, the "talent" (Management) and Capital, Godin allocated a certain portion of the profits to the members of the Board.

The worker-members of the Board naturally shared in this distribution, but what Godin did not foresee was that the personnel came to regard this distribution as in the nature of a windfall which should not be reserved for a few privileged persons, and to prevent the beneficiaries from touching it more than once, they never re-elected them. Caring little for the " share in management " and seeing only the sum of money to be obtained, the personnel decided that everyone should pass there in his turn and in order of seniority ! This equalitarianism doubtless has its laudable side, but it is to be regretted that it entirely distorted Godin's intention, for, naturally these workers, being designated not for their usefulness, but turn about, did not ordinarily take any part in the deliberations of the Board.[1]

On the strength of these various observations, then, I will conclude by saying that if I claim a right of intervention or, if you prefer it, collaboration, this could only be in the domain of the actual *execution of the work.*

If the Director can deny my competence in his domain I can answer in turn that I am at home in the workshop just as he is at home in his office. It is there that I can exercise the whole of the resources of my special competence and it is only there that I can find a useful, practicable and fruitful basis for patiently undertaking those changes which cannot be brought about by this " conquest of the State " which hypnotizes so many brains. When I said a little while ago that I refuse to undertake the conquest of the State " from the top " it was this that I had in mind, for I know that if the worker can do a useful job it can only be in his immediate environment. It is there that he can put on his harness and, if

[1] Information communicated by M. Prudhommeaux.

he desires it, with the irresistible power of accumulated small efforts, can bring about a sort of *molecular change in social life.*

It is, then, with this modest field of endeavour, which is open from now onwards to my fellow-workers, that I would concern myself here.

Chapter Two

The Problem of Remuneration— Its Close Connection with the Problem of Freedom of Labour

The hall-mark of ability is to govern without force.

VAUVENARGUES

For ages before our time some men, more daring and resourceful than their fellows, have taken others into their service to work for their profit. But only when he is compelled by some urgent necessity does a man allow himself to become another man's serf, nor, when so situated, does he ever render that fullness of effort that he can exercise when working on his own account.

Thus it has naturally followed, throughout the ages, that anyone who has employed others has soon become aware of their reluctance to work "all out", and has always felt that here was a source of loss that he must try to avoid.

Historically, he has always tried first to rectify this loss by some kind of constraint. Afterwards, having grown cleverer, he has used cunning, the more modern forms of which we shall examine later on. Not that this has prevented the survival of constraint to our own day, although, obviously, it no longer wears the same garb as the slavery of ancient times. Is not the constant threat of "the sack", suggested more or less in the way that orders are given, a form of constraint? We cannot put a workman to death as we could a slave, but do we

not strike him and his family a severe economic blow when, in a fit of bad temper, we throw him into the street?

I know very well that this form of constraint is not always exercised after the fashion of a Nero, solely to gratify a lust for power. Although, here and there, this desire may still exist, constraint is used mainly to enforce the discipline required to produce certain results. The chief wishes to establish *order* in accordance with his plans.

Now, order and discipline can derive from two sources, one of which can be voluntarily accepted, whereas the other has to be *undergone*. The order and discipline which we undergo is the kind that begets the feeling of constraint and the discipline that we undergo is one which comes from a man. Obeying another man often means humiliating oneself. That discipline, on the other hand, which is imposed by the fact of a rule or law, the basis of which we recognize as sound, while it may be difficult to observe, can never be resented as humiliation. When the driver of a car keeps to the left of the road by the order of a policeman, he knows that his obedience is not to the constable but to the law of the land. If a certain order must prevail, never cease from striving to ensure that the need for it is clearly understandable, for its observance will then come more readily than from the mere existence of " orders ". Consequently, the secret of good labour relations consists in encouraging the evolution of a régime in which factory workers, some day, will obey rules rather than individuals. And as those who will have to act as interpreters of these laws will still be men, all their science and skill will have to be brought into play to show clearly that the obedience they

demand is due not to them personally but to the laws which they represent.

But I will leave arguments of this theoretical sort for the moment, to return to them later when they may usefully serve my purpose, and begin first with those which seem to me to show the most practical value.

Whereas the use of constraint upon the worker is intended to whet his keenness for work, may we not observe that the history of progress in output shows quite definitely that this output has always increased in inverse ratio to the degree of constraint, and that *pari passu* with the easement of the severity of the constraint, output has continued to expand? Why?

I hope that the reader will forgive me for the way I would answer this question, but I can only conclude that the resort to constraint arises from the common error of failing to distinguish between a man and a draught-horse.

Now a workman is not a draught-horse. He is a man. And be he as rough as may be, his efforts cannot be dissociated from human effort regarded in its most general sense. Perhaps it might, in fact, be more profitable, instead of making a special study of the workman as such, to confine our analysis to human effort in general, in order to discover the secret law which determines its intensity.

For if it be true that, in the matter of relations between work-people and business firms, nothing really satisfactory has as yet been achieved, it is probably because of our obstinate tendency to think of some particular sort of workman as a species apart from human beings in general. Thus it comes about that those who complain of their relations with their labour force may be heard to declare that "The *workman* is like this. . . . The *workman* behaves like that. . . ."

At bottom such complaints only show a lack of intellectual courage. Rather than incur the effort required for a searching examination of the problem, such persons content themselves with a few superficial formulæ, the main purport of which is to raise the plaintiff to the superior position of one whose good intentions are misunderstood by fools. But if we note that the employer often enough, by virtue of his social position, has enjoyed an education that the workman has never known, may we not suggest that the very fact of this advantage imposes higher duties upon its possessor? He should be all the more tolerant of shortcomings due to ignorance. He should remember that the less a man *knows* the less he can *do*. He should therefore be prudent in his reprimands, remembering that it is wiser to help than to blame.

And when all is said and done, I ask again, what is a workman but a man like the rest of us, owning not only the same 198 bones and 368 muscles, but the same psychological characteristics as any other type of human being?

The day when, in the face of these problems, we are ready to change our mental attitude and discard the quaint supposition that the workman might be a separate creation who would be moved by incentives other than those which activate the rest of the human species, we shall have taken a great forward step towards the scientific examination of labour problems.

For it is probably just because of this false conception in which the workman is thought to be different from others, that we continue to believe that constraint is necessary to make him work, whereas this same constraint would be useless for individuals of another "class".

If it were true that constraint were necessary to make workmen work, and if this constraint really constituted a higher and universally valid law of efficiency, the highest type of worker would be the whip-driven slave. Now we know, on the contrary, that his productivity is the lowest, and that the story of the growth of productivity might almost be confused with that of the steady decline of slavery.

But we are no longer in a state of slavery, you will say. True enough. But we have not yet got out of a phase that has been evolved from constraint; though it no longer wears the garb of ancient days it has not yet disappeared.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that in its course of evolution, the degree of constraint has continually tended, up to a point, to approximate the workman's situation to that of his master. Again, it is instructive to note—as a source of inspiration for our further endeavours—that the severity of the constraint has only been relaxed *pari passu* with the masters' realization of the fact that such relaxation has served their personal self-interest.

We would like to put these successive assuagements to the credit of human sentiment. Unfortunately the whole of this sad story shows, on the contrary, that the steps taken in this direction have been dictated often enough by nothing but self-interest. Let us, therefore, retain this incentive. We shall perhaps find a way to go on using it to enable us one day to escape entirely from the wage-system.

We all know that the oldest form of motive power ever used is that of man's muscles and that primitive man, wishing to be possessed of it, had to take prisoners and

make slaves of them. Certain peoples, it is said, at first looked upon prisoners merely as an additional source of nourishment, and ate them! . . . until the day dawned when our distant ancestors perceived that they would derive greater profit by making their prisoners work than by eating them immediately.

An historian [1] who in recent years has made an important contribution to the history of slavery has shown with the aid of valuable documents what may have been the conditions endured in ancient times, by Egyptian slaves who had to drag the stone colossi which astonish us so much today. Graven tablets, showing their overseers armed with scourges and knuckle-dusters, bear poignant witness to the character of ancient types of labour. Constraint was then exercised by means not only of the scourge but by constant threat of death.

Taking this period as his starting-point, M. Lefebvre des Noëttes has clearly shown the self-interested reasons which have successively modified, little by little, the slaves' conditions.

Just as, of old, it came to be recognized that it was more profitable to make prisoners work than to eat them, in due course arose the custom of using animals instead of men for carrying burdens. This happened when it was seen that animal-power was cheaper than man-power. Now this change was dictated by no other motives than those which impelled us later on to replace animals, and finally men, by machines and, nowadays, this or that machine by a better one.

Such is the simple and natural observation to which we are led by the researches of M. Lefebvre des Noëttes

[1] M. Lefebvre des Noëttes: *L'attelage à travers les Âges*, A. Picard, publisher.

and the various facts that he brings to light. Speaking of slavery among the Mussulmans, he makes the following remarks :

> " If the Mussulmans always had fewer slaves and treated them better than the ancients did, it was not because they had humaner or gentler feelings. It was because this pastoral people, as conquerers, never managed their civilization with a view to such intensive production as that of Egypt, Greece or Rome. Producing less and building less, *they had less need of human motive power.*"

Now let us turn to Japan. This people carried out important public works which involved heavy human drudgery, " but these works were too few to require the permanent institution of forced labour " . . . " Feudal Japan had serfs attached to domains as we had in the middle ages, but not many slaves debased to the animal level like those of Rome or of the New World. *They did not need them.*"

I am responsible for the italics of this last phrase, which completes my argument with the simple rigour of a scientific demonstration.

The fact that slavery reappeared in America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is explained by this author as follows : " When the American colonists wished to exploit their conquests they were faced by the same kind of difficulties as were the ancients." M. Lefebvre des Noëttes then recalls the fact that before Columbus' time the New World knew neither horse nor ox. " They had to have some motive power for works and transport, and the only one which existed was manpower. With no more consideration for moral factors

than the ancients had, they took possession of the indigent and reduced them to the level of human cattle."

We may add that when it became no longer possible to recruit poor men they imported African negroes, because kidnapping them in the bush was cheaper than importing oxen or horses, which would have had to be paid for!

And even today, have we not re-established slavery in Africa under this euphemism of "forced labour" to which the International Labour Office has had recently to direct its attention? And do we not know that if we wish to refuel aeroplanes that are liable to land in Africa far from any place with road or rail communications, we simply have the metal petrol containers carried by negro porters? It would seem better in this latter case to free these men from this laborious work by insisting upon roads or railways—a technical solution—unless, of course, we do without sending our letters by air-mail!

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Seeing that the question of self-interest plays so important a part in determining man's attitude towards work, it might perhaps be thought that in so scientific and matter-of-fact an age as our own we should eventually have recognized that we must give way to its requirements.

Nevertheless, the history of the evolution of slavery has not yet convinced those who have to solve the problem of the relations between workmen and business concerns.

Rather than make a frontal attack on the problem created by the motive of self-interest and resolve it in accordance with the principles of justice, we linger over

methods which are inspired mainly by guile, such as those wage systems to which, when deceived by the mathematical appearance of the calculations to which they give rise, we are wont to apply the term " scientific ".

Now as a matter of fact all this " science " has only been one more attempt, as futile as the others, at evading justice. But we may say, without fear either of self-deception or of rash prophecy, that justice alone will evoke fullness of effort, for even with the roughest sort of workman it is a vague feeling that he is not being justly treated that paralyses his goodwill. As a result of long experience he knows that his reward is a question of self-interest, and that as a matter of self-interest his paymaster has always managed to invent a thousand subterfuges to avoid paying him his due. He knows that his partner's imagination has always revealed inexhaustible sources of ingenuity for keeping something back while appearing to give everything.

The most precise and the fairest comparison that we can make in regard to all these methods of remuneration is perhaps to liken them to the traps which a skilful sportsman devises to beguile the wariness of his quarry. But if the animal often falls into the snare set by the ingenuity of the hunter, a man falls much less easily to the wiles of his employer. That is why we have to witness a sort of silent, continuous struggle, in which the attack consists of more and more complicated piecework and bonus systems, while the defence takes the form of a more or less obvious passive resistance by which the workman seeks to undo the combinations that have been invented for speeding up his output. The attitude was recognized by Taylor, who gave it the famous name of " soldiering ".

Despite these researches and the results to which they have given rise in the form of new wage systems, it may be shown that these latter, no matter how ingenious, are fundamentally absurd for the simple reason that—*supreme blunder—they put the self-interest of the wage-earner in conflict with that of the business which employs him.* And even if this conflict is sometimes eased by special provisions, not one of these systems realizes a state of association between the interests concerned. That such an association ought to exist is admitted by the employers, and they generally like to imagine that it does exist when they speak on official occasions of their relationships with their subordinates. We may even add that in their wish to show this desire for real collaboration they generally think that the wage-earner, in return for his wage, *ought* to understand that it is to his own interest to be active, seeing that in return for such activity he will ensure the continuity of his wage. But this employers' notion is a result of only superficial reasoning, and no doubt we should have to put the employers in workmen's positions for a longish time before they would come to realize that the wage, so far from being a formula of association, is one of antagonism. And the least that we can say of it is that if this clash of interests does not lead actually to avowed antagonism, it leaves the worker in a passive attitude, and that this attitude alone is a source of incalculable waste.

There has been a good deal of talk in recent years, at least before the recession of business caused by the crisis of 1929, about anti-waste campaigns.

Let us now explain how these methods of remuneration, which are only forms of wages, conduce to a particular kind of waste to which nobody, as a rule, pays any attention.

I have said that the wage-system leaves the worker in a passive attitude, because it puts him in a position to carry out orders and definite instructions instead of inducing him to anticipate what has to be done.

The reader will forgive my returning several times to this theme in the course of this work, because it is its very foundation, but from now onwards I would like to insist on the fact that whoever gives orders or instructions, even if he has genius, cannot foresee in all their details the special cases and circumstances which inevitably arise in all kinds of activity in an unexpected way and which, precisely because they cannot possibly be known in advance, we categorize as "unforeseen". During actual production an opportunity arises for improving a process, and in such a way that it could only become manifest in the presence of all the elements involved. Or else it may be a chance to economize in time or materials that the previous job-analysis had failed to reveal; a way of utilizing something again which may have been thrown away as refuse after a first process. . . . Those who have had some practical experience in a workshop will best appreciate this aspect of my argument. I have in mind, in fact, all kinds of working details about which it is impossible to give previous instructions and in regard to which, when they find themselves mistaken after the event, the management are wont to declare that the workman concerned *ought to have done* this or that.

And why should he have done it, seeing that in the first place he had not been ordered to do so and, further, he had no obvious and direct interest in doing it? Moreover, I was referring to a case where the management is aware after the event that some initiative should have

been taken. But I would add now that for two cases where the management is aware too late that action should have been taken, there are perhaps eight others which escape its notice altogether, and the possibility that the operative should keep silence about cases of waste which he sees but does not report is itself enough to constitute a source of incalculable loss.

There has perhaps been no more striking illustration of the inferiority of the passive to the active attitude than the novel line of action taken by the Italian railway workers who, about the year 1910 I believe, wishing to protest against some decision taken in regard to them, decided simply to carry out rules and regulations to the letter. There followed such a jam in the services that the management soon had to give way. It was a clear proof of the fact that intelligent interpretation of orders, that is to say their continual correction on the initiative of those on the spot, restored the balance between the *letter* of the regulations and the real *facts* of the work, the ever-changing details of which can never be foreseen in a text laid down from *precedents*.

A military author [1] writing on army regulations has made a very curious and highly instructive observation by simply citing the number of pages of military regulations for the different arms over a period of about a century. *This number of pages has continually decreased*, and we may be sure that the reduction observable at each revision of the regulations has not been done willingly and for the mere joy of using less paper! Those who know such documents will remember that once upon a time these military regulations contained most minute

[1] Pawlovitch: *L'idéal démocratique et la discipline militaire*, Chapelot, Paris, 1911.

instructions, where the movements of troops were foreseen with such incredible detail that the whole affair looked like a piece of very complicated clockwork. Even to the way in which marching, or handling the rifle was to be carried out, all movements were counted, and their duration measured by an astonishing sort of foretaste of Time Study and " Taylorism ".

So these kinds of preciseness which aspired to turn soldiers into automata are steadily on the decline. Thanks to a remarkable evolutionary change in the military mind, these documents, regulation by regulation, have progressively thrown overboard the old passive mechanization in order to make a steadily widening appeal to the spirit of initiative. In these military manuals there are some highly significant passages which contrast strangely with the regulations which still dominate the industrial life of today, and which may lead us to the surprising conclusion that, appearances notwithstanding, industrial life, so far as the utilization of individual initiative is concerned, lags unexpectedly behind the military. There, too, we may find evidence in support of my recent observations on the evolution of constraint, for precisely in the degree to which the pernicketiness of the regulations has been smoothed away the military value of the soldiers has been found to have increased.[1]

[1] " The Military Authority has the advantage over us business men of having long meditated and carefully codified the rules of command and co-ordination " (Robert Courau : *Le patron et son Équipe*, Berger-Levrault, publisher). Perhaps it was Napoleon who invented " Staff conferences " ? The historian, Albert Malet, relates that when, during the course of a campaign, he met regiments on the march, he made them form a circle and explained to them the operations he was going to undertake. I will revert

The spirit of initiative doubtless has not the same object in the military as in the industrial field, and the comparison may therefore seem arbitrary. Nevertheless the question surely resolves itself in either case to one of output. Now, in the industrial field the question of output is often bound up—proportionately to the importance of the part played by the operative in a given piece of work—with that of remuneration. It is impossible, in fact, to separate these two terms. Limit remuneration and you limit at the same time initiative and, consequently, output. There, at bottom, you have the whole dilemma, and so far as it has not been resolved, the impossibility of resolving fundamental labour problems will remain.

Seeing that so many people still persevere in the vain hope of obtaining a maximum of output by wage systems which I shall designate as astute rather than ingenious, I should like to bring to their notice a seeming paradox which seems to escape their attention: *Men who are not "salaried" in the true sense of the term are precisely those who afford the highest examples of utter and complete devotion to their work.*

This simple observation, taken in conjunction with the foregoing analysis, may now help us to formulate the following conclusion: It is along the downward trend of the curve of slavery that we must look for the secret of productivity. Following this line to the point where the last trace of servitude gives place to perfect freedom, we ought to find work in its highest expression, simultaneously with optimum output. At this point—the

later to this comparison with military organization to show how the development of initiative has been helped in the army by processes of subdivision. See page 104.

extreme opposite of constraint—we shall learn the nature of the springs of endeavour. We shall see where lies the deepest origin of striving. By contrast with the effort that we put forth under the influence of an external stimulus, we shall discover that the most effective kind is that which is given in freedom by the powerful inner drive which is characteristic of all those who act " on their own ".

And the search for human types that illustrate this principle need not take us long, for they exist everywhere in numerous incarnations to which we scarcely pay any attention. Anyone who looks around him will, in fact, easily recognize examples of the most sedulous application to work, in which the notion of time ceases to exist : they are to be found among all persons who act spontaneously, and in the total absence of external pressure or constraint.

First and foremost, in its highest degree, among men who daily risk their lives in perilous journeys or hazardous experiments, where does constraint come in ? Or where is it to be found among those numerous sportsmen who strain every nerve to win a championship ? If we study types of men who go " all out ", we shall soon see whether their urge to action comes from without or from within.

This inner urge has long been recognized as having its highest manifestation in *faith*, and when we speak of the faith " which moves mountains " we use an expression which is literally exact. It is the supreme expression of human action, and in saying that it can move mountains we do not exaggerate its strength : the age-long annals of heroic deeds show the immensity of man's inner powers compared with the puny efforts that can be obtained from him by constraint. Next to the heroes may we not also place the artist, when, in the freedom of his inspiration,

he seeks to express some part of himself in stone, in colour, or in sound? May we not regard the artist as the supreme model of the worker, the ideal example whom all men should seek to emulate?

Finally, in another sphere, and as another illustration of a free man, we might recall the peasant who works his own land, of whom Michelet has given us so vivid a picture. Does he need an overseer watching him all the time to make sure that he puts forth his maximum effort? Is his remuneration calculated on the basis of some "scientific system"?

But the most decisive and most interesting example in the case we are studying is still supplied by the man who comes most directly opposite the wage-earner, i.e. the man who employs him. What is the motive that drives the employer to that degree of activity which is so often held up as an example to the workman? May we not apply to his case the same comments that we made on the attitude of the peasant? Need we point out that to excite his activity there is no need of anybody else, nor of any of the speeches used on work-people, and that his remuneration is based on quite different principles from those of the systems to which I have just referred?

This other principle of remuneration is of such capital importance that we must examine it carefully, for perhaps we shall be able to deduce from it certain corollaries that might be applicable to the solution of our problem. It is in fact by making an attentive comparison of the conditions of remuneration of these two men that we can throw the limelight upon a fundamental difference, one which is pregnant with consequences through its effects upon their respective activities.

By contrast with the workman, who—when he is

working, of course—is certain of receiving his wages at the end of the week, the employer has no such certainty before him. Moreover, apart from his person and his time, he has further to invest in his business some funds that he is by no means sure of getting back. Thus it is that beneath the appearances of a situation for which he is often envied by the worker, we must also find uncertainty and risk.

But if there is *risk* there is also a *chance*, and this will serve as our measure of the whole difference between employers' and workers' remuneration. And into that workers' envy to which I have just alluded there enters to a large extent, believe me, an envy of this *chance*, the chance of something other than a more or less fixed wage, i.e. of profit, of which the essential characteristic is the fact that it conjures up no notion of an arbitrary limit.

It is possible that the "unlimited" character of the employer's reward is mainly theoretical. The fact remains, however, that this "theory" leaves room for *hope*. Unlimited, it is true, does not necessarily mean unmeasured. The term implies that the possible profit is located within an elastic zone which energy, skill and intelligence can widen, more or less.

When an employer has embarked upon some line of manufacture his imagination—stimulated not only by monetary self-interest, but by all the complex motives which urge man on in the pursuit of success—can be freely exercised in the search for all sorts of means of increasing his profits. If he has ever so little of the spirit of enterprise he knows that he has before him a broad field in which his success will measure the value of his energy. The "margin of profit" has this fundamental characteristic—that the various personal resources of the

employer can continually alter its importance—and well beyond what a premium bonus system can do for a wage.

Such are the perspectives which, even though they prove illusory, can act so effectively upon the human imagination as to replace the fear of risk by the lure of chance.

Chance and hope! Elements of capital importance which we have but to embody in the organization of work! Why should we have to remind people that a man thus poised between the fear of loss and the hope of gain is also placed in circumstances that have always pushed human effort to its maximum! Need I insist further? Need I recall the fact that bonus systems have never produced any radical modification of Labour's attitude?

The conclusion is simple and should be self-evident: despite its apparent variability under the influence of bonus systems, the wage, remaining a limited quantity, more or less known in advance, will never offer that margin of hope that is the secret of the employer's exertion.[1] Because it *excludes the idea of chance* [2] it is hopeless ever to

[1] There is a difference in nature between wage and profit, as Eugène Fournière remarked. See his Chapter entitled "l'Ouvrier et son Salaire" *Ouvriers et Patrons*, Fasquelle, 1905.

[2] There is perhaps no better illustration of the nature of a system of remuneration which excludes the idea of chance than the conception of a wage based upon the "cost of living". The *alimentary* character of the wage is legally recognized by Article 47 of Book I of the French Code, which makes wages a preferential claim in the event of the bankruptcy of the employer. The workers ought either to refuse to negotiate on so undignified a basis, or declare: We shall accept payment on a cost-of-living basis when all the other social categories are similarly treated.

It is strange that those who are indignant at the idea of a "class struggle" do not understand that they themselves create this idea by a method of payment which operates only for the work-people,

expect it to persuade the worker to change his attitude. The conclusion of this reasoning might also be stated in the form of a dilemma: You either retain the wage system, and the worker will remain passive, or else you open the doors of chance, and he will put forth all the effort of which he is capable.

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In comparing the respective attitudes of the workman and his employer I have called sufficient attention to the fact that the most elementary of human motives is personal interest. We shall depart from that idea, then, only under penalty of losing our way.

We must hope, no doubt, that a day will come in some unforeseeable future when all men will be able to act in accordance with ideal motives. For the time being, if we wish to achieve some real and positive progress, we shall be wise to remember that we must deal with men as they are, and therefore rely only upon their simplest and most natural motives. There is nothing to prevent our going a little further and waiting for an opportunity to prepare them gradually to act under the impulse of progressively higher criteria. But this objective will only be attained by a slow process of education, and I am

making them into a special class which, whatever it does, has a right only to its subsistence. What is the wage of humanity as a whole? It is the sum of the wealth created by work. So long as the distribution of this wealth is not carried out in an equitable manner it will be chasing a phantom to dream of "social peace". Those whose share is supposed to be measured only according to their needs and not in accordance with the value of their collaboration will never be satisfied. Incidentally it should be pointed out that the mere fact of not rendering to the workers the equivalent of that which they give by their labour is sufficient to create that much-discussed disequilibrium between production and consumption.

convinced that this education will only be achieved through the discipline of work.

It is, then, by design and for practical purposes that I lay stress on this problem of remuneration. Indeed, for the sake of the honour of the human species we must recognize that the love of gain is not always its only incentive. When I consider the position of the head of a business the fact does not escape me—as I have not failed already to point out—that his motives are often of a complex nature. Together with his desire to " make money " we must take into account other incentives whose force is sometimes stronger than sheer love of gain : the desire to command, to exercise power, to be in the public eye, to create, and the whole congeries of indefinable elements which together constitute the notion of success.

The wage-earner, on the other hand, feels that whatever he may do he will always come up against an arbitrary limit mapped out in advance, even if masked by the appearance of variability offered by the bonus systems. No matter how ingenious these systems may be, they will never suffice to give him that freedom to expand to which the employer is inspired by the perspectives before him, chimerical though these may turn out to be.

In a word, the wage will never set free the hidden springs of the spirit of enterprise because, I repeat, limited remuneration can only correspond to an equally limited degree of activity. We may even add that under the régime of the wage pure and simple, even when modified by a bonus system, the imagination of the worker, if he has any, will sooner be occupied with undoing the combinations invented to increase his output than in their docile observance.

Would it not then be better if the working-class imagination, and all the inner resources that lie hidden in the worker's personality, were directed towards ends that are broader, healthier and more worthy of a man? For these resources, I repeat, do exist: they are identical with the resources of those famous ancestors of whom we so often remind the workers, and whose worthy heirs they could show themselves to be. They too would be capable of loving work well done and of taking delight in perfection . . . if they were really put in the same working situation as of old.

Since in spite of all the subterfuges so far tried, the wage problem still remains with us in its entirety, let us now try to get back to its roots in order to see what practical proposals might possibly solve it.

Before launching out upon these proposals, however, I must remind the reader that we must first perform that mental process the necessity of which I have already pointed out, viz. we must recognize the fact that the workman is a man who can only act under the incentive of motives that belong to man's common heritage.

The problem that we have to solve might then be summarized in the following formula: By what practical arrangements could work be organized in such a way that, in relation to it, the work-people found themselves in conditions identical with those of their employers?

The foregoing analyses indicate at least the principle of the answer: In order that this identity of situation might be realized it would be necessary that the workers should cease to be paid wages. In other words, in order to find the secret of the best wage system we must have the courage to go so far as to abolish systems of work based on the wage.

The abolition of the present wage system is a theoretical and fundamental objective of trade-union policy, at least in France. We read, in fact, in the first article of the statutes of the C.G.T. (Confédération Générale du Travail) that it is formed to obtain " the abolition of the wage ". In reality, and we may perhaps say through the exigencies of day-to-day tactics, the policy of the workers' unions is mainly concentrated on the two opposite poles of increase of wages and reduction of hours of work. So far as positive action to bring about the " abolition of the wage " is concerned, it is hard enough indeed to find any traces of it.

It seems as if at the moment of passing from words to deeds the workers experience grave hesitation. No matter how precarious, arbitrary and unrelated to the value of the work done the wage may be, it has nevertheless the appearance of something acquired and certain, more acquired and more certain than the problematic profit of the independent worker who *undertakes* a job *on his own account*.

Let us note the character and consequences of such facts. We see the workers—incidentally just like other men taken in the large—divided into two unequal categories. On the one hand the enterprising ones, to whom the yoke of the big firm is intolerable and who dare to go ahead and take risks ; these are they who, as we shall soon see, go to swell the ranks of the artisans. The other and more numerous category cannot or will not embark on the adventure that tempts the enterprising man ; they are in fact really content with the wage, although they encourage the noisier elements to agitate for higher wages through the medium of the unions.

The organizations made up of these active elements

continue theoretically to demand the abolition of the wage, but they generally confine themselves to claims for its improvement, such as those various measures of legal " protection " to which I have already referred, and which in no wise change the principle of the wage system.

There is a queer enough contradiction between theoretical position and practical behaviour.

These organizations also agitate—always theoretically, of course—for various audacious arrangements for joint responsibility in the management of businesses, but in the face of the evidence of the worker's poverty of training for such responsibilities, they remain almost indifferent towards methods of workshop organization which make definite provision for workers to go through some apprenticeship in management, by the exercise of minor administrative and organizing duties. . . .

It seems as if a certain lack of backbone may be the cause of this hesitation. If we are to pass from the wage system to some other method of remuneration we must of necessity directly examine the problem of organization of work, so that we can grasp its responsibilities, accept its risks, and use our exercise of these responsibilities as the basis of our discussion of the distribution of profits.

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A man whose work deserves to be better known, J. B. Godin, founder of the *Familistère de Guise*, was one of the first, with Robert Owen, to attempt to grapple with these problems in a practical way, and his chief claim to originality consisted perhaps in his inauguration of the experimental method in this field.

This man, who was a disciple of Fourier, devoted his

life and his fortune to an attempt to translate into practice something at least of the ideals of that celebrated Utopian.

The historical merit of Godin was his introduction into this field of the method I have just indicated, the social value of which is surprisingly unrecognized as yet, seeing that it has already given such striking results in all the scientific fields in which it has been used.

Later on I shall record one of the characteristic experiments of this pioneer. For the moment I wish to remark that it has given us an essential guiding line on the wage question, and one which may be considered as the basic principle for every form of evolution of the wage-earner's status.

Reviewing the modern wage system Godin estimated that only the question of duration distinguished it from slavery. Nowadays the employer no longer owns the workman's person, and can no longer dispose of the whole of his time. " Services can only be engaged by time or for a given task " says the Civil Code.[1] This Godin translated by saying that wage-earning is no more than a form of " slavery by time ". For so many hours per day the modern workman is at the disposal of his employer.

Crucial remark ! It is the *person* of the workman that is " at disposal ". Consequently, in order that this person shall produce, some form of constraint is used. He is supervised. Hear now what Godin learnt from his experience of labour :

> " It is absolutely necessary to abolish supervision of individual by individual ; this supervision, instead of being exercised upon the workman, should be applied

[1] Clause incorporated in the Labour Code, § 20, Cap II, Book I.

to the material, i.e. to the product of labour. Instead, then, of fixing a value for the workman's time, a value should be fixed for the product to be created. When the price has once been discussed and accepted, the workman acts entirely of his own accord in relation to his task. . . . Thus the worker recovers his dignity; he is master of his time; his actions and his person are no longer the object of a degrading inspection and supervision: only the work done is checked, and accounts are adjusted according to its value." [1]

Let us see how, in modern industry, we can apply this aspiration of Godin—who was not satisfied with piece-work, as we might infer from the above quotation.

The industrial concern of today has only the appearance of a hierarchy constituting an all-seeing and all-pervading unity. In this human edifice there has been necessary recourse to the possibilities of the division of labour. For the most part, however, this process of division has operated only so far as executive functions are concerned. Since an employer cannot do everything himself, he has split up his duties and entrusted them to various persons who in their turn have continued to delegate other functions within their sphere, so that, step by step, the work to be done has been spread between a sufficient number of persons. The whole of the material side of the work has been thus divided. But the general result of the work done—the financial result—remains in the hands of the central individual or organization. Hierarchical division of labour has never been allowed to affect the financial control. It remains above and beyond the rank and file, who are assured in advance of a kind of

[1] Godin: *Solutions Sociales*, Paris, 1871.

result that is more or less fixed and relatively independent of the general result, viz. wages and salaries. This rule has a few exceptions, but only for certain persons in the highest ranks of the hierarchy, who may receive a percentage of profits in addition to salaries etc. We must therefore observe that when we omit to bring about the division of some portion of the profits among the various ranks in the business we deprive them of that special stimulation that is experienced by the entrepreneur in his pursuit of profits. Such a view of the question might then lead us to demand the establishment of profit-sharing, spread proportionately to the importance of the jobs existing from the top to the bottom of this hierarchy.

Theoretically, a solution of the problem based on these observations may seem just and workable. When tried out in practice, however, it has been found incapable of diffusing the moral benefits of the spirit of enterprise from the top to the bottom of the industrial edifice. It assumes, in effect, that in every rank men are to be found who will at all times envisage the success of the concern as a whole as essential to their personal well-being. But experience has shown that this theoretical solution does not in fact evoke from everyone concerned those individual contributions that the sponsors of the plan have expected and hoped from it. When spread over too wide an area this spirit loses all its force, because the average man does not perceive sufficiently clearly how he can satisfy both his individual inclinations and his personal interest.

This is because with the majority of men short views hold sway, and also because, in the state of things as they are, it is not in fact possible, nor even reasonable, to ask the average workman to grasp the broad aspects

of the business in which he is employed and to devote himself to it as if it were his own affair.

But when we watch this same man who cannot acquire such a general view, in a situation where a stroke of special luck has enabled him to found some tiny business of his own, the different parts of which he can easily comprehend, we soon notice his change of attitude : he gives himself up entirely to his new work and stints neither his time nor his pains.

Good enough, you may answer, but what use can that observation have for us ? The time has gone when each and every man could legitimately hope to found his little business and, when his turn came, " set himself up ". It is too obvious that in many lines of manufacture it is hopeless to dream of seeing little businesses come to life : their costs of production would be too high. Our observation, then, may be worthless, because its lesson is inapplicable in the present stage of technological development.

The time has gone, they say, when every workman could hope to " set himself up " ? For all that, as the motives conducing to such behaviour have in no wise lost their vigour, everyone knows that despite the diminished chances of success his hope lives on, and he still tries to find satisfaction through supernormal striving. In the American text-books, which treat questions of work in relation to the worker with such remarkable diligence, there is a characteristic expression which often recurs, and with which it would be worth our while to be familiar. It is the phrase which declares that one of the worker's main needs is that of *self-expression.* They try thus to voice the sentiment of workers who, more or less consciously, would like to

create something on their own and achieve some form of independence.

There are always some of them who experience this need of *self-expression* and wish for this independence. But when they find that in the workshop they are faced with a closed horizon and that no *chance* ever opens up, what do they generally do ?

Let us note what happens in many occupations. Do we not see that there are to be found in them numerous work-people, among the best and most hard-working, who persist with heroic patience throughout the years in practising the strictest economies so as to accumulate the necessary funds to set up some small independent business ? It is this movement which creates these *artisans* of whom so many things are said by persons who do not always analyse the origin and character of the drudgery from which they have risen.

These cases are typical of industrial centres which are full of hundreds of such small craftsmen working more or less " to order ", and who have desired above everything to " free themselves " from the big firm which gave no satisfaction to their ambition. It is remarkable, too, that the artisans who have got away from the large concern often typify the flower of their trade. But let us be careful of this term. We must understand " flower " in the craft sense. When these workmen were in the large concerns they had to exercise their skill only as craftsmen. It is the function of the commercial side of the business to find outlets for the products created by their skill. Consequently—and here is a matter of supreme importance of which we must not lose sight—these artisans, skilled workers though they are, have as a rule no commercial ability whatever. Certain industrial centres where they

swarm, in little workshops where the personnel often consists of no more than three or four persons, present the characteristic appearance of places where technical wonders are worked, but where the sales methods are of the most primitive order.

Thus it comes about that those who study the plight of these artisans, seeing the underlying reason for the powerlessness which results from their dispersion, declare that they may have to combine to form collective purchasing organizations for such raw materials as they need, and selling depots which can apply commercial methods similar to those of the large houses.[1] That is to say that these artisans, who left the big business to be "free", are being invited to re-combine themselves in some communal organization so that they may enjoy the advantages of centralized purchasing and marketing!

Is it really necessary thus to break down the large business, only to reconstruct it soon afterwards at such great pains? Would it not be better, once having discovered the desire for independence and capacity for initiative that have made the workman into an artisan, to seek for means of satisfying these tendencies, by making better use of them within the framework of an autonomous unit, which could be intelligently integrated with the general organization of the business?

I dare say that any attempt along these lines would be more rational and, above all, more profitable than one which tried to organize the artisans. Apart from this, the inability of most artisans to see things in their totality, beyond their ordinary sphere of work, has generally

[1] An excellent picture of the artisans' difficult situation is given in M. H. Guitton's *L'Industrie des Rubans de Soie en France*, Receuil Sirey, publisher.

ruined such types of concentration. Clumsily jealous of a precarious freedom, they wish to safeguard it, and believe that they will best succeed in this aim by remaining isolated. And so they remain powerless, and most of them only vegetate in this " independence ", which often presents worse material conditions of work than those that they had to put up with in the large concern : a longer working day, inadequate equipment, a low order of comfort and hygiene.

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I have done my best to emphasize the fact—which seems to be established by history—that no amelioration of workers' conditions has ever come about except when such a step has been supported by some kind of self-interest.

I wonder then whether we would not be wise to keep in mind these lessons of the past as a guide in our efforts to remodel the working conditions of the future.

It seems indeed that speeches directed to arouse the compassion of sensitive souls for the conditions of the workers have no effect whatever. But when, for example, we can demonstrate that reduction of working hours need not reduce output, so that we can arrive at the eight-hour day, it means that the employing interest is safe.

What about the question of the five-day week ? Here is what I read in an American periodical :

> " The house of E. E. Squibble and Sons has done well in applying the five-day week. The production that it has been able to attain in five days has risen to 98 per cent. of what was formerly obtained in five and

a half, coupled with an increased stability of the personnel." [1]

This observation, by the way, seems to me to be typical of all the facts of this kind that are to be noted in the United States. I have already had occasion to point out that the Americans, when they introduce some improvement into industrial life, protest against being regarded as philanthropists. They readily repeat the well-known dictum: "It pays". By this they mean that such benevolent and humanitarian measures as they have seen fit to adopt so far from having cost them anything, have only served to improve production. This object-lesson strikes me as very instructive in view of my statement that reduction of slavery has always been due to self-interest. We see that this American attitude conforms, in its essence, with the line of historical evolution that we have already observed.

Does this mean, then, that we should now go further and advocate some form of copartnership? We can, of course, support this cause by vague generalizations or by sentimental arguments, but when I recall the reasons why slavery has disappeared I feel obliged to remain sceptical of the effectiveness of a claim based on no solid foundation of self-interest. For that reason I think that if the workers wish to be listened to more attentively, they should find a way of showing their employers that it would be worth their while to understand them.

One of the workers' great weaknesses—and easily understandable for the reasons already stated, e.g. lack of suitable education—is to give too ready an ear to those who come and incite them to purely negative action. If

[1] *Personnel Service Bulletin*, September, 1931.

those who pretend to take so much interest in the workman's lot would really like to do something useful, they should educate them first of all to the fact that nothing good can be done in anger. Many revolutionaries, or those who at least believe themselves to be such, are unaware that anger is only a sign of weakness. They abandon themselves to the indignation aroused in them at the sight of this or that injustice, and are ready to treat as traitors those who do not live like themselves in an eternal bout of rage.

I remember one day coming up against an excellent comrade, whom my attitude irritated because he did not find in it enough of the will to protest, a fact which kept him in a state of perpetual fever. He was revolted by the sight of life as it is, and deplored the fact that I did not sufficiently share that excitement which kept him lively. For all that, I remain convinced that nothing useful can be done if we remain steeped in that state of morbid indignation which is often considered to be the hall-mark of the true revolutionary spirit. Anyone can indulge in recrimination : it builds nothing. It is a low form of activity and it is much to be regretted that most revolutionaries cling to it. If that first impulse is followed by no more substantial action, by nothing constructive, we shall in the end have done nothing at all.

The true revolutionary spirit is embraced in the famous principle according to which " we destroy only that which we can replace ". That is why I remain convinced that the workers will never succeed in changing the régime of which they complain until they are able to formulate positive propositions for a new organization of work.

As for heads of businesses who do not deny the

existence of this problem, nor regard it as having been satisfactorily solved by any existing systems of remuneration, I invite them to reflect upon my observations regarding the inevitable obstacle to profit-sharing. And in reminding them of their classics I would say this to them: There is a man who, far back in our national history, showed us the way to a fruitful method which we should never forget. When Descartes told us that we should split up questions which we cannot easily solve in their entirety, he gave us the key to the problem with which I am now dealing. Profit-sharing attempts in effect to solve *en bloc*, for the whole personnel of a business, without discrimination, a far too vast and complex problem of remuneration.

If this problem is too vast we must attack it by the Cartesian method. Such is the route that I shall try to show in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

A Pioneer's Experiments

> That which men who labour most need, more than all the things they desire to obtain, is the spirit that will change drudgery into work, a trade into a vocation, for man's best recompense is in the realm of the spirit.
>
> FRANK CRANE

IN the preceding chapter I made only brief reference to the ideas and experiments of Godin and I propose to come back to them here to try to discover how they can illuminate our search for a solution of problems that are so closely bound up with remuneration and output. If this solution is to have real value it will have to be presented in such a form as to be applicable in a fairly general way to the infinite variety of manufactures and manipulations of modern labour. It is important, then, for us to ascertain whether the modern type of concern, even one which has evolved according to the most recent conceptions of " scientific management ", is capable of being transformed internally in such a way as to enable us to attain our objective.

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On matters of organization of work, and more particularly on the new ground of relations between man and industry, the Americans today are the pioneers whose merit history will one day recognize. But after giving

such just recognition as I can to their efforts, I ought to mention that we Frenchmen can also claim a great pioneer in Godin.[1]

Already preoccupied, in 1860, with these same problems that we are studying even to-day, Godin did more than discuss them in the abstract. If he also constructed theories, he had the will and the means to submit them to a series of long trials. Under this head he was an innovator whose efforts have not yet produced all their results. *Social science* will not advance as the other sciences have done until the day when we cease to consider it simply as a field for speculation and hypothesis, and begin to study it in the light of the experimental method. That method Godin tried to inaugurate, in an

[1] J. B. Godin (1817–88), born at Esquehéries (Nord), was apprenticed as a locksmith with his father until the age of seventeen, when he began the traditional "Tour de France". He studied the theories of the Saint-Simoniens, but even more those of Fourier. When Victor Considérant in 1851 wished to found a colony in Texas in accordance with Fourier's ideas, Godin gave him 100,000 francs, representing an important part of the necessary reserves of his industry. Quite apart from his sociological ideas, Godin introduced various technical innovations. It was he who created the cast-iron stove industry. In the construction of his famous *Familistère* he introduced a number of then new ideas in matters of hygiene and domestic convenience. Thus he had contrived "chutes" for household refuse such as are now installed in "modern" dwellings. It has been customary, since Franklin's time, to quote so many precepts from American lips, that I may well recall here one of Godin's sayings. When he was quite a young man, busy creating the industry that made his fortune and enabled him to pursue his experiments, one of his friends asked him how he thought he was going to beat the powerful competitors already established in his industry. "By doing better than they," replied Godin. It is pure Emerson. I would add that most of the foregoing information and other matter relating to Godin found in this book are borrowed from a study by M. J. Prudhommeaux: *Les Expériences Sociales de Godin*, published by the author, 8, rue Jacques-Boyceau, Versailles.

enterprise characterized by a high degree of division of labour, with serial production.

We know that he founded at Guise in 1846 a manufactory of stoves and heating apparatus which incidentally still exists, and as these articles were made there in large numbers it was necessary, naturally, in order to conduct the business in an economic and profitable manner, to organize the foundry and assembly plant in such a way as to make full use of the laws of division of labour.

Thus we have a perfectly characteristic case of repetition work such as is generally believed to exist only in mechanical manufactures. Each workman having only to make perhaps the twentieth part of a stove, or even merely to prepare the accessories that were collectively necessary for the making of that twentieth part, the conditions of complete " brutalization " were all there for the benefit of that kind of observer who contents himself with appearances and knows nothing whatever of the inside of working life.

But in this case we find an employer who for two kinds of reasons *wishes to develop workers' initiative.* He desires it in the first place, admittedly, because his business must live : it must be soundly enough constituted in the matter of production costs to enable him to grapple effectively with competition. In the second place he desires it because he wishes the workers to take an interest in the operation of the factory as if it were their own concern. We know in fact that Godin made the necessary financial provisions to enable his personnel progressively to become the actual owners of the business.

We must preserve this attitude of mind, thanks to which we shall be able to demonstrate that the real problem does not rest between man and technical development, but simply between man and man. These remote

experiments of Godin have immense interest, in fact, as a general indication of the line along which we can make practical efforts to solve internal labour problems.

When we try to raise these matters with a head of a business we are invariably told that our intentions are doubtless excellent, but that the essential thing for him is that his business should carry on, and under the most satisfactory conditions from the point of view of output. We cannot ignore this preoccupation which is, in fact, essential: a man holding such a responsibility must study the proper functioning of the whole concern. Faced with this situation we must then consider the second element of the problem, which consists of the worker's aspiration for freedom and independence.

Those are the two inevitable data that must be reckoned with right from the start, and we must look about for the practical means by which we can satisfy them at one and the same time. If we confine ourselves to a superficial view of a business, we might regard the contradiction of these points of view as insoluble, and come to the conclusion that the head of the concern alone enjoys conditions that conduce to the spirit of enterprise. It is the head and he alone who, according to Fayol's formula, should and must *plan*, *organize*, *command*, *co-ordinate* and *control*, for those are the high duties which are far beyond the range of those whom we call " subordinates ", who have only to give scrupulous obedience so as in no way to upset the schemes devised by the chief for the smooth working of the whole affair. He is the head and the others are the members, and there being nothing in common between the tasks of the chief and those of his subordinates, it is only natural that there should be none either in their respective remunerations.

If all that is true, if every business consists of only one brain, around which all the other cogs must remain in passive submission, and that the whole affair should function like the parts of a well-regulated mechanism, then we must admit that output should be passive; for we do not expect a machine to give more than the quantity for which it was constructed. But if, on the other hand, we may question the absolute necessity of this form of purely mechanical hierarchy, then we may perhaps discover a means of transmitting the spirit of the entrepreneur to the worker as well. It is here that we must turn from the technical side and ask our business man whether his concern must necessarily retain this sort of military hierarchy, which demands passive obedience from top to bottom.

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Now as a matter of fact the need for the military character of this hierarchy is open to question, at least in many cases, and technology can frequently help us to solve the contradiction with which we are faced. It has already solved many other problems whose answers we have persisted in trying to find without it. It might also solve the problem of remuneration of labour if we would only give it a trial instead of eternally reverting either to futile speeches or to those means of constraint whose efficiency has always been side-stepped by the passive resistance of the workers.

What did Godin do, then, along this new path? What practical experiments did he make to enable his staff to get a relish for their work despite the inevitable division of operations imposed by technical requirements?

When he wished to put his plans into operation he began with a careful analysis of the entire internal structure of the business—a structure that had been built up empirically, like all practical achievements, in the course of a ten-years' effort.

> " In collaboration with one of the principal members of his staff he revealed the existence of six fundamental categories of industrial activity: (1) the counting-house, (2) the factory, (3) the foundry, (4) the stove shop, (5) the enamelling shop, (6) the stores and miscellaneous workshop. It was found that each of these six functions or principal branches of the industry ramified into secondary branches. Thus, for example, the counting-house included the following subdivisions: accountancy proper, finance, supplies, sales and production costs. It was seen that twenty-seven subdivisions or branches were derived from six " master " branches of the industry, and that each of these twenty-seven branches in turn gave rise to distinct elementary services. The service of supply, for example, included the following specialities: purchasing of raw materials, stocks and depots, suppliers' accounts, etc. In this way it was found that the entire factory embraced 116 clearly defined services." [1]

Having carried through this analysis Godin thought that he could give each of these various departments *a certain share of responsibility* as a starting-point for the whole interior transformation that he had been medi-

[1] In all the American books dealing with industrial organization the frequent use will be noticed of analytical charts of the same nature for the examination of all problems arising in the industry.

tating. He "*proposed to create as many groups as he had discerned distinct elementary functions, and to give them as an object of study the improvement of these services themselves*".

He went even further, because he thought of taking these groups as a basis of a democratic organization of the whole business. The objective thus given to the group included at first only its internal activity. Then he showed in an address delivered on 3rd January, 1878, that each of the elementary groups should be put in a position to elect a representative to sit on a sort of Board formed to administer not the whole business, as some impatient spirits might imagine, but simply one of the special branches of which the group formed part.[1] They could thus form, grade by grade, their own representative system in which the responsibilities to be exercised should never exceed the capacities of the individuals comprised in each of these grades.

Let us, however, leave on one side for the moment this outline of a possible representative system for industry, and look into the groups resulting from the analysis of the concern. It is, indeed, in the examination of the kinds of activities that we can entrust to these groups that we shall see that we can take two distinct attitudes towards them; thus we shall locate as it were the point of bifurcation that offers the workers two very different aims of life.

On the one hand, we can tell them—and this is the usual situation, more or less, in the businesses of today—that all they have to do is to obey the orders given to them. The management's job being to think for them, they have only to carry out passively what they are asked to do. And if what they are asked to do is mechanical

[1] See above the six fundamental branches of the business.

and repetitive, it can then have the effect of " brutalizing " them to the extent that it really does imprison their minds in the closed circle of work without initiative.

But we can also take a second attitude, which is just the one which Godin chose. As a result of his having entrusted the groups he set up with the duty of studying the means of improving their own services, these same men left the position of passive executants to take on responsibility.

A revolutionary step in the true sense of the word, in which we can discover the sure and non-Utopian antidote for the evils charged against technical progress. We say to the worker: " There is the fraction of the work in this concern that is entrusted to you. But you must in no wise look upon this fraction as if it had reached its final stage of evolution. You are free, if you feel that you have a taste for it, to apply all your inventive abilities to make drastic alterations, at your convenience, in its method of execution, provided, of course, that these alterations are in a progressive direction."

I wonder whether the whole of the difference between the two working situations that we have examined will now be understood.

Placed now in conditions where he can freely let loose his initiative and inventive abilities, the worker is no longer " a machine ". He can think and invent as much as he wants, for the field of technological improvement is as infinite as that of any other form of scientific or intellectual investigation. If he has both the desire and the ability the worker can now go ahead, and his new situation enables us to prove the entire falseness of those accusations against technical advance and mechanization, since he can be put in this new situation without our

having to make any alterations in working procedure. We have only changed the worker's situation in relation to these procedures, and this change of situation can show that if certain working conditions may tend to "brutalize" the worker, the procedures themselves have nothing to do with it. In front of the same task the worker may be conducted towards brutalization or towards understanding, and it is not the equipment that we have to judge, but rather the men who determine the conditions in which it is utilized.

That is why those who spread trite sayings against mechanization such as I have recalled really do the workers a disservice, by distracting their attention from the true problem. Their objections are sent to the wrong address, and I cannot repeat often enough that the real problem is not one of adjusting relations between man and the machine, but simply as between men.[1]

[1] Although interesting improvements have sometimes been brought about by apparently uneducated workers, I am quite aware that this kind of collaboration is often difficult. It is certain that many tenders of complicated and delicate machines entirely lack the technical knowledge that would enable them to work usefully on improvements. The difficulty of the problem should not, however, discourage us. We must remember how trying it can be to stand in front of a machine with no other thought than the slowness of the passing hours. For in such a situation the length of the working day does not make much difference, and they are easily satisfied who expect to dispose of this problem by demanding shorter hours. No matter whether it be four or five hours, the worker will still find it a "long stint". Ask a soldier whether an hour's guard duty does not seem to last a century. And a shortening of a period of guard duty in front of a machine brings no solution whatever. It is the moral attitude towards the work that must be changed. And meanwhile might we not at least study the subjects who are thus "put on guard" in front of machines, so as to avoid submitting to such a position of total passivity those who would show too high a degree of sensibility in such situations?

No doubt Godin did not achieve all the objectives that he set himself to attain, and he has bequeathed to us no final solution. What we know of his experiments enables us nevertheless to quote facts in illustration of the assertions we have made as to the intellectual possibilities opened up for the workers through the constitution of his groups. To convince oneself of this one has only to run through the details of technical suggestions that emanated from the workers themselves when they had been offered the means of making themselves heard. M. Prudhommeaux, in his little book from which I have already quoted, had the happy inspiration to reproduce a certain number of workers' proposals that were formulated long before we thought of importing from America the practice of offering " rewards for ideas " or keeping a " suggestion box ".

Let us take just one of these propositions as a real-life example of the exercise of the worker's intelligence in its true field of competence :

" Proposal by Defontaine, produced in Group No. 4 of the Assemblers' Union. Object : To make a flat, mobile stove-pipe with small pipe set square to it so that the flue can be placed at will either in front or behind, for heaters Nos. 14, 15, 16 and 17. The group, on 20th February, and the Assemblers' Union on 9th March having examined a model submitted by the proposer, have reported favourably. The Board of Administration on 6th June pass the proposal to the Committee on new products.

" The latter, considering that this new part could serve many useful purposes as flat-iron warmers or hot-plates for cooking in small households, adopt the

proposal (session of 4th July) and request the management to have the necessary preliminaries carried out."

There is an example of one of these historical documents from the painful story of labour that is worth so many of the others to which the historians devote their exclusive attention.

M. Prudhommeaux quotes numerous examples of the same nature, in which are revealed the infinite variety of problems upon which at any moment the worker's intelligence can be brought to bear—on condition, of course, that it is offered the opportunity.

By means of the experiments that he pursued with a tireless patience, Godin has given us a conclusive demonstration of the possibilities opened up by conceding a definite responsibility to the groups that he had created. The many proposals that emanated from these groups gave proof that the workers were capable of seizing an opportunity to exercise initiative, and that they could " think " of their work so as to improve processes.

On this point alone, then, Godin deserves great recognition, for he has done a pioneer's work. By this genuine " laboratory work " carried out in the factory, he has pointed to a line of research which I profoundly believe is the genuinely scientific line, which will render possible the solution of the great labour problems.

But along the path of all progress it always happens that the explorers halt at some point beyond which they know not how to advance ; their work accomplished—and Godin's was considerable—they leave materials behind which must be picked up and taken further. Thus it is that we can seize upon the idea of the group, the full value of which Godin does not seem to have realized, and take it as a basis of a new organization of work.

CHAPTER FOUR

Subdivision of a Business into Autonomous Groups

> Order is but a meaningless word without liberty. They are two connected and inseparable conditions.
>
> VICTOR CONSIDÉRANT

THE great obstacle which has always retarded the application of ideas relating to the liberation of the workers is the accusation that their nature seems Utopian. It is important therefore that we should avoid such objections by formulating only those proposals which are based upon a genuinely scientific examination of all the elements of the problem. Regarding the matter now under review, it is important to know whether the process of subdivision sketched out by Godin is always practicable in the present state of industrial organization, and consequently whether it could not be revived, developed and generalized, and thus afford a final remedy for the various disadvantages known to exist in the labour situation of today.

Not many years ago industrial organization began to become the subject of researches that were genuinely scientific in character. Up till then advances in methods had been brought about mainly through a long series of empirical trials. Thus as regards the subdivision of a business the industrialists, acting upon the simple logic of facts rather than with theoretical inspiration of any kind, have had to delegate to subordinates certain func-

tions which they were formerly able to carry out for themselves when the area covered by their business was less extensive. Why then should they not allow this process of delegation to continue and develop and even in certain cases to extend so far as a relative autonomy? —for it is of course necessary that the services enjoying this autonomy should remain in direct connexion with the concern as a whole, of which they could only be satellites.

What, then, might be the practical bases of such an autonomy? In order to discover them we must carefully examine the position and function of the worker in relation to his task. Only when it becomes possible for the worker to adjust himself freely to the practical difficulties with which he alone is in direct contact will his special function in the workshop be properly developed.

In order that the centrally determined programmes and plans of the business shall be smoothly carried out, scientific management requires a whole hierarchy of functions and organs of transmission. Now, if planning and administration constitute a separate mental task, the executive organs at the extremities, whose duty it is to handle the actual materials, are comparable with the sensory and motor organs by the aid of which the brain receives impressions from outside and then reacts upon the surrounding environment. If the brain thinks and organizes, it is the hand that touches, handles and lifts the object. Each has its function, and in the living organism there is no conflict between the centre which thinks and directs, and the extremities that are entrusted with making external contacts: it is a collaboration in which the organs cannot exchange functions.

In a business, the two sets of organs, those of direction and those of execution, ought to live in the same harmony.

Placed at the extremities, the personnel should be like the eye, the ear or the hand of the living being, the antennæ with which this being feels and acts. Every limitation placed upon the sensitiveness of these antennæ, every trammel upon their liberty to feel or to adapt themselves to all the contours of reality, under pretext of reserving initiative to the central authority, are just so many limitations to this central authority's means of action and, so to speak, just so many causes of infirmity.

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Let us take up Godin's idea at the point where he left it. Even if he stopped at the conception of a vast system of profit-sharing and did not think of restricting its field of operation to the dimensions of his groups, he nevertheless covered an important stage of the journey by this idea of subdivision alone. He was the first in fact to indicate the road along which we could find the formula of a precise and practical remedy for the various inconveniences recognized by all industrial observers ever since business concentrations began to bring important workers' groups together.

It is interesting to record that even at the period when big businesses were only beginning to appear, one of the men of the Revolution was already preoccupied with these same inconveniences. Thus it was that Mirabeau, who seems to have had a certain competence in economic matters,[1] had already considered ways of multiplying small businesses to avoid the inconveniences that he foresaw in the structure of large ones. In a work which I have not been able to consult and whose title, by the

[1] See Jaurès: *Histoire de la Constituante.*

way, does not seem to lead us to expect such considerations: *Essai sur la Monarchie Prussienne*, he used an expression that is significant enough, *entreprises séparées*, and he hoped to find a form of social equilibrium in the idea of craftsmen's units. No doubt his conception was not very clear on this matter, and it seems that he was unable to imagine a means of preserving the spirit of craftsmanship in the midst of the then dawning industrialism. But it is enough to note, even then, this concern for the small business, which we shall soon meet again in more recent writings. As for Mirabeau, it is worth pointing out in passing that he had dreamed before Fourier of combining agricultural with industrial labour, so as to increase its stability.[1]

If Godin had not thought of extending the freedom of his groups as far as autonomy—perhaps he did not know of the example of the typographers' *commandites* who were his contemporaries—this idea of the group has never ceased nevertheless to make its way. It reappeared in a work published in 1885 [2] in which the author, who had evidently meditated a long time on these problems, thinks of going a stage further. Here is what he writes:

[1] We know that this idea has been revived many times during recent years and particularly during the economic crisis, when it was recognized that populations having a basis of support in the cultivation of the land were less denuded of their resources than those engaged exclusively in industrial work. It was also announced that Ford intended to put an end to the enormous concentration of his business and to divide it up into a large number of small workshops scattered about the country. (*New York Times*, 5th February, 1933. See also, for details, my book *Les Codes de Roosevelt et les Perspectives de la Vie Sociale*, p. 161 ff., Grasset).

[2] Ad. Coste: *Les Conditions Sociales du Bonheur et de la Force*, Alcan, 1885.

"The true problem, in my opinion, is to make over to the worker his own little allotment in the domain of each industry, clearly to delimit his function, to marry his person to the material or to the equipment that is entrusted to him, to define his responsibility and at the same time to stimulate his personal pride and to specialize his profit.

"It would then be necessary in every establishment to create as many groups as there are special lines of goods in the stores or of distinct tasks in the factory; put each group under the command of a responsible departmental head who, while remaining under the master's control, would retain his initiative and would be the assessor of his own budget, the manager of his own plant, the controller of expenditure in accordance with the selling price.

"At the end of the year the economies effected by a department on its presumed budget would constitute its profit, to be shared with the master in an agreed proportion."

We see that Godin's idea has been carried a step farther. For all that, we are not yet at the limit of the possibilities contained in it, and which we shall discover little by little as we go on.

Nearer to our time, here is a French engineer who, in criticizing large-scale industry, considers its internal discomforts, and also contemplates its decomposition. But instead of turning towards the autonomous group he returns to the idea of the "small employer", to that artisan whose untenable position we have already examined above. Very justly reckoning, like Godin, and almost in the same terms, that the wage-earners are in a

state of semi-servitude, this engineer, M. Marcel de Coninck, writes in the *Grande Revue* [1]:

> "Abolish the *permanent wage-earners* by multiplying the number of employers to the limit: that is the goal to pursue! Hired labour could never be in principle more than a phase in the active career of a man, a period of training that enables him to become master of his trade. Every worker should aspire to become an *independent producer*."

I have put these last words in italics, for we shall shortly meet the essential idea again over another signature, and their strange similarity will help us to recognize the strength and persistence of an idea which is, as we say, "in the air" and which, one day or another, will find its ultimate road.[2]

M. Marcel de Coninck incidentally reverts again to the same idea in a little work in which he criticizes the railways, and in which he declares:

> "The best guarantee that we could possibly give to the 'proletariat' is an extreme multiplication of 'masters'. The prospect of becoming himself a master, after a salaried period of trade apprenticeship, will relieve the worker of the demoralizing idea of being a wretchedly poor man for the whole of his life. . . . To realize this miracle, we have only to

[1] February and March, 1931.

[2] In an article published by the English review *Business* (London, June, 1930) we find the following significant lines in which subdivision of businesses into units is given full justice, although the author does not exhaust all the advantages of his idea:

"Division of a business into small-size units avoids the mistakes of the large and takes advantage of the good points of the small business." (Quoted by the *Bulletin of the International Management Institute*, Geneva, September, 1930.)

render modern individual machinery available to the masses." [1]

M. Marcel de Coninck's preoccupation with making machine equipment accessible to the masses is quite essential, but in my view it would be a mistake to insist on the idea of a dispersion of ownership of the equipment. It would be enough to let the workers have the *use* of it.

Having registered the suggestion of this French engineer, let us now examine the ideas of one of his American colleagues who, having studied the character of modern businesses at some length, finally asks the following striking question : " To what extent can large groups be organized and managed to realize the abilities, capacities and energetic efforts of an individual as though he were in *a small business of his own* ? "

Is not this latter phrase which I have put into italics strangely similar to the one we found just now from the pen of M. Marcel de Coninck ? It is due to Mr. Malcolm C. Rorty, Vice-President of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, a man whom one would not take for a Utopian, and whose interesting reflections we shall now follow : [2] Mr. Malcolm C. Rorty first observes, and in doing so gives what I regard as a decisive answer to M. Marcel de Coninck, that the evolution of (large-scale) business will offer decreasing opportunities to enterprising men to set up independent concerns. He also declares that there will be a steady increase in the number of men endowed with capacities for headships of businesses who will be forced by circumstances to accept subordinate positions in some vast organization. These observations lead him on to declare clearly that " the

[1] *La Mort du Rail*, Cahiers bleus, Valois.

[2] See *Bulletin of the Taylor Society*, April, 1930.

forcing into corporation employment of an increasing number of men who have natural qualities of leadership and of independence of thought must have its inevitable reactions upon methods of management, and upon the forms and types of corporation organization".

Having thus set the problem, he tries to proceed with its analysis, and breaks it down into four leading questions:

1. Is the business economically justified as to type, size and location?
2. What should be the fundamental structure of the organization?
3. What general methods of management and operation will conduce to the soundest *esprit de corps*? [1]
4. What special monetary or other incentives should be offered to stimulate the personnel to put forth unusual efforts?

How were these various questions to be solved?

Considering existing businesses, he divided them into two large categories: those that can be designated as *functional*, that is to say in which the hierarchy of functions is organized in rigid fashion, and where the whole is submitted to the authority at the top, as in a military hierarchy. This type of organization is slow in action even if it has sometimes the superior advantage of important technical resources. It suffers from the growth of a certain bureaucratic spirit, and what he calls the mental ossification of subordinates in tasks that are too narrowly defined.

The other type of organization, which he calls non-

[1] These questions also resemble all that has been written in France in recent years on the necessity of creating the *team spirit*.

functional, is characteristic of the business of limited size, in which the head decides nearly everything for himself. This type is generally inferior from the technical point of view, but allows of quicker decisions in case of urgency, as there is no interposition of sluggish administrative machinery between the will of its head and its executive organs.

Thus we see that Mr. Rorty, after asking what must be done to imbue heads of functional concerns with the energy and adaptability displayed by the higher command of the independent business, looks for some sort of compromise which might bring this about, and thinks that the existence of an *esprit de corps* depends mainly upon a good choice of head men.

No doubt his observations on this subject are not devoid of value, but the question of leadership, no matter how important it may be, must still take second place to those organic changes which could ultimately realize that idea around which these men whose opinions I have quoted seem to revolve, without appearing to know how to define it.

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After these opinions I might point to other studies of a more substantial order and of the greatest importance to the case I am arguing here. They will demonstrate that the idea of organic change in industry tends more and more to haunt the minds of theorists engaged in purely technical investigations in this field. These relate especially to what we now call budgetary control of a business.

A centralized business of present-day type includes a central accounting department, and it has long been noticed that certain items appearing in the accounts,

which play a more or less important part in its operation, escape the exhaustive study that each department should receive if success is to be assured. They have realized that neither the bonus systems applied to workers who constitute the majority of the personnel, nor gratuities to members of the staff, succeed in stirring up that famous "productive enthusiasm" which ought to unite all concerned in unanimous fervour for maximum output. We must not forget, on the other hand, that production pure and simple is not the only source of profit, and that questions of quality and economy in raw materials and various supplies play an equally important part, and one which only appears in the accounts. In other words, centralized accounting allows the survival in private businesses of many symptoms of that inertia of which it is customary to accuse only state-managed concerns.

To combat this inertia, they have begun to turn to the solution that I am here to advocate. They have meditated a return to subdivision and autonomy, and more efficaciously than by a vague movement to restore the "small employer", they have begun to study means of putting an end to centralized accounting.

This has been accomplished by the famous shoemaking establishment of Bat'a, where each department operates like an independent business, so that the circulation of shoes in process of manufacture through the various workshops gives rise to genuine procedures of buying and selling.[1]

[1] See on this subject a study by M. Paul Devinat: *International Labour Review*, January and February, 1930. Various writers have taken an interest in the Bat'a factories and according to their inclinations have often misconstrued the exact meaning of the internal organization of this establishment. I had an opportunity to visit it in 1931 and to interrogate the workers through the medium of an interpreter who is a well-known Czech socialist, M. Eugène

The evolutionary tendency towards departmental autonomy is particularly clearly shown in a study published by Mr. Wolfgang W. Neumeyer of Berlin in the *Bulletin of the International Management Institute* of February, 1933. Mr. Neumeyer set himself to achieve this autonomy by means of a subdivision of the accounting staff according to technical departments. Although purely technical in character, this study contains modes of expression of ideas which show the general direction of his efforts, particularly when the author declares that "the control should not only strengthen a sense of responsibility but reward its successes". This phrase alone is enough to show that under this new method of organization internal relationships in the business tend to take on a new character, departing fundamentally from those formerly existing in the centralized concern. Another outstanding inference from Mr. Neumeyer's article is that inter-departmental relations, just as in the Bat'a example, tend to assume a commercial nature, in that their financial responsibility is involved when they receive or exchange products in course of manufacture.

In this connexion I should also mention another study which, like Mr. Neumeyer's, seems to offer a true technical preparation for the process of industrial subdivision that I am advocating. This is the chapter also relating to budgetary control to be found in the large volume published by the Taylor Society entitled *Scientific Management in American Industry*. Like many men who, although

Stern, and was able to ascertain that many reports spread by the Press about work in these factories were false. Regarding the organization of the Bat'a factories, see also M. Landauer's article in the *Bulletin of the Comité National de l'Organisation Française*, June, 1933, also the author's own *l'Example de Bat'a*, Grasset, Paris, 1937—Translator.

dealing with purely technical matters, consistently pursue a clearly defined idea, the author of this chapter illustrates his case with some extremely significant expressions. Boileau's famous lines on clarity of style can be applied, it seems, even in an accountant's thesis ! Thus Mr. John H. Williams sums up the kind of budget he advocates by describing it as "flexible". One could not better describe that constantly adaptable suppleness which should typify *organic* relationships. This author himself would no doubt be surprised at the possibilities implicit in a method of accountancy which he regarded only as a means whereby the head of the concern could follow more exactly the trends in his various departments. But that is how sometimes an investigator, quite unwittingly, can emphasize a method of which he had not foreseen the consequences.

In any case, and whatever the future may have in store for these researches, it is certain that they are destined to develop and, in the near future, noticeably to transform both the internal structure of business concerns and the various opportunities of the men engaged in them.[1]

This transformation will naturally be hastened if the tendency just referred to in methods of general organization is reinforced by men's spontaneous desires for

[1] A suspicion, more or less clearly expressed, of the value of the subdivision of businesses into autonomous groups is probably to be found in numerous writings of which I am ignorant. Here, for example, is one of these which was sent to me to read : " The team spirit, then, can only be revived if the worker feels himself to be some kind of an entrepreneur, with the whole of the initiative and responsibility which that word connotes." Louis Charvet, engineer : extract from *Annales des Mines*, November and December, 1926. Dunod.

Again, in a work published in 1903 the following characteristic phrase occurs : " Industrial enterprises must become more of a series of sub-enterprises." *Les Conflits du Travail et Leur Solution*, by Yves Guyot, Fasquelle.

independence as artisans, as we have noted above. This desire is so strong that when I was speaking of workers who sought to " free themselves " from the large concern by " setting up on their own " I might also have mentioned cases of workers who strove to free themselves collectively by founding co-operative producing societies. France is, as we know, the country in which the movement for workers' co-operative manufacturing societies is the longest established and the most deep-rooted.[1] Nevertheless the promoters of co-operative manufacturing societies find themselves up against serious difficulties. It is not enough that their members should find among themselves a man of the necessary commercial acumen to manage a business ; they have also to muster sufficient capital. This reason alone has always prevented the promotion of such societies in industries that demand heavy investments.[2]

Must the workers in these latter industries then give up all hope of liberation ? Have they no other alternatives than to resign themselves to being mere " regimental numbers " in a large concern, when they find that it is definitely impossible for them to found either a small workshop or a co-operative oasis ? The idea of sub-dividing the large concern into a quantity of small autonomous *sub-concerns* demonstrates that the road to freedom is open to all, and I must now examine it in greater detail.

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[1] For full information on this particular subject, consult La Chambre Consultative des Associations Ouvrières de Production, 24, rue de Renard, Paris.

[2] See in Appendix E my note on the experiment in co-operative production of the Naumkeag Textile Company in the U.S.A., i.e. in an industry in which neither the constitution of a Co-operative society nor subdivision into autonomous teams seemed possible.

The reader will have learned from the foregoing matter the nature of the plan which constitutes the central idea of this book: it consists essentially in taking as a basis of a new form of business organization all those subdivisions that an analysis on Godin's lines could show to be technically separable. Then, having defined these units, they must be granted an autonomy that is not only technical but also in some way budgetary in character, so that each of those men who are included in a given unit, as a result of an equitable proportional distribution of the product of the work, finds himself in a situation comparable to that which is offered him in an independent business. It goes without saying that this autonomy is conceivable only within limits compatible with the harmonious working of the concern as a whole. In this way the business might resemble a juxtaposition of cells in which that much-sought equilibrium could be established between the personal interest of each individual and the collective interest of the whole enterprise. All the internal relationships of the business, whether as between the individual and the group, or between the group and the concern as a whole, would tend to become purely commercial in character, with the disappearance of this notion of subordination which is an inexhaustible source of conflict.

Such a form of organization would also show that, just as in matters political and economic, we can conceive of the establishing of a sort of industrial federalism [1] in which each of the different departments could be inde-

[1] We may remark here that this special kind of federalism, adapted to technical requirements, is the only sound basis of this "industrial democracy" on which many theorists, at bottom, have only vague ideas, generally too much imbued with notions derived from party politics.

pendent as regards their internal activities on condition that they completely harmonized that activity with those of the departments with which questions of production brought them into direct contact. If, in a given series of operations, it is absolutely necessary that a workshop should receive the work that it has to do under certain conditions established by the general production plan, and subsequently to release it to the next department under certain conditions also planned beforehand, there still remains nevertheless between these two fixed points a margin available for the exercise of the spirit of initiative.

It is this margin which it would be possible to entrust to the workers, so that the carrying out of an operation could serve as the basis for the constitution of an autonomous undertaking; this new undertaking being detached, as it were, from the big one would then become a *sub-concern*.[1]

The autonomy of the group thus detached may also be characterized by the fact that the mother-concern no longer has any relations with the individual members of the group. The delegate or leader of the group will receive from the concern, as represented by its ordinary technical staff, a collective specified job to be carried out at an agreed all-in price. This is what makes it easiest to understand how the general organization of the business is not interfered with in any way. It merely unloads, so to speak, the details of the job to be done on to the group, at the same time placing its premises, equipment and the necessary raw materials at their disposal.

[1] Outside the field of industrial organization but in one where personnel matters play an equally important part, i.e. in the big shops, we already see an application of the idea of subdivision of the business in the relative autonomy of the " departments ". Ad. Coste, whom I have already quoted (see p. 79), did not overlook this example.

To give an example, when this method of work was put into practice with the typographers for the setting-up of a daily newspaper, the bargain took the form of a contract under which the typographers' team undertook to furnish the composing work necessary to the paper at a given time and at a predetermined price. This bargain obviously could take different forms according to the nature of the work to be done. This could be a certain bulk, or a certain area of stone or brickwork in the case of building operatives. Each trade can thus fix a given quantity of work to be carried out by a team, this team taking entire responsibility for the work, like an ordinary contractor.[1] It follows that the group becomes master of its internal life and is free to organize the work entrusted to it according to its own taste and best interests. It can recruit its own members, divide the work among them as convenient, and share the profit according to such rules as it deems equitable.[2]

Take first of all the question of sharing the work. If we remember that the remuneration is collective, we shall understand that each member of the group has the greatest possible interest that the task should be divided as exactly as possible among the various kinds of ability

[1] See in Appendix A the baker's contract (Caudry Co-operative Society).

[2] It will be understood that I am not dealing here with the question of the price of labour, which must also be determined upon a commercial basis, and not on one of "cost of living", of which I have spoken elsewhere. The commercial contract is the one essential point through which we can escape from the wage-system, and there is no other way.

To those who have no real knowledge of the abilities and habits of the workers the difficulties of agreeing on a fair assignment of work and distribution of profits among the members of the group seem often to be insurmountable, but experience has shown that they are usually solved with great ease.

that are latent in the group. We may also add that the workers themselves know how to weigh up their respective capacities better than anyone else. If, for example, you ask the workers to grade themselves in order of trade competence you can rest assured that they will carry out this classification with the most scrupulous exactness. All the experiments have shown that on valuations of each other's services they can judge infallibly.[1] If, incidentally, one of them should raise an objection, there are test procedures in the workshops which permit of a rapid sifting of opinions. Consequently it is certain that under these conditions of freedom the sharing of the work will be carried out in a more rational manner than it ever is by the attention of any head of a department.

If we pass on to the problem of sharing the monetary takings, we may assert that this will be carried out with the same facility. We have only to remark that the method of this sharing may vary according to the different occupations. In cases where the tasks offer approximately equal difficulties, distribution by equal shares will clearly prevail. When, on the other hand, the execution of the work demands different kinds of ability of unequal value, a method of proportional sharing can be devised.

[1] Regarding this certainty of estimation of trade competence by the workers themselves, we might recall those memories of *compagnonnage* (a period of service of a journeyman after apprenticeship), i.e. of a time when education, even of an elementary order, was less widespread than it is today. We know that the journeymen's societies admitted a candidate only after an examination that was not only scrupulous but even punctilious regarding his knowledge of the trade. Further, the various *Devoirs* (craftsmen's associations), in which pride of craftsmanship was extremely highly developed, held frequent competitions, the usual object of which was to ensure exclusive rights to work in a given locality. On these occasions each *Devoir* paraded the most skilful workers that it was able to take into its fold after a rigid process of selection.

This proportion can be very easily determined by assigning to each member of the group a coefficient which will serve as a basis of calculation for the distribution of the total remuneration. Let us add further that, appearances notwithstanding, it has been shown by experience that the determination of the coefficient by the workers themselves has presented no difficulties whatever.[1]

I have taken part in an experiment of which a description will be found later on,[2] and which very easily solved this particular problem.

There is no need to labour this point in order to show what a perfect unity of interests is created by these methods of sharing, whichever they may be, because all personal effort has its repercussion, at the same time personal and collective, upon the sum that is to be shared. Not only is each member of the group interested in giving the highest possible value in his own contribution, but he is equally interested in a similar raising of the standard on the part of all the others, and consequently in helping them whenever the occasion may occur.

This perfect unity of individual and collective interests

[1] Among the typographers, who have a long experience of this system of work, to which they have given the name of *commandite*, three types of distribution have been adopted. That in which the distribution is made in equal parts is called an *equalizing* commandite. Another type established to meet conditions of work peculiar to this occupation has been named *pro rata*. The third type, which allows of a genuine proportional distribution is called a *mixed commandite*. The assignment of coefficients is a practical procedure in cases where it is only a question of using as a basis trade competence or gradings such as those which distinguish with more or less precision the differences in the hourly rates when men are on "time-work". This last method of distribution on a basis of coefficients has been called a *quoted commandite*. See in Appendix B an example relating to this method of distribution.

[2] See page 122 ff.

can enable us now to refer back to the objections already noted regarding the generally recognized inefficacy of ordinary profit-sharing. We found that this inefficacy was mainly caused by the excessive scope and complexity of the business concern as a whole, which prevented most members of the personnel from having a clear conception of its entirety. From this we concluded that the ordinary run of workers could not easily appreciate their own personal interest in its smooth working and consequently that we are dealing with a method of remuneration which lacks the objective that we want above all to attain, viz. to get the whole of the personnel actively interested in the success of the concern that employs them.

If we recall these objections we shall easily see that the subdivision of the business into relatively autonomous groups is the only practicable means of replacing this totality by a sufficiently limited area, i.e. one which is, so to speak, within range of the workers' field of vision. If this subdivision were carried out we should not be rash in thinking that each unit would be able to appreciate more easily—provided of course that it had a part to play—the benefits that its own contribution could bring to the totality.

In this restricted area, within easier reach of the worker than the totality of a business in which so many of the data escape his notice, the problem of " profit-sharing " would be restored to more understandable and, above all, more efficacious proportions.[1]

If the workers composing the group have only to share in a subdivision of the general budget of the business, or in the price of work undertaken collectively, and the price

[1] Note also that in this method we dispose of the well-known objection according to which profit-sharing involves the personnel in the results of commercial operations in which they have had no part.

of which will be fixed according to data that are in current usage in their particular industry, it is evident that the various constituent factors in the questions which interest them will be much more accessible to them.

From now on we have the right to hope that they will be able, just as much as their chief, to regard their workshop as their own domain and will work as hard as they can in it, being now sure of receiving their just share of the results. We may be sure that when we have succeeded in putting them in this situation in which they will be able in their turn to share in the spirit of the entrepreneur, there will no longer be any need to think of complicated systems of payment to serve as baits for their exertions.

We may also note that with this form of co-operative group *without capital*, the workers will be freed from the chief obstacle which so severely impeded the promotion of manufacturing co-operative societies. Being a complete business, the manufacturing co-operative society requires not only administrative talents which the workers are usually without but also, as I have already mentioned, the capital which they lack even more. That is why the history of workers' manufacturing co-operatives is so often merely the history of years of self-imposed privations by the founders who managed little by little, sometimes by going without their salaries, to build up their necessary working capital.

The workers possess a personal capital in their capacity for work, their knowledge, their tradesmen's competence. It is only this capital that they ought to put in a common pool. As for the other factors in the business, money-capital, administrative ability, it is now no longer necessary for them to possess these in order to tread the road of co-operative labour. If we revert to Mr. Mer-

cer's remarks which I noted previously [1] we shall easily understand that even in a manufacturing co-operative society the work cannot in a certain sense be regarded as really co-operative if the internal structure of the enterprise does not differ in any respect from that of the ordinary business, i.e. if the graded organization of functions and the *subordination of individuals* one to another is exactly the same as we find in "capitalist" concerns. Under such conditions the worker in a manufacturing co-operative society can really only become the co-proprietor of the concern. As for the nature of his relations with his chiefs, they may be the same as in other concerns. He receives orders which he must carry out; no doubt he has a means of reacting upon these orders, but by channels which are in a sense external to the work, that is to say by those which are at the disposal of a shareholder. I know well that in practice this kind of relationship may be better than in other concerns, but it depends only upon the goodwill of the individuals involved and not upon a difference in their respective positions. Thus we can perfectly well conceive of the formation of co-operative teams within a co-operative society, no matter whether a manufacturing or a distributive one,[2] each team taking responsibility for a fraction of the general responsibility.

Let us observe also the high flexibility and mobility of this co-operative without capital, because it can always dissolve at the conclusion of a given operation—the division of the fee earned communally, and immediately shared out, can be likened to a genuine liquidation—and be quickly reconstituted for a new piece of work perhaps

[1] See page 16.

[2] See page 210 and in appendix A the case of the bakers in the Caudry Co-operative Society.

differing in responsibility or in magnitude, and adapt itself immediately to the fresh requirements of the new task.

In the chapter which I have devoted to the importance of the question of remuneration of labour the reader will remember how I insisted on the absolute necessity of taking as the point of departure for any attempt at establishing a new régime of work—and under penalty of taking the wrong road—the idea of personal self-interest. I know enough of the ideas held by theorists who dream of building an ideal city peopled with perfect men, to have no illusions as to the objections that can be raised on this matter. It is only because I know that men are not "perfect" that I must resign myself to taking them as they are! I know that even should we wish as a matter of principle to neglect personal interest, we should be reminded of the fact by the interested parties themselves.[1]

It is not without interest to remark that the Russians, who also started out with theoretical conceptions after the Soviet Revolution, have had to return in working matters to systems of remuneration based upon output. This relapse has been the object of many ironical remarks among certain of our socialist theorists, writers and politicians, who are accustomed to finding elegant solutions for the most difficult problems . . . on paper.[2]

[1] In a brochure published by the Chambre Syndicale Typographique Parisienne, in 1905, as propaganda in favour of *commandite*-work we find the following lines, certainly dictated by experience:

"The equalizing *commandite* is certainly the most ideal form, but unfortunately we must not forget that men are only men and nothing more; also that humanitarian sentiments disappear often enough before material interests, and whatever may have been the rules that we would have liked to have imposed, they often have to give way to their members' greed."

[2] See *Le Populaire*, 13th April and 11th May, 1931.

No one who knows men can be astonished at the measures that Russian industry has been compelled to take to obtain a proper output. There are, and there will be for a long time yet, but few men capable of acting from idealistic motives. To be astonished or indignant about this is merely to show one's ignorance of the reality of men and things. In any case so far as I am concerned I cannot too much insist on the necessity of basing any reform of the working régime only upon the psychology of existing men, and not upon those of exceptional or even imaginary ones.

Moreover, an intelligent organization of the group can moderate certain disadvantages in an unchaining of the profit-seeking spirit. For example, a current objection voiced against group-work by those who have never tried it is the suggestion that it would create among the workers taking part in it a spirit of brutal competition, and would necessarily lead them to adopt merciless methods of selection. It is complained that they would reject the weak and less skilful. This overlooks the rule of proportional distribution which gives each man what is judged to be his fair share. The weak or unskilful receiving a share in accordance with the value of his collaboration, limited if need be to a certain easily determined minimum, no one will be harmed and therefore no one could have any interest in his rejection. . . . Theory? Ask the *facts* and they will answer. They will show that simple people have practised mutual aid and solidarity long before wise philosophers made a theory about it.[1]

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[1] See especially what has been done regarding utilization of the weak by the luggage porters, for whom we have reserved a special chapter later on, see page 157 (note).

If we now recall our ambition relating to the abolition of the wage system, we may remark that it is from the moment when the group is ready to divide the price of a piece of work undertaken and carried out in common, that its members cease to be wage-earners.

The wage is, in effect, the method of payment which essentially implies the subordination of the worker's *person*.[1] But when the man is remunerated according only to the value of his labour, and not from the mere fact that his person is at the disposal of whoever employs him, he is no longer a wage-earner any more than the tailor, who undertakes to make a garment with the cloth that his customer brings him, is the salaried employee of his customer.

Let us further note how such a distribution would allow us simultaneously to liberate not only the workers' efforts, but those of the personnel of all the " staffs ", particularly if we were bold enough at the same time to think of limiting the rewards of capital.[2]

Is not the personnel of direction and management often placed in a situation almost identical with that of the workers, by virtue of its fixed remuneration, independent or nearly so of the success of the business ? I say " nearly so " when I think of the bonuses which various heads of departments generally receive. But how inferior is the system of bonuses to that of independent groups, which alone entirely sets free the motives of personal interest ! When the workers enjoy a freedom commensurate with

[1] It is clear that I am dealing here with the position of the vast majority of the workers. Legally, it might be otherwise in cases of persons paid for a *job* or for *services* other than those for which the workers are ordinarily paid.

[2] I will return later to this important question. See appendix E, page 263 ff.

their capacities, they will be able to pass from the *passive* to the *active* attitude, and make their own adaptations to necessities and circumstances which they are in the best position to understand. Then they will translate into practical realities, and with more direct logic, those intellectual abstractions that emanate from higher up.

An important observation must now be made regarding the possibilities of applying this idea in the immense variety of working conditions created by the diversity of industrial techniques. Seeing that the mind is always inclined to create abstract structures where everything appears simple and easy, where above all it appears possible to apply uniform rules, we must remind ourselves that life offers an infinite variety of *cases* where the direct application of a general formula is impossible without the mediation of a special method of adapting it. I must insist on this point in order to show that only those interested in each particular case should be in a position to reveal the lines of this necessary adaptation, for the numerous details of such an application obviously cannot be indicated here. All that it is possible to do is to explain to those who are interested the outstanding characteristics of this method of organization of work, and to leave them free to adapt them to the particular conditions existing in their locality. Here are these characteristics set out in four fundamental rules :

(1) Free recruitment of workers by their collective unit, constituted as a co-operative labour group.

(2) Collective undertaking of specified work for a price agreed between the employer and the delegate of the co-operative labour group.

(3) The workers grouped in the collective undertaking

themselves choose their leaders and freely organize the execution of the work entrusted to them.

(4) Distribution of the total price of the work among the workers according to the method of sharing judged by them to be suitable.[1]

That those interested should themselves be free to adapt these principles to the needs of their particular case is an essential condition for success. One cannot too strongly insist on the fact that the technical and practical details of this general idea can only be worked out by those who know the secrets or, perhaps better, the inmost implications of a given class of work, those almost mysterious factors which those concerned in it *sense*, and which are hidden from the profane who have had no direct experience of them.

When we remember the special flair possessed by those railway porters, whose example will be explained later on, we may take it that theirs is no exceptional case. In every occupation, and under influences as yet unexplored by science, various aptitudes and what seem to be special senses are developed through long practice of the particular work: these aptitudes generally escape the notice of outside observers together, incidentally, with almost

[1] These characteristics, which I first published in the *Revue des Etudes Co-opératives* (January–March, 1925) were adopted the same year by the Semaine de la Co-opération which was organized by the Fédération nationale des Co-opératives de consommation. I must add that in his work on *Methods of Industrial Remuneration* (Williams & Norgate, London, 1898) Schloss, omitting the question of sharing the collective earnings, had already enumerated these characteristics in the following manner: (1) The members of the co-operative group are associated by their free choice, they themselves decide of how many persons and of which persons the group will be composed; (2) The associated workers choose their own chief; and (3) They organize the distribution of the collective work among the members of the group as seems equitable to them.

everything connected with the inner life of labour. It is just the result of the man's mysterious and spontaneous adaptation to the circumstances in which he has to live, and is no longer a question of physiology but of psychology. There also the need creates the organ, but this is an order of things which we shall not understand well unless scientific investigation is extended to the innermost details of life in the various trades, instead of confining itself to a superficial study of gestures and appearances which conceal the internal realities from the profane.[1]

If such daring notions do not appear to be too far from the subject, I would say that the régime to be created in the business concern should tend as far as possible to resemble that unity which is peculiar to organic entities, in which the autonomy of the organs is found to be perfectly integrated within the solidarity of the ensemble. The old apologue of the limbs and the stomach could thus find its modern interpretation in harmonious organization of work. Perhaps it is not so unreasonable to think that relations between human beings—which is the final essence of the internal life of a business—should be

[1] It is very significant to observe that most modern artists who interpret in these matters the typical outlook of the "cultivated classes" deal only in their paintings with energetic kinds of work. For most of the time all that they see in the workman is the navvy, and it is evident that the special efforts of skilled tradesmen almost entirely escape them. It is true that this kind of effort would be more difficult for them to interpret, for it would have to be expressed only by such subtle movements as those of the facial muscles, instead of by crude distensions of the muscles of the arms! An American painter, Gerritt A. Beneker, has already succeeded better in this vein than our European celebrities. If only they would drop that stupid idea of manual labour! Oh, you comfortable middle classes, does the cook who contrives your dainty dishes work with her head, or only with those hands that she uses to peel her vegetables?

capable some day of being arranged according to laws which will doubtless be somewhat analogous to those of biology. In animal life, each organ functions on its own account to sustain the life of a complex being. They labour and nourish themselves, giving and receiving at one and the same time in that admirable equilibrium which is the very nature of living phenomena. "It is urgent therefore that those who aspire to positions of responsibility in industry and commerce should have some general understanding of biological principles," declares Mr. Leonard P. Lockhart in *The Human Factor*[1] and he very justly adds that if we speak of industry as an *organism* we should cease to treat it like a machine.

It is not Utopian to imagine that a day will come—no doubt a distant one—when within each group, and then within the higher organisms formed by the groups, a harmony will reign similar to that of living beings. Some families already offer an example of perfectly organized groups of human beings. Why should it be too daring to imagine that the organization of human work, beginning from the workshop, could function some day in the same equilibrium? Is this beyond human genius to achieve? I do not believe it. All that we can say is that man is not yet ready. I agree. But let us then take the educational road that will render man capable of being integrated in such an ensemble.

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Having thus reassembled the arguments which seem to

[1] Monthly journal of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, February, 1933, Aldwych House, London, W.C.2 now replaced by the quarterly journal: *Occupational Psychology*—Translator).

be most suitable for the maintenance of my case, I would still like to make a last effort in its favour by appealing to sources of evidence which may seem unexpected enough in such a connection, but which nevertheless should serve to reinforce and consolidate the ideas I have expounded as to the value of tendencies towards autonomy.

When earlier on I was drawing from the ideas of Mr. Malcolm C. Rorty [1] I mentioned his allusion to the military hierarchy. I would like now to return to this subject so as to formulate certain observations upon the evolution of army organization, in which there also exists a tendency towards subdivision and autonomy of the organs.

With a very different objective in view—the waging of war—we reassemble a certain number of men recruited from civilian life. These are just ordinary men of varying qualities, quite like those recruited by industry, because they are in fact the same. With these mere "men", as the military professionals are wont to speak of them, they have to make soldiers, and with these soldiers, an army, i.e. a concordant and easily handled ensemble.

Now it is interesting to study the evolution of military organization, seeing that it has been brought to its highest efficiency by the progressive introduction of forms of relative autonomy. By this process of evolution, which has lasted for centuries, we see that since ancient times the army has ceaselessly moved away from the essentially centralized, massive and compact form of the Greek phalanx, through the more mobile parcelling out of the Roman legion, towards the extreme flexibility of the military formations of today, and particularly those described in military terminology as "tactical units".

[1] See page 82.

All this evolutionary process shows that these new units have been constituted in order to give them greater mobility, or in other words to allow them to adapt themselves more rapidly to the changing necessities of warfare. The former Army Corps is subdivided into " Divisions " which have themselves also become autonomous " Departments "—complete armies and quite distinct from the army as a whole, in the same way as a " department " of a large firm might operate in the manner of an independent business. Moreover we know too of the new part played by the *section*, which constitutes yet another subdivision, with duties entirely analogous to those of industrial team-work. As for the soldier himself, we all know that " open order ", necessitated partly by the new conditions of military technique, and resulting from causes that I shall discuss immediately, has brought its own parallel changes in forms of discipline. His isolation in conditions of warfare has led the higher command to rely more on his initiative. When the demolition of the field of operations has broken all the contacts he had with his leaders, there can no longer be any question of mechanical obedience to orders, as in a barracks. He must organize his position " on his own ". He has really become an active unit, and must look to himself for the motives determining his acts. The forces of cohesion that unite him with his surrounding factors are derived from his own will, and no longer from a material force that is external to him, like that which formerly united the members of a Macedonian phalanx, who " felt the ropes " in the literal sense of the phrase and even, it is said, were sometimes joined to each other for greater safety by means of iron chains !

Very striking it is, then, that the metamorphosis of

military organization should already have followed the road that I advocate for the internal transformation of industrial relations. The lessons of the last war showed conclusively that the army is visibly tending to lose its former aspect of mechanical organization in order that it too may be modelled in accordance with the inner constitution of living organisms. The High Command now only concerns itself with schemes of a higher strategical order, leaving the organs that are in contact with the enemy the responsibility of interpreting its fighting orders, and of using their armed equipment and the resources of the terrain at their own discretion.[1]

[1] To be carried out in a perfect manner, every adaptation should be left to the free play of extremely sensitive and elastic elements, entirely free from rigid attachment to the solid structure of which they form the surface. If a concrete example is required, I would compare the mechanism for adaptation of all kinds with that of the pneumatic binding of the wheel of a motor-car. This (the tyre) by itself, and much more than the spring—a mechanical organ—ensures perfect contact between the rigid ensemble of the vehicle and the unevenness and roughness of the ground, whose surface is continually and rapidly variable. No central will could intervene quickly enough to dictate how to "swallow the obstacle", and it is remarkable that we have only succeeded in solving this problem thanks to the use of an eminently flexible material, and one which, in consequence, is particularly unsuitable for exactly *transmitting* a movement coming from the centre as is done, for example, by the metal gears. On the other hand, if it cannot transmit, it is particularly suitable for receiving and absorbing immediately a shock coming from the outside. As regards the philosophy of industrial work, it should be important to study all cases of transmission of movements between the organs or supple materials, and rigid agents, so as to compare them with the relations between the general organization—a rigid framework—and the man—a living and sensitive element. Another case is presented by the free expansion of gas or vapour—substances that are even more flexible than rubber—in cylinders in which their particularly elastic force is transformed into mechanical movement transmitted by organs of hard metal.

Let us further note that if these organs are now allowed that autonomy which finds its fullest expression in " open order ", it is because the soldier of today is no longer a machine, as was his counterpart of the distant past, but rather a man capable of acting on his own impulses. Like the artisan who works " on his own account ", the citizen-soldier who fights for his freedom no longer has need of an external authority to dictate his conduct. It is entirely significant to this subject that " open order " was born in the first armies which in modern times have really been people's armies, fighting for a cause that all could understand, and which each and every soldier could make, so to speak, his personal affair. Thus it is that " open order " which is generally believed to be due to the appearance of rapid-firing arms, was first applied spontaneously by soldiers who only had flint-guns at their disposal—those of Washington's army in the American Revolution, and the same was true some few years later of the soldiers of the French Revolution.[1]

[1] See the book quoted on page 43. In the wars of the past examples of initiative due to some form of subdivision are rare. This subdivision had to be imposed, for example, by the nature of the ground, which precluded all mass action. Thus, according to M. de Ramsay, historian of Turenne, the battle of Ensheim in 1674 was engaged in conditions that were contrary to all tradition, and compelled the officers to take unaccustomed responsibilities. " All the officers acted as their own chiefs, and made decisions according to circumstances. The irregularity of the ground and the ferocity of both sides prevented the giving and receiving of orders in the customary manner: the encounter was detailed to an extraordinary degree " (quoted by Jaurès in *L'Armée Nouvelle*). However, although orders could neither be given nor received " in the customary manner ", Turenne on this occasion, with 15,000 men, defeated the 40,000 Imperial troops who were invading Alsace.

In the light of these military precedents are we not justified in thinking that if the central command of a business renounced

This fact has a profound significance, which is worth meditating now that we are reaching a new phase in the division of labour. Washington's soldiers, like those of Carnot, were not mercenaries—nor wage-earners—like the Hessian troops that England sent to fight in America. At this closing period of the eighteenth century they introduced a new element to confront the old-type armies of the former régime, which included an odd jumble of Swiss and other professionals of the military "trade", but no citizen-soldiers personally and individually interested in the defence of a social community.

It is a phenomenon of the same kind, then, that might appear with the subdivision of businesses into autonomous groups. Just as the function of the army staff is above all things to ensure contact with the enemy, that of the higher executives of the business concern will be more and more only to take care of the relations which must be established between it and the outside world, leaving to the lower organisms the duty of looking after the details of combat with the raw materials.

Industry of the future will follow the same road as we have seen taken by the army. Its staffs will content themselves more and more with the general policies of businesses, with organizing, purchasing and sales, with harmonizing the work of the departments, while the whole of their internal life will be pursued through the free functioning of differentiated organs.[1]

the issuing of certain orders "in the customary manner", and granted more freedom to the combatants—to the workers—it might also obtain unexpected results?

[1] A famous military man has already occupied his spare moments —those in which he was not making war!—in thinking out a reorganization of civil life, in which he wished to base this reorganization upon the most important social cell after the family,

Let us pass now from the soldier to the labourer.

If I have tried in effect to point out the value shown by the progress of freedom and initiative in all the fields in which I have been able to find it, I could not possibly forget the historical precedent which is perhaps the most capital that could be invoked in favour of this idea of subdivision.

How could we ever forget the consequences involved in our country from the parcelling out of the properties of the old régime? In the agricultural sphere, what was this parcelling out but a phenomenon of division, which supplied the peasant not only with material property, but with a reason for living, a possibility of eventually fulfilling an intelligible destiny, in a word, with a form of spiritual nourishment intimately linked with the means of labour—the soil?

In a letter written by a country priest at the time of the Revolution, which Jaurès quotes,[1] we may read the following recommendation which even then pointed to all the benefits hoped for from the dispersion of the National Wealth: "It is important that the lands be divided between the greatest possible number of hands,

i.e. upon the parish. In a note that Napoleon dictated to his brother Lucien in 1800 he said that "if he were not distracted by the war (!) he would begin to restore the prosperity of France by parishes". He certainly had in mind the idea of subdividing the problem which consisted of finding how to ensure harmony and prosperity in a great country, for he said: "Each parish (commune) in France represents a thousand inhabitants. Work for the prosperity of thirty-six thousand parishes, and you work for the happiness of thirty-six million inhabitants; *by simplifying the question, by diminishing the difficulty*, by all the difference between making contact with thirty-six thousand and with thirty-six million" (quoted by Victor Considérant, *Destinée Sociale*, Paris, 1847).

[1] *Histoire de la Constituante*, p. 652 (Rouff).

so as to interest as many men as possible in the maintenance of order."

I have italicized the last words of this obscure man,[1] and I ask that they be deeply meditated for it is not only in agriculture, but in the whole gamut of human labour, that we should " interest the greatest number of men in the maintenance of order ". Think of the millions of men whom modern industry has morally uprooted, and you will consider that it is time to give them, as was done for the peasants of the eighteenth century, a more substantial reason for living than their material wage.

Obviously, for inescapable technical reasons, there can be no question of dividing the material property of industry like that of the land.[2] The problem is different, no doubt, but that is no reason for giving up trying to find safety by an analogous route. " Since the abolition of personal slavery," says Auguste Comte, " the proletarian masses have not yet been . . . genuinely incorporated in the social system." [3]

The subdivision of businesses, operated on the triple basis of technology, budgeting and responsibility, will alone provide one day in the life of labour results identical with those which have been attained by the parcelling out of agricultural property. In accordance with the thought of Comte, it will offer a means of incorporating in the resulting unified ensemble of human labour those workers who have hitherto withheld their wholehearted adherence to it.

[1] According to Jaurès, the Abbé Coveleau, Vicar of Péault, in the canton of Moreuil (Somme).

[2] I leave on one side the question of subdivision of industrial property by means of shares which, as we know, is far from effecting results comparable with the parcelling out of the soil.

[3] *Philosophie Positive*, 57th Lesson.

We shall also see among them a reappearance of the taste for work and even the taste for beautiful work, as well as the energy, daring, inventive spirit and all those virile qualities which are to be seen in the man of independent life, but which relapse into slumber as soon as that same man is placed in a state of subjection.

The mistake about all systems hitherto invented for inciting men to work, and this applies to so-called " scientific " systems more than the others, has been the attempt to imprison human personality in a sort of machinery designed to obtain work by force. The only efficient system will be that which will revert, on the contrary, to the natural forces that every man carries inside him, and which urge him from within towards all forms of spontaneous effort.

It is comforting, then, to find that the evolution of technology—of which so much evil is spoken—has in no wise for ever shut off human beings from those paths which lead to the development of the individual and to the satisfaction of those inner tendencies which we can discover in the most unexpected ways in the most unpretentious worker. If we can manage to change our attitude towards these labour problems and entrust their solution to those psychological and moral forces which from all time have enabled man to achieve his greatest efforts, we shall understand the vanity of continuing to seek for this solution by various systems of external pressure.

Chapter Five

Some Applications of the Idea of Subdivision and Autonomy

Without having as yet openly arrived at complete autonomy for the groups, certain industrial concerns have already made experiments with forms of subdivision in accordance with the idea which I have developed in the previous chapter. These examples of subdivision are interesting mainly as demonstrations of the fact that the constitution of autonomous groups is possible, and do in fact prove that certain elements of a business can be isolated without affecting the proper functioning of the whole.

The most elementary way of applying the group idea is probably that which has been practised in the United States as a means of remedying the scarcity of qualified workers. Because of this scarcity they tried to make a maximum use of the time and skill of these workers by placing at their disposal not only the best tools, but assistants as well. When a piece of work is entrusted to them they can requisition, according to their needs and the nature of the work, as many as four or five assistants who will carry out the most elementary processes under their constant supervision, while they restrict themselves to doing only those delicate parts of the "finishing" processes which the assistants do not know how to perform. Thus the qualified worker provided with his assistants is not a supervisor, as the term I have just used

above might lead one to suppose, but rather a guide. Incidentally he is described as a *leader*, which confirms this function of guide. Consequently, as he himself works in view of his assistants, and these work at the same time under his direction, he becomes a sort of master, directing and instructing his apprentices. In fact this mode of work submits the assistants to a real and direct apprenticeship, and when an intelligent and teachable man has worked for a while in such a group he can in turn become a *leader*. One can easily imagine that such a group has a high degree of cohesion, for the leader alone is in touch with the foreman, and also is alone responsible for the work. This form of subdivision of the business is already precise enough to give the appearance of a differentiated organism.

To this elementary group we must now add another, somewhat analogous to *sub-contracting* (*marchandage*), which I shall examine later on, but operating on a different basis. It is typical of those groups now being formed with increasing frequency in industry, and which at the present time are subjected to systems of *collective piece-work*. We need not be surprised that collective piece-work should have been studied with special care in the land of "efficiency".[1] We already know that numerous systems of remuneration by the piece or by bonus have been invented and put into practice in the United States, whence they have spread throughout European industry. But it is interesting to note that in the most firmly established "scientific systems" there is a sort of crack through which fractions of lost time still leak out.

[1] Consult on this subject *Group Incentives*, by C. C. Balderston, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930.

This crack proves indeed the impossibility of adapting the collection of narrow mathematical rules of a system to the actualities of the work. Despite all possible perfection of strict organization, designed to foresee all the details of a job so as to make maximum use of human movements, there still remains nevertheless a margin known in the United States as " dead times ", i.e. periods of stoppage which they have not been able to fill in with useful motions. This is what the system-hunters were aiming at when they instituted collective piece-work. This sort of *residue* of time which individual piece-work had failed to fill and which left the worker with a few shreds, so to speak, of idleness, could be utilized, it was thought, by the institution of group-work, so that the worker who enjoyed a piece of " dead time " could use it to good account by helping his neighbour under the impulse of the common interest as represented by a collective bonus. Thus we might say that the gaps of freedom and rest left by individual piece-work were to be filled in by recourse to sentiments of group solidarity. In other words, we see here the invention of a sort of supreme expression of the constraint exercised by piece-work, of which the workers have already had so much to complain.

Even if it has become collective, this piece-work nevertheless remains, in fact, piece-work pure and simple, i.e. the execution of work the price of which has not been freely negotiated between the parties, as would be the case with a genuine business contract. In piece-work, even when collective, the price for the work is not the subject of a contract and according to the, alas, traditional rule, every rise in the wage achieved by the efforts of those interested can give place, just as much collectively

as individually, to that progressive and arbitrary reduction of the rate after the fashion that is still the indelible vice of piece-work.

Consequently, as there has been no freely negotiated contrast, so there is no true autonomy. We have merely tied a certain number of workers together so as to enable them collectively to win a bonus that will subsequently be divided among the members of the group. In other words, collective piece-work constitutes a sort of working method, intermediary between individual piece-work and the contract of a commercial nature for which the entirely autonomous group could take the entire responsibility. In collective piece-work the degree of autonomy is even less than in the case of the *leader*. The organization of the work and the distribution of the wage continue to be assured by the management of the concern. The members of the group are merely placed in a position to help each other in the common interest of increasing the collective bonus.

If then I retain here the example of collective piece-work, it is not that it interests me as such. It serves to illustrate a partial application of the group idea, although it is to be regretted that it has been regarded only as a means of retrieving the "dead time" that individual piece-work failed to capture. May we hope that collective piece-work will be the last manifestation of these clever contrivances which are so unsuitably employed to obtain by constraint what might be better achieved by freedom?

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Among the cases of group-work still to be found in industry which, although not going as far as autonomy,

may nevertheless help to show that the idea is not Utopian, I must also mention the existence of experiments in regard to which I have been unable to obtain any direct information, despite the interest offered by the examination of their working.[1] Details of these experiments in group-work are to be found in an enquiry published by the Association of Mining and Metallurgical Industries, which contains various models of contracts which may be in use in some mysterious corner of French industry.[2] This publication reproduces five contracts aiming at the organization of teams for manipulation of steels, moulding, machine assembly work and wire-drawing. But the chiefs of the groups mentioned are really only foremen, and not true representatives freely chosen by the workers in the teams. Certainly it is possible that if the workers were free to choose a representative, they would appoint their foreman. Everything would depend upon his relations with his subordinates. In any case it is interesting to note the general conditions mentioned in the contracts, which are the following:

> The management deals only with the chief of the group and ceases to have industrial relations with the workers regarding work and remuneration. The group takes charge of its own labour costs. Sometimes also of small tools and petty supplies.

[1] Whereas American businesses are always open to investigations, it is still difficult in France to get information about the internal life of business concerns. The narrow notion of secrecy coupled with puerile fears are still to be found there—the regrettable insignia of mental cowardice.

[2] See *Enquête sur la Participation du Personnel aux Économies de Matières Premières*, published by the Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières, 7, Rue de Madrid, Paris. (Document Organization Scientifique, No. 2.)

The management furnishes raw materials and large-scale equipment, also motive power. It is responsible for insurance against accidents and continues to pay family allowances.

The group receives the order for work from the chief of the group as intermediary, in return for a contract price, with penalty clause, freely negotiated.

The chief of the group recruits the personnel that he requires.

The accounting department of the factory undertakes for the group the distribution of the payments which are calculated according to coefficients assigned to its various members, the chief of the group also participating in this distribution on the basis of a coefficient.[1]

I naturally pass over the details of application that must be assumed in these contracts, and confine myself to tracing their general line, which once more demonstrates the possibility of subdividing a business not only on the technical but also on the budgetary planes. I will only remark that group-autonomy is not complete. It retains a chief chosen not by the workers but by the management. Finally, the workers do not themselves decide the system of distribution of the payments, and they do not appear even to be consulted on the matter.

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Before passing to other examples it is not without

[1] This provision removes the group from conditions of exploitation to be noted when we deal later with *sub-contracting* (*marchandage*). It only remains to be known whether the coefficient assigned to the chief of the group is a fair one. The mere fact of its being proportional and variable does not absolutely exclude the possibility of an exaggerated share.

interest to recall that the oldest historically verified examples of collective undertaking of specified work by workers' groups appeared during the ninth century in Russia under the name of *artels*.[1]

Since that remote epoch group-work has continued in Russia among widely varying categories of workers: agricultural (particularly harvest workers), fishermen, masons, carpenters and various artisans. *Artels* are even said to exist among domestic and staff employees in hotels. The author from whom I draw this information [2] states that at the time of writing the kitchen employees of the Hôtel de France at St. Petersburg were Tartars associated in *artels*.

At the period when Peter the Great attracted a large number of artisans to the new capital that he was building, towards 1712, many *artels* were constituted, especially for the workers engaged in handling shipments in the port. In these associations the sum earned in common was distributed according to rules determined by a general meeting of participants. It is worth noting that an

[1] It seems that the tradition of the *artels* has survived to a certain extent in industry under the new Russian régime. An organization based upon autonomy of departments, and even of teams, is actually applied in some enterprises. It is worth noting that in certain cases team-autonomy was demanded by the workers themselves. An Order of the upper Council of National Economy of 11th September, 1931, defined the conditions in which this autonomy could be granted to them, *Izvestia*, 12.9.1931 (quoted from *Informations Sociales*, International Labour Office, Geneva, 18th April, 1932, p. 73).

[2] Study published in 1893 by the Office du Travail (a service attached to the Ministry of Commerce prior to the creation of the Ministry of Labour). *Notices et Copies rendus.* Fascicule IV. *De l'Emploi des Artels et de la Participation Intéressée du Personnel dans les Chemins de Fer Russes.* See also P. Apostol: *L'Artel et la Coopération en Russie*, Guillaumin, Paris, 1899.

associate recognized as sick by his fellows could draw his full share during an absence lasting as long as a year. When the railways appeared *artels* were also constituted in the luggage and freight porterage service. We shall see later how this example has been imitated in France by the workers responsible for the same services in several large stations in Paris.

Without being able in fact to trace the idea of this form of workers' association to such remote origins as is possible in the case of Russia, France nevertheless can claim a live tradition in this matter, which was born and nurtured principally among the workers in the printing trade. I have already mentioned how under the name of *commandites* our typographers organized societies entirely analogous to the Russian *artels*, the oldest on record having been founded in a Parisian printing works in 1853.

Since this period co-operatives of this particular type have continued to operate in France and notably in Paris, and even today a certain number of them continue to testify not only to the survival of the idea but to the practical possibility of such a system of work.[1]

The *commandite* is a co-operative of a special type, which is also referred to as a labour co-operative or

[1] In an address delivered by Albert Thomas in 1931 on the occasion of a celebration organized at the Trocadéro for the centenary of the manufacturing co-operative societies, the former Director of the International Labour Office recalled the place occupied in the co-operative movement by the *commandites*. In this connection he declared that the moment had come when we should ask whether we could not think of applying this system of work in large-scale industry, by effecting in its structure what he called "*compartimentage*". He also discussed this same question at the International Co-operative Congress at Ghent in 1924. See Report, pp. 150 and 159.

workers' co-operative, to distinguish it from ordinary manufacturing co-operative societies. As I have already remarked, it is a co-operative society without capital or plant of its own, seeing that it confines itself to collectivizing the working capacities of its members and, being thus constituted, of putting itself at the disposal of an employer for *undertaking* his work. The employer furnishes the shops, the plant and the raw materials and assumes, as usual, the general management of the business, as well as its commercial organization. As for the execution of the work, he entrusts it to the workers' collective formed by the *commandite*, thus relieving himself of all supervision of the personnel responsible for carrying out the order. Having dealt with this collective just as he would have done with an outside contractor, he confines himself to the receipt of the specified work, inspecting it for quality, and paying the agreed price for it, leaving the workers' collective to look after its own inner organization as well as the mode of distributing the sum received in exchange for the work done.

It is on this basis that a large proportion of the personnel of our Imprimerie Nationale still work, without the public's being generally aware of the fact.[1]

In 1899 M. Charles Dumont, then a Deputy and responsible for the budget of the Imprimerie Nationale, having studied this workers' association, pronounced a judgment in his report which it is interesting to reproduce here :

[1] The history and description of this important *commandite* will be found in an article by Charles Maraux : Les " Commandites ", Associations de Travail dans l'atelier Patronal, *International Labour Review*, November, 1925. This article has been issued as an offprint.

"The *commandite* is a labour organization whose principles are so high that on a mere description of them no one would believe them attainable. Human selfishness has waned, unity has been expressed in a living and concrete form, natural inequalities themselves have been corrected by the common will to make a discerning justice rule—that true justice which is infused with goodness and mercy."

He also added, which will certainly interest those who complain of the evils of *étatisme* (state control, or nationalization), that the *commandite* appears to him to be a means of transforming the organization of work in the service of the State :

"A flourishing and parasitical outcrop of officials, pruned a few years ago, tends to spread unceasingly through the workshops of the National Printing Office, nourishing itself on the profits of the Office. To cut the roots of this invading officialdom, the plague of state administrations, to oppose the tendency to officialdom in the workers of the National Printing Office, and at the same time to save the money spent on useless tasks, or superfluous material, or excessive and impossible supervision, there is a remedy : the equalizing *commandite*. Such a *commandite* will certainly be a means of economy. For that reason the Budget Committee has unanimously adopted it."

The typographers tried several times, as will be shown in a later portion of this study, to interest workers in other bodies in the same idea, so that they might make the same experiments. But scarcely any effect was obtained from this propaganda except among the metal-

lurgical workers, and notably among the motor-car body builders, as witnessed by the documents quoted in the Appendix.

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If my case has the support of the evidence of ancient and varied experiments which have replied in advance to the objections of the incredulous, I may well add that my conviction as to its value has come to me by more effectual and decisive means than the mere observation of other people's experience. Having lived the life of a worker myself I have been enabled not only to appreciate this value at first hand, but even to check up to what point it is easily practicable.

I have lived, I have lived long in that state of dejected subordination in which so many thousands and millions of workers still fret away their time and, like them, for long years of mortal boredom which I still think of as a "dark age" in my life, I have had to obey, dismally enough, orders which were not always intelligent. No one knows, except those who have really endured them, how long the hours can be when the mind is occupied only in waiting for the time to leave. There you have the mistake, even the crime of those who deliver lectures upon the monotony of muscular motions in work and—in the best of good faith, I know—thus divert attention from the real problem, when they twist it over to questions of tools and technology. What a fatal misunderstanding! And pregnant with disastrous consequences for the cause of freedom. Monotony of motions is nothing, *nothing* besides the monotony of life due to the crushing out of freedom and initiative, to the incessant repetition of drab days of a life in which there is never a

hope of seeing a " chance " open up. You wish, my well-meaning friends, full of pity as you are for this melancholy life of labour, at least to shorten the daily working spell? Dare I risk your surprise, and even your suspicion, by saying that this shortening leaves me almost indifferent? I have been a slave for twelve hours a day during my youth, and that is long, long, I assure you, when you are eighteen years old and all of life's forces begin to surge within you. Then it was only eleven hours, then ten, and finally eight. But I beg you to look at the workers of today, and ask them if they feel less bored in eight hours than we in the old days used to feel in ten. What change, fundamentally, has there been? A slave for twelve hours, or eight, or even two, still means being a slave, and my dignity and sensibility are wounded just as much. Godin was so right—he who had gone through the fifteen or sixteen hours of what we " did " in his day—when he said that modern labour was nothing else than slavery by time. At the risk, then, of scandalizing you, my well-meaning friends, I will tell you that I care neither to work for twelve hours, nor six, under a régime which crushes my personality. I beg you, too, not to trouble yourself about my " leisure moments " during which you think you can make me forget the black hours in which I shall have to continue day by day to lose my freedom. If my personality and my initiative are not trodden out in my working period, believe me when I say that I shall be able to get enough of them back to organize my evenings and my Sunday's recreation! So leave that alone and pay more attention, I beg you, to the conditions in which I must pass the best hours of my day and of my life, and by that I mean those which I must devote to my work. You

wish to help me to escape from my factory-prison? Think—would it not be better to alter the factory in such a way that it would be no longer a prison, so that the joy of life could get in by every window, and the worker be transfigured with the thrill of enthusiasm?

The idea of joy in work, introduced into the modern world by the genial inspiration of Fourier—without that inspiration he would never have perceived the practical means of obtaining it—has driven many good minds towards a strange misconception. They have made of joy in work I know not what quaint notion of labour changed into a kind of amusement such as the games played at a circus or a fair. In the course of a visit to a co-operative workshop where the workers enjoyed complete independence, some men who had no clear notion of the realities of work asked: "But where is the 'attractive work'? We do not see any." As if they were unaware of the fact that the joy of working is experienced only in the accomplishment of unfettered effort, in which the human being feels the exhilarating sensation of mastery—of having overcome all his difficulties.[1]

Watch the independent artisan who has finished some difficult task and is visibly "pleased with himself". Is his joy expressed in laughter and capering? Discover

[1] I am aware that many adepts of the "materialistic conception of history" scorn the idea of joy in work as a "bourgeois" invention. May I point out, however, from the pen of a sociologist who is also a scientist, M. Ad. Ferrière, founder of the Ecoles Nouvelles, the following conclusion relating to human evolution? "The end of all vital synergy is the conservation and *growth* of the powers of the living being" (*The Law of Progress*). It is certain that the joy of work, which results from the feeling of difficulty overcome, corresponds to the sensation of growth of power as defined by M. Ferrière.

what lies behind the relaxed seriousness of his face, on which even a smile cannot appear. You will find there the man's most exalted happiness, and that is what the worker must be allowed to attain, and that is what I have yearned after for so many dreary hours passed in the factories. Only the physiologist, with adequate scientific knowledge of the life-forces, if he could at this instant seize upon the satisfied artisan, would be able to explain to us the true nature of joy in work: a perfect balance between the resources of the body and of the spirit, an ardent plenitude of all the forces of the Being, the sentiment of serene elevation of the man who experiences a veritable exaltation above himself and all that is trivial and paltry in this existence. . . . It is that joy in work whose austerity and inner beauty Proudhon "caught" so well. Compared with this joy, how pitiful is the idea of flight from work. Is it, fundamentally, anything other than a kind of desertion in face of difficulties which must be resolved before its nature can be changed?

And, above all, please do not tell me that I am voicing exceptional ideas, and that the yearning that I am trying to describe is so rare as to be not worth bothering about. I know that it is not universal; I can nevertheless assert that it is much more general than is commonly imagined, and that it is at the bottom of the discontent and uneasiness of which only the more serious outbursts occasionally disturb public opinion.

This uneasiness is there all the time, and each worker gets his first taste of it when he crosses the threshold beyond which his liberty as a citizen has ceased to exist, to give place to that state of subordination so justly characterized by Godin. In the so-called "well-organized" establishments a visible mechanical sign

records the mathematical moment when this serfdom begins. This is where the worker has to put his " time card " through a clock in which an automatic contrivance prints the exact time of his entrance and exit. There are even some establishments in which, between these two extremes, the worker has actually to punch his card when he finishes one piece of work and begins another! So far as mechanization is concerned, this is a matter of far more importance to the worker than those repetitive movements to which it is customary at the present time to devote almost exclusive attention. We shall soon see how, in the experiment I wish to describe, one of our first precautions was to rid ourselves of this clock.

I was then employed in a factory where the whole of the labour force was on " piece-work ", and in a gang with which we had succeeded in maintaining the " time-rate " system—in accordance with the authority and opinion of the unions, which were always theoretically hostile to " piece-work ". I must say that the satisfaction that we derived from this was moral rather than monetary, which proves that if there is need of them, people are still to be found who can sacrifice their material interests for their idealism.

In order to clarify this last remark I must recall the fact that according to a theory that is familiar to certain amateur economists who are but superficially informed regarding the real nature of the life of labour, the workers are usually divided into two categories, the well-paid " aristocrats " and the true proletarians who alone are supposed to suffer the indignities of the working-class position. I am sorry to give the lie to this facile, demagogic theory, and point out that on the contrary—and this is an assertion that is easily verifiable—the wages

of many unskilled workers often exceed those of the skilled for the simple reason that many of the former are engaged on tasks that are easy to pay by the piece, whereas the work of the latter, for practical reasons, cannot for the greater part of the time be paid otherwise than by the hour. Everyone in the factories knows this, that is to say all those for whom work is not a mere field of observation and study, but the only way they have of earning their bread.

Actually, such was the case with my gang, and we had around us workers who were quickly familiarized with very simple operations, and who drew wages well above our own, although without the tools that we made they would not have been able to work. . . .

The head of the business naturally knew of this situation and never left off chaffing us about it. According to him, our union principles "cost us money". And every time this occurred he used to insist that we should fall into line with the general rule, and thus raise our own wages, at the same time, naturally, giving him more plentiful production. For if our work did not lend itself as readily to rapid operation as was the case with the other men, it is no less certain that the initiative of the interested party, stimulated by piece-work, could nevertheless contribute some means of speeding up the work. As he was satisfied, however, with the quality of our work, he did not dare to override our objections and impose upon us by force a system of work which was distasteful to us.

Then it was that I remembered the experiment of the typographers' *commandites*, about which I had read in one of their propaganda pamphlets [1] and suggested to my

[1] See Bibliography, p. 267.

comrades that we should *undertake* our work on the same basis. They accepted, and we then made a proposal to the head of the business which I may describe in this way:

Having prepared a detailed list of all the jobs that we were doing regularly, we calculated the cost of production of each piece according to the time that we took over it and the wage that was paid us. That enabled us to tell the head of the business that up to the present these various pieces were costing him so much each. We asked him then to take these prices purely and simply as a basis for a collective enterprise, that is to say that we undertook collectively to deliver him these pieces at the same price, but under the same conditions as an outside supplier, it being understood that thenceforth nobody would any longer be concerned with the time that we took over the work. I think I can even remember that we were "good fellows" and fixed lower prices for some pieces than the old costs of production. And, believe me, that was because we knew that we could make them easily!

Naturally the work-place, equipment, raw materials and miscellaneous supplies would be at our disposal as formerly.[1] It was finally agreed that every fortnight one of us would present at the counting-house a docket of work delivered and draw the total sum due, so that no one at all could interfere in our distribution of this sum among the members of the gang.

Taking advantage of the opportunity we added an extra demand to our proposal, saying to the head of the business: "You know . . . your time-recording clock at

[1] Note this detail in passing: We did not demand ownership, but merely the *utilization* of the means of production.

the entrance . . . we should very much like to be rid of it ! What is the good of uselessly punching these cards now, seeing that we have just done a deal that makes us your suppliers, and you are only paying for the work that we deliver to you. . . ."

Being businesslike and frank, and smiling as if to say " but you can't do that to me ", this employer resisted the temptation that so many others would have had to yield nothing under the heading of " authority ", and agreed to everything : We became independent in the heart of the vast organization where we had to go on living, and from that moment onwards we passed scornfully by the time-recording clock, instrument and symbol of the mechanization of the worker !

There we were in business " on our own account " ! Revolution ! We have no longer a moment to lose. No longer any effort to waste. No longer a talent that must not be used to the maximum.

We soon get to work on rearrangements in the team. By virtue of the principle of the utilization of abilities we soon arrange ourselves so that the jobs shall be shared out in such a way as to fit more exactly the competence of each man. There is among us an element that is precious above all others, and that is the skill of those who can be sure of executing the finest class of work. We decide immediately that those who are capable of doing this highest-grade part of the work shall do only that in future, to the exclusion of all jobs of preparation and " roughing out ". One of us who we think has hitherto had a poor share in the distribution of the work gets a job of a more important order. We cannot afford to throw our resources away ! Now, then, take care about the quality of the work ! It won't do to have arguments of this sort

when the goods are delivered, or when they come to be used later on : we should run the risk of awkward discussions about the payment of the collective account. Everyone understands that, and through the fact of the close interlocking of all the interests we now have a régime of the most thorough-going mutual aid. The member of the team who is good at figures will keep the accounts. We consult an engineer, who supplies us with the formula we need for proportional sharing on a double basis. First we want the coefficients which distinguish the differences in value of the participants. Then one to represent the time put in by each of us during the week or the fortnight. We must in fact have advance knowledge of absences. All that is arranged without discussions, and is finally consolidated at the sharing-out of the first invoice.[1]

Nothing is in fact more decisive than the sanction of results : From the first fortnight each man's share is raised to a third more than the wage he drew before. If it were necessary—but there is no need of anything over and above our observations—we might remark to the master—who has become our customer—that his pieces are not costing him any more than before. In reality they are costing less, because we have given him more of them in the same time : his overhead charges have evidently gone down, and consequently his production costs.

Between ourselves our solidarity will take on later some novel and efficacious forms : A comrade is going to entertain some relations at home, and would very much like to be free to be with them : " Stop at home this afternoon. We shall not make any deductions. It will be

[1] See note in Appendix B on proportional sharing.

our turn another time. . . ." Another one who is particularly courageous and devoted, is taken ill for a few days. We decide—because we know him to be no scrimshanker, that we shall take no account of his absence. On the day of the share-out, he will touch his full quota. It is cordial and spontaneous. And it is efficient and elastic, quite different from the cold and mechanical operation of an insurance policy. The group is a family.

But I will return later on to the examination of possible consequences of work thus organized in the group. Consequences the first effects of which I was able to observe in this experiment, and the like of which can be observed in every case of application, and when the workers are left to themselves.

The important thing is to record the change in our relations with the business. They are no longer those of superior and subordinate. Our "person" exists no more. We are no longer supervised. According to Godin's aspiration, this supervision has been entirely transferred to the work that leaves our hands. It is a contract, a true working contract, or rather a contract of exchange, for it is clear that our relations with the business present a commercial aspect rather than the usual aspect of subordination that exists under the régime of the wage-system pure and simple. For we are in fact no longer wage-earners, but really suppliers, no more nor less free than outside contractors. This situation is even confirmed by the fact that we have competitors. Getting supplies of certain pieces from outside firms, the employer sometimes says to the team: "Such and such work you are doing is costing me too much. X. is offering them to me for less." Then the team gets together. We examine whether the objection is well-founded. We

accept or refuse as the case may be. But we are no longer in the humiliating position of the man who can only discuss his salary, for this new situation is no other than that of people who are " in business " and discuss a deal in the traditional manner.

Moreover, let those who are disturbed at the idea of the disappearance of wages ponder these words : The only possible alternative to wages is the contract system. If the wage-system is slavery, the contract alone is the practical basis of freedom.

*
* *

In the building industry there is a long-established example of subdivision of businesses which is particularly worth mentioning here, and is known as sub-contracting (*marchandage*).[1] It will be remembered that when we were studying the need for independence observable among certain particularly energetic workers, I pointed out that the artisans drew most of their recruits from the ranks of the former. Now in certain industries, and particularly in building construction, this need of independence—combined with the wish for a non-limited form of remuneration—has led the workers to think of a system of work in between wage-earning and artisanship.

In establishing this system they reasoned as follows :

" Supposing I could put myself between the employer and the other workers, and *undertake* the work to be done on my own account, I could manage to compel the

[1] If sub-contracting is more generally practised in the building trade it also exists in very different industries such as wholesale clothing. Towards 1900 it even existed, in Paris, in certain machine-manufacturing corporations and in ancillary trades.

workers to give an active and abundant production, and thus ensure for the employer the maximum output that he expects from piece-work. Then, if I kept the workers in ignorance of the price I could obtain from the employer for the whole of the work, and pay them only at a lower rate than what I could manage to get from him, I could make a pretty profit out of the difference."

In various trades this reasoning was accepted by the employers [1] who found in it a convenient way of getting out of the troubles of carrying out the work and of the supervision that they were bound to exercise over " day workers ". These employers did not care in the least about what might happen to workers who were submitted to this system of exploitation in the second degree. They only considered the reciprocal advantages accruing to themselves and to the *sub-entrepreneurs* in such a system of work.

> " But," [as Paul Pic says in his *Traité de Législation Industrielle* [2]], " quite different is the situation of the workman pressed into service by a sub-contractor (*marchandeur*), a workman like himself, who takes on a job on a penalty contract, and speculates on the difference between the penalty contract price by which he is bound, and the sum of the wages of the workers that he hires by the day at the lowest possible price. A workman like themselves, and consequently well acquainted not only with all the processes but all the tricks of the trade, the *sub-contracting worker, marchandeur or Gang-boss*, exacts from his personnel an amount of work often

[1] In fact the initiative in this practice may very well have come from the employers, when they themselves noticed the advantages described above.

[2] Rousseau, publisher.

greater than the employer would expect from them, his personal profit increasing with the speed of the job. In exchange for this intensive work he promises his workers only a reduced wage; and still they are not certain of getting this extremely trifling wage, as the employers do not always verify carefully enough the solvency of the sub-contractors with whom they deal, knowing that they cannot be made responsible for unpaid wages.

"No doubt sub-contracting is not entirely disadvantageous. In the first place, it allows first-class workers to raise themselves above their situation: it is from among the sub-contractors that the greater portion of contractors and building employers are recruited. Again, it is by no means true to say that this arrangement necessarily conduces to a degradation of the wage-level, to an abusive exploitation of day-workers. For certain classes of work, especially in the building trades (carpentry, floor-laying, rough-casting, etc.) it pays the contractors to negotiate a penalty contract with specialist workers who are prepared to supply at a given place the flying squads which they will require for several days, but could not utilize for the whole campaign. These squad leaders, if they are skilful and smart, enter into a series of graded agreements with the contractors which leave them a reasonable margin of profit and enable them to pay their workers sometimes more generously than the principal contractor would have done.

"The only incontestable abuse of this mode of working lies in the inadequacy of the guarantees of payment offered to the worker. But it would be easy, some say, to overcome this disadvantage by inserting a clause

conveying a direct claim for the workers on the principal contractor for the whole of their unpaid wages. . . ."

On complaints expressed by the workers, the Second Republic, by a decree of 2nd March, 1848, tried to suppress sub-contracting. But it survived and still survives in practice, despite the prohibition formulated in the Labour Code in the following terms: "Exploitation of the workers by sub-contractors or *marchandage* is forbidden." [1]

Moreover this latter text, we should note, contains a small addition which definitely opens the door to the co-operative arrangement which I raised just now as a possibility. We read, in fact, as follows: "Workers' associations with no such object as the exploitation of workers by one another shall in no way be regarded as *marchandage*." [2]

Let us say, then, that despite this legal prohibition the evil that it tended to suppress still survives, without the workers' having succeeded in applying the law that ought to protect them, or replacing the sub-contractors by those associations that could be so easily constituted.

It depends, in fact, upon the workers themselves whether this idea of work in autonomous groups becomes dangerous or beneficent. If they leave the initiative to the sub-contractors (*marchandeurs*), or to the *tâcherons* (jobbing workmen), as they are called in the building trade, group work will only superimpose one misery upon

[1] Art. 30*b*, Chapter IV, Book I. Law of 25th March, 1919, Art. 2. This text is simply a reproduction of the decree of 1848.

[2] This is the one and only reference to group work in the Labour Code.

another. If, on the other hand, the workers associate themselves so as to replace the jobbing workman and *undertake* the work in common, the whole aspect of the question would be entirely changed, a fact which was realized recently by some of them.

In 1932 on some important building-yards opened on the outskirts of Paris (Châtenay-Malabry) by the office of the Habitations à Bon Marché, an official organization created by the Seine Department, some groups of building operatives working for an important firm (Rouzaud et fils) have begun to replace the *tâcherons*. By agreement with this firm, which employs *tâcherons* as well, these groups have undertaken the construction of twelve three-storey buildings.

One of the men directly concerned with this interesting experiment has been able to draw the following conclusions, which furnish a remarkable illustration of the thesis I am advocating in these pages :

> " In a month's time we shall have finished the works that we were engaged to carry out. We shall then have paid 200,000 francs in wages to about forty-five comrades during a period of five months.
>
> " We shall have done the bricklaying in the agreed periods of time in respect of twelve buildings, which represent about a twentieth part of the city of Châtenay-Malabry, which the office of Habitations à Bon Marché is having built.
>
> " We started without a sou's worth of anything in our pockets. How could we pay our first wages ? All our comrades knew that during the first fortnight we were only feeling our way : it was a question of organization, of putting everyone in his right place.

We had to overcome this handicap by a good rate of production right from the start.

" Added to the difficulty of setting up the scaffolding, in which there was a risk of compromising our first pay-out, there was that of the 10 per cent. guarantee money retained by the Rouzaud concern upon the value of our production.

" All that was going to reduce the amount paid at the end of each fortnight by the Rouzaud concern on account of work done.

" We contrived to overcome these initial difficulties : after three months' work we repaid a sum lent to us by a kindly comrade : it meant holding wages back all the same. We are conscious of our victory. Some of us, sure enough, when we leave the yard in the evening and glance at the finished work, feel a sort of uprush of legitimate pride. The twelve buildings are there : we needed no employer, no sub-contractor ; we got there by ourselves.

" The work we took on is nearly finished. We can already say that our experiment is conclusive : it is possible to put up an effective fight against sub-contracting on the basis of a workmen's collectivity." [1]

We can appreciate the wholesome and legitimate jubilation in these words. They testify to the value of the system far better than the most subtle commentary.

*
* *

I cannot furnish here a complete inventory of experiments and instances of the idea of group labour. They

[1] R. Bertholet : *Le Bâtiment Syndicaliste*, October, 1932.

are very numerous and are not confined to those which I have indicated in summary fashion.[1] As we have seen from the example of the Russian *artels*, this system of work has come into spontaneous operation by very different corporate bodies and in very different places. But as I am speaking of different places I would like to mention one more example of its application located in . . . the Antipodes.

Since 1891 the governments of the Dominion of New Zealand have entrusted the carrying out of important public works to teams of workmen constituted on a co-operative basis.[2] Teams of this kind have been used during this period for such important works as, for example, the construction of railway-lines, and in the development of coal mines.

For the construction of the permanent way, the formation-work was first subdivided into sections whose lengths were determined by the special difficulties to be met with in the various portions of the line. Each one of these sections was specially studied by engineers with a view to assessing the importance of the work to be carried out and the expenses to which it would give rise, the labour costs being calculated according to the recognized hourly rates.

On the completion of these preliminary calculations, the work was offered to parties of workmen acting collectively like ordinary contractors. The sum to be paid for these works was remitted to the party on the understand-

[1] The work by David Schloss mentioned elsewhere (p. 101) enumerated a certain number of cases. One of the most interesting is that of the agricultural workers' societies in Italy known as Società di Braccianti.

[2] The following information is derived from an account contained in the *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1924.

ing that it would be distributed among its members in proportions that they were free to settle for themselves. The work in course of execution remained under the constant supervision and technical management of the engineers of the Department of Public Works, which also furnished the stores and equipment necessary for the work.

Tables of production costs published officially by the Dominion of New Zealand show that the direct execution of these works by the workers has enabled the State to effect important economies.[1]

More recent documents show that this system of work continues to be applied in New Zealand, especially in a number of coal-mines.[2]

I would like to conclude this little review of applications of the idea of group-work with an observation which will reply in advance to a question that many readers will put to themselves: But if this mode of organization embraces so many possibilities why is it not more generally adopted?

It is long since the Parisian typographers, with almost a century's experience of group-working, expressed astonishment at this indifference. "This form of labour ought long ago to have won over all the craft guilds",

[1] For details see *New Zealand Public Works Statement*, 2nd October, 1896, p. 5. This document, which was presented to the New Zealand Parliament, gives comparative production costs per mile of track as between sections carried out by the co-operative contract parties and ordinary contractors respectively. The former are almost always notably lower, and the author of the report concludes that in the majority of cases these works have saved the tax-payers' money.

[2] See report of the Ministry of Mines for 1926. The text of one of these co-operative contracts has been included in Appendix D, page 242 ff.

we read in a brochure published by their union in 1905.

Here, nearer home, are the comments of a representative of the Federation of Building Operatives when describing his comrades' initiative in the Malabry building-yards as already mentioned in this chapter:

> "We think that we ought to encourage the organized workers in other trades ravaged by sub-contracting to study and apply in their unions the same form of organization of work, in which the profits of production do not belong to a single individual, but are distributed among the producers." [1]

And yet the workers remain indifferent to a system of work that could offer them unquestionable advantages!

What, then, is at the bottom of this indifference?

We must be brave enough to look the truth in the face. At the bottom of this indifference there is fear of freedom, of the burden of freedom before which, let us not deceive ourselves, many men hesitate.[2]

Liberty suits only the strong, and it is certain that the strong are and will be for a long time in the minority. The bulk of the others hesitate and tremble and, at bottom, prefer the moderate security of the wage-system to the vigorous emotions of the man who dares to tempt fortune.

There you have the real reason for the workers' in-

[1] H. Cordier: *Le Bâtiment Syndicaliste*, October, 1932. It is to be noted that in anticipation of objections that I shall examine further on, this author describes the group that he recommends as a "Trade Union Labour Co-operative".

[2] "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men fear it."—Bernard Shaw.

difference. Consequently, and I have no illusions on this point, I know that in upholding this thesis of independence I am not interpreting the thought of a majority of the workers. But this does not diminish my desire to attract them to this road of freedom, for I see in it the only genuine way of leading them to a higher spiritual level, by placing them in new conditions where they would be compelled to work out their own education. I am not indeed simple enough to believe that they would be transformed overnight by these new conditions, but I do know that they will find in them ordeals which are the only ways through which man has ever risen above himself.

A survey of the majority of instances of the application of group-work definitely shows that those who have wanted to take the initiative have needed any amount of courage, for that indifference which is manifest to anyone may be coupled with a form of mistrust the sources of which are worth examining.

This mistrust will help us better to understand up to what point the traditional rules of labour obtained by constraint have contrived to vitiate the worker's fundamental attitude towards his task, and to distort those feelings of satisfaction that he ought to derive from it.

The main result of constraint has always been to imbue the workman with a certain distaste for his work. Then as an effect of the long monotony of life, this distaste has finally become, among many workers at least, a fixed idea, and particularly among those who can never manage to detach their minds from the usually sombre surroundings of industrial life. It is when a few individuals rise up from these masses to effect some rehabilitation of labour and recapture the motive of joy in work, that we are able

to measure the extent of the damage wrought by constraint in the workers' mentality. Their first reaction is to heap ridicule upon anyone who seems to be fool enough to take an interest in labour problems. The deceptions and insults that they have had to put up with have engendered at the bottom of their minds a pessimistic and bitter scepticism, so that any such proposal is soon greeted with sarcasm. They have so often been "had" that we must forgive them for thinking that they are to be "had" once again. Their attitude to work has retreated to a state of indifference as expressed in the thought: "If we do as little as we can, the masters will still be rich enough. Why do good work? Whom does it benefit?"

There you have the fundamentals of the moral penury of labour such as constraint has made it. As a result, anyone who sets out from among the workers to try to set them on their feet again soon finds himself up against disheartening obstacles.

Listen to the man whose evidence I have quoted elsewhere regarding the Malabry building episode. In the same article in which he expressed so legitimate a sense of satisfaction, there is another passage which should be borne in mind, showing the kind of criticism that has to be faced:

"You are sub-contractors yourselves: you disown our trade-unionist struggles of the past! When some of our comrades hear of our little business, perhaps they will send us their criticisms and make faces at us in a way that we can't misunderstand."

As this man is obviously full of practical common sense he wastes no more time on this aspect of his work. But what he does say is enough to enable us to understand

the line of resistance that has to be overcome. Let us make no mistake about this. " Perhaps ", he chose to say ; but he did not mean to convey any real doubt about it. The criticisms which he seems to anticipate, he has already heard. . . .

So group-workers may be the objects of the absurd accusation of being sub-contractors themselves ! They have to defend their courageous initiative not only against the employers but against their own comrades ! Nothing, perhaps, better illustrates the range of the difficulties which bar the road to freedom. In order to approach it we have even to overcome the ignorance and misunderstanding of those whose life it might transform.

But has not this always been the lot of pioneers ?

*
* *

To those obstacles that we have seen crop up from the workers' side, we must add those which come from the employers.

In effect, heads of businesses generally bristle up in advance and without investigation at the mere idea of conferring this sort of autonomy upon groups of workmen. They confine themselves, without further ado, to mouthing the word " soviet " and imagine that disorder will soon break out in their business, instead of seeing that this mode of organization could give rise to a better kind of order and to better output.

It is easy, however, to answer the employers' fears by a somewhat unusual argument : during a period of nearly a century in which this method of work has been in operation among the typographers, it has never given rise to a single dispute before the courts, which cannot be

said, alas, of the wage-system.[1] And from the very fact of this absence of judicial intervention, we may search in vain in our laws, over-intricate as they are, for the smallest clause tending to regulate this form of relation between masters and workers. The only allusion, and that a remote one, to be found is contained in the decree prohibiting sub-contracting, of which mention has already been made.

In this way we can verify the surprising statement that whereas many legislative clauses confirm the fact that workers may associate themselves *for the purpose of not working at all*—these are the clauses relating to the right to strike—none of them provides for their associating themselves *in order to work*, other than in the form of manufacturing co-operative societies.[2]

[1] See results of an official investigation of the *commandite* in the (French) *Ministry of Labour Bulletin*, 1927, pp. 129 and 415.

[2] I recall the fact that I have already indicated (see page 135) that the Labour Code contains only one unique allusion to the possibility of the workers' forming co-operative groups for undertaking specified work. This absence of legal clauses has already caused various inconveniences of a juridical nature, notably in connection with the foundation of the luggage-porters' co-operative to which I have devoted a special chapter.

Chapter Six

A Living Experiment

To the precedents which I have described in the last chapter I now wish to add an account of an original experiment which has been in progress since 1925, and continues to operate under the most satisfactory conditions.

Most people on making a first acquaintance with the idea of entrusting a certain degree of autonomy to groups of workers soon raise an objection, generally expressed in the following manner: "Oh, yes, such a system of work is likely to be practicable with picked men such as are to be found, for example, in the printing trade. As a result of their special work they profit from a certain education which workers in other trades do not generally possess to the same degree. Consequently a system of work which presupposes voluntary submission to a discipline of their own free determination is certainly applicable. But elsewhere? Surely not in the unions where education and morals are more primitive? Where there is less corporate solidarity, and where the ground has been less well prepared by the custom of reasonable discussion, how could one hope for the spontaneous establishment of a state of order? Where could one find a basis upon which to entrust workers with responsibilities?"

I want to try to answer these various questions by showing how this free and spontaneous order has been established quite naturally among workers entirely with-

out corporate ties. When it comes to saying that they were lacking in education I dare not do that, in view of the example that they have given us. Now listen to their story.

***

" Once upon a time " in an ordinary Parisian barber's shop there was a customer who had a predilection for an assistant whose dexterity he specially appreciated. None of the others, it seemed to him, could give his skin such sweet caresses with the razor. No perfumed friction could be administered with more expert hands. And this customer with an admirable fidelity would waive his turn to answer the call of " next gentleman please " until his favourite barber was available.

The hands of the one having become so indispensable to the head of the other, it was a natural consequence that a certain familiarity should spring up between the owner of the hands and the lender of the head. This inevitable familiarity led naturally one day to mutual confidences, which in these difficult times turned quickly enough towards questions about the effectiveness of their respective means of getting a living.

When the hairdresser's assistant had revealed in this way the dimensions of his modest wage, his " appointed " client spoke to him in some such terms as the following :

" That certainly isn't much ! I myself look after some jolly fellows who, with much less professional skill, enjoy a much better situation than you do. I have made a contract with the big railway companies by the terms of which I have to supply teams of porters who place themselves at the disposal of passengers arriving by train. It is profitable enough for me, and also for

'my' porters, whose tips very often exceed the wage you mentioned."

"Diable!" replied the barber. "I'm not particular about what my job is, so long as it gets me my bread and butter. If you can really earn more there I'd willingly quit the barber's shop for the station."

"Nothing more simple," answered the customer, with a patronizing air. "I'll take you on."

See now our "capillary artist" quickly changed into a luggage porter, and well enough satisfied for a while, he leapt bravely to the assault of the coaches bringing transatlantic travellers to Paris.

But our man was one of those sons of Belleville in whom slumbers a ferment of ideas which in olden times raised the paving-stones. His brain was trotting all the while the man himself was trotting behind the rich tourist, no matter if his back was bent under a heavy trunk, and we must now explain why this Belleville brain was working silently until one day it gushed forth with the idea of a deliverer.

His own special customer was, in fact, an unusual kind of entrepreneur. In reality he was a sub-contractor like the jobbing workman whom we have seen in operation among the building workers. By a process of reasoning analogous at every point to the sub-contractor's, he made a proposition to the railway company in these terms:

"At such and such a station you need so many porters to serve the trains. I undertake to recruit these porters and thus save you the trouble." Next, having brought along the men he has recruited, he chooses several of them to be entrusted with a particularly important mission. This consists not merely of ensuring the presence of a sufficient number of porters at the arrival of

each train, of spreading them judiciously along the series of railway-coaches, but also of securing the return of the tips received by each one of them from the passengers. These tips are afterwards redistributed among the porters at the end of the day . . . but only after the entrepreneur had raked off a certain "profit" amounting to as much as 20 per cent. It has been calculated that in one station only in Paris this rake-off represented more than five hundred francs per day!

The reader who learns with surprise of this singular practice will judge it to be a pretty enough profit, if the word profit can be used in such a case, even if it be placed alongside the famous adjective *illicit*. For it is difficult to imagine a more clear-cut example of exploitation and parasitism. In the case of an industrialist or merchant who takes direct charge of the management of his firm, shoulders its various responsibilities, and fulfils an indispensable function, his normal profit is justified in the work done by the head of the business, in the risks that he runs and the services that he renders. But there is nothing of that in this case. We have here a sleeping-partner in a transaction in which there is no trace of technical organization, who intervenes merely to take possession of a portion of the yield.

There we have, then, the simple fact which soon struck the curious and attentive mind of our Belleville worker, who was not slow to reflect as follows: "I remain very grateful to my former customer for having taken me into his service, but I am obliged to recognize him as a somewhat peculiar species of master. What part does he play? We work steadily in the crush on the 'arrivals' platforms. We use every 'wangle' to lay hands upon the 'important customer' whose impressive luggage

justifies the expectation of a generous tip. Then this mere spectator comes along afterwards to take out of our pockets what is, as clearly as can be, the product of our efforts! But he is a particularly mischievous specimen of a parasite! It is true that thanks to the company he can fire me out of my job, but is it not a fact that in other trades the workers can solve problems of this sort by means of a union? Let us organize, and tomorrow . . ." our porter is now humming, thoroughly rejoiced at his discovery, " and then we shall see how to take on this work by ourselves, and do without this superfluity."

Thoughts of this kind generally confer a sort of irresistible eloquence upon those who hold them, and in his suburban jargon he quickly passed on to his comrades the idea that had flashed upon his mind.

And so like " the man who inflicts his own punishment ", a parasite was overtaken by a sort of " immanent justice ", as a result of that unfortunate inspiration which was mysteriously wafted to him one day to recruit his victims in barbers' shops.

*
* *

Thus was born in Paris the Baggage Porters' Union, which through the nature of its members' work, the special needs of a particular situation, and also the happy initiative of an intelligent worker, took direct responsibility for organizing the labours of its own members.

The famous resolution of the Amiens Labour Congress in 1906, which is only referred to as a rule for fixing the attitudes of the unions in connection with party politics, also contained a more or less forgotten phrase about the special responsibilities of the workers in economic matters.

Though they certainly did not know it, the workers received from it a spontaneous inspiration and, on the enlightened advice of their new comrade, decided to discard the parasite who was enriching himself at their expense. Soon they had themselves to fulfil the simple enough rôle of this individual: to assume responsibility to the company for providing at the arrival of every train a sufficient number of porters conveniently to ensure the service of porterage.

At this decisive moment our man was able to show that he was no mere suburban dreamer, haunted with vague revolutionary memories, for he proved himself to be an organizer and a leader, able to assume enough ascendancy over his comrades to construct with them, as a sure, fraternal guide, the fundamentals of a new order which we shall now examine.[1]

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Men who like to be labelled as "revolutionaries" are apt to think of every fragment and form of social life in such a way that its operation would necessitate men possessing qualities of brotherhood and devotion which are not ordinarily to be found walking in the streets. The nineteenth century knew many of these builders of

[1] Having submitted this text to the interested party, my comrade and friend Fournemilh, requesting him to check the accuracy of my description, he added to his observations the following lines, the value and honest simplicity of which I do not wish to weaken by any comment: "The passage which I have marked gives me too much personal credit. Although I was the instigator of the affair, I had to count from the very first moment upon the priceless co-operation of several good comrades. The good organization of the work is as much their achievement as mine." I may perhaps add here that this organization has been recognized by the highest authorities of the Railway System.

Utopias which all collapsed as soon as they were put to trial [1] for the simple reason that they demanded men of too rare a virtue. That is why I insisted before on this fundamental idea, that any plan designed to change the organization of work must be conceived in such a way as to utilize men *such as they are*.

The example now cited constitutes a very interesting case from just this point of view, for it cannot be said that it was brought to life in the artificial conditions of a laboratory. We certainly have here men " such as they are ". Recruited fortuitously, we cannot even consider them as having reached the state of spiritual advancement found to exist among special craft organizations, upon which we would normally expect to base our greatest hopes. The success of the *commandites* of the printing trade have often been attributed to certain specially favourable conditions of their environment, to habits of order and responsibility which prevail in such circles. Their long success still gives only partial confirmation of this thesis, whereas the case of the porters proves it.

The solutions offered spontaneously by these men to certain problems under our examination have then a particular interest for us as experimental checks upon our assertions as to the virtue of freedom. Moreover, I am more than ever convinced that the study of solutions for labour problems would certainly make great strides, if instead of only discussing them in the abstract we could follow the strictest scientific procedure by noting what happens each time workmen are called upon to take their own steps to solve problems involved in their work.

[1] See on this subject an interesting work of Charles Gide : *Les Colonies Communistes et Coopératives*. See also the Bibliography at the end of the volume.

But we are still waiting for the Fabre who will keep his eyes on the *facts* with sympathetic curiosity and courageous understanding.

In the chapter devoted to the examination of the problem of remuneration for work I pointed out the attitude which should be taken regarding the rudimentary incentive embodied in the spirit of gain. In the case we are now studying it will be very instructive to note what attitude has been freely adopted by those concerned when confronted by this first problem.

When faced with work of this kind one would guess that the respective responsibilities of each member of the group would be approximately the same. Apart from questions of physical strength, the art of carrying a suitcase does not seem a very promising field for developing trade distinctions. There is evidence of equal work, whereas, on the contrary, its reward is outstandingly unequal.[1] Consisting solely of tips, it is based upon a factor which is essentially variable and unpredictable. There is no certainty that the generosity of the customer will be directly proportional to the importance of his luggage. Thus, given equal zeal and energy, nothing is less certain than an equal distribution of receipts among the workers.

[1] We should mention meanwhile that these porters had to take account of the utilization of the weak, an important problem which is often raised as an objection to group-work, as already mentioned in the chapter on the subdivision of the business. Every member who is too weak or ill is assigned to places where there is less traffic or, at least, a smaller number of passengers with luggage (suburban trains), but nevertheless receives the same share as the others! "There is no work so hard that it cannot be proportioned to the strength of the man that does it, provided that it be regulated by reason and not by avarice," Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, Book XV, Chapter VIII.

It is entirely admirable that in face of this fact these men —men " such as they are "—should have spontaneously decided, after having got rid of the entrepreneur who used to exploit them, to continue to put their tips back into a common fund so as to distribute an equal share to every man at the end of the day.

But an important observation has to be made here. Every time these men have had occasion to explain such a system to persons who were strangers to their surroundings, the same question has come to their listeners' lips : " But are you sure that each one of your comrades sincerely and honestly puts what he has received into the common fund ? How can you know whether one of your number, when isolated in a compartment with a traveller, will not cheat you of at least part of what seems to him to be a large tip, from which a personal withdrawal would not seem likely to be suspected ? "

This question is answered as follows : " It is certain that we sustain ' leaks ' of that sort, but they are not serious and are negligible in total. Besides, they are in any case much less than the rake-off the sub-contractor used to enforce. Further, when there is anyone among us who practises this kind of misappropriation, we don't take long to hunt him out."

When Dr. Fauquet and I heard these categorical statements for the first time, we found them hard to believe, for we could not very well see how it was possible to check this kind of receipt. When we objected, the answer given by the porter who was the source of our information was simple, quick and perfectly characteristic. With that naturalness of the Parisian worker, accustomed, in Proudhon's phrase, " to pass through every hole in a screw-gauge " and skilled in judging at a glance the situations

that arise in his work, he replied in a tone of inimitable conviction: "We know our customers!"

This daring and curious retort served to remind us of the fact that every trade develops special abilities which are never analysed, but whose indefinable elements do not deceive those concerned with their use. And no matter how inexplicable this fact may appear, we can nevertheless corroborate it by comparison with many special qualities found to occur in various trades, and which, for lack of a more precise expression we refer to as a 'knack' or 'flair', meaning those mysterious capacities that a man can acquire by long practice in a given occupation.

Indeed we all know that in every occupation genuine "special senses" develop as a result of long use: although we know nothing about them they are none the less real. A given fact that would pass entirely unnoticed by the layman will leap to the eyes of a practised professional at first appearance. Without any instrument other than his trade knowledge the wily cattle-dealer will give surprisingly accurate valuations of an animal that is shown to him. It is a well-known fact that a skilful chauffeur closely follows the smallest variations in his engine's performance by ear alone. And we all admire the orchestral conductor's refinements of judgment, when he distinguishes the most delicate variations in the tone-colour of a single instrument amidst the noise of a hundred others.

The musician's ear, the builder's eye, the cloth-merchant's touch, the wine-taster's palate, and the infinite variety of vibrant sensations that enter into the pursuit of every occupation rise to heights before which our most perfect measuring instruments are almost powerless.

And are we not obliged to listen when a professional, combining physical means of observation with the data supplied by some prescience of unknown origins, affirms that " It is thus, and not otherwise " ?

The porter's strange and daring answer : " We know our customers," means that he too as a result of long practice at accompanying travellers in the corridors of railway coaches, has acquired a *flair* of this sort. He weighs up his tourist in advance. By his dress, his bearing, and by things that cannot be defined by laymen such as we are in this matter, he knows that this man will give five francs, and that other one ten !

Now we can understand. As the register in which the tips received are recorded is open to inspection by all members of the group, it would not do for a ten-franc customer's porter to pay back only two ! One would not be able to prove anything, of course, but there would be a foundation of suspicion which would set in motion an ingenious and painstaking form of mutual supervision. If the usual figures in the table showing individual receipts should give cause to suspect deficient returns, two men chosen, on the other hand, from among those who bring in the largest sums, will be told off to work continually in the immediate neighbourhood of their suspected comrade, to " frame " him, as they say in their slang. It is quite possible, however, that a man who is under this sort of supervision may not be actually dishonest but merely lazy. Among men " such as they are " there will naturally be some who, as some readers will doubtless have foreseen, will think on the following lines : " Why should I tire myself, seeing that in the final reckoning I shall get no more than my comrades do. If I personally have not taken a big lot, the effects of this small deficit will be

negligible in the total fund, so that my share will not be noticeably reduced."

A man who reasons thus will certainly change his attitude when he feels around him the more or less discreet pressure of well-informed comrades, and an examination of the interesting statistics kept by the porters shows that in such cases the receipts of a member who has been " framed " in this way have never failed to show an immediate rise !

Thus do simple porters show us how it is possible to solve the famous problem of utilization of the lazy,—a great subject of discussion for the champion " hair-splitters " of the academic social study groups.[1]

Supposing that the suspected man is not lazy, but actually guilty ; what then ? He will soon be caught " red-handed " in his embezzlement. Immediately he has left his customer he will be " stopped " and requested to empty his pockets. For he should only have the last tip received on his person, as his pocket-money should have been left in his town clothes. If, then, after his tip has been turned into the common funds he still has something left, it means that he has tried to defraud the community. He will then be pursued by an application of the self-discipline that is based upon the collective interest of the group. Have we not here some valuable pointers for the inculcation of an autonomous discipline, which would justify our hoping that parallel results would be obtained in other groups and in other conditions ? Here we have evidence of the moralizing virtue of freedom.

[1] We have seen elsewhere how proportional distribution based upon variable coefficients can in other cases enable men to be utilized, by rewarding them only in accordance with the value of the services that they are able to render. See page 92.

Left to themselves in their own sphere, the workers no doubt may sometimes find difficulty in finding their balance and restoring order. But just as in a phial, whose contents have been disturbed by a sudden shaking, the liquids come back into place according to their specific gravities, we see the re-establishment of an order superior in value and stability to that which is obtainable from an authoritarian empiricism.

If we cared to broaden our study of this particular example of group-work we could show how its spontaneous development had enabled certain valuable traits to evolve. Thus, having set up collective responsibility, a sentiment of collective honour soon developed, and these men can declare with legitimate pride that ever since this system of work began the company has not recorded a single complaint from travellers of thefts of luggage, nor even of rudeness to customers, nor of any insistence upon larger tips. Further, should any of these men turn up for duty in a state, alas, of inebriety, his comrades will not allow him to appear on the platform! Better still, they have a natural control over themselves even as to their dress, and should one of their number get the reputation of offering his services in a "badly turned-out" uniform, another is detailed—just like an officer who is jealous of the smart appearance of his troops—to get his tie correctly tied, to draw his overalls properly under the belt, and even to criticize the questionable whiteness of his collar![1]

[1] We must not overlook the material advantages: These porters' drawings have risen after a year's operation of their co-operative group to 40 per cent. above what they were under the former régime. Further, the weekly rest-day was regularly assured for the first time and, what is truly remarkable, this association has been able to devise an ingenious system for paying for rest-days.

Such facts as these are proof enough of the superiority of autonomy, when it allows the workers to dispose themselves freely within their natural compass in the occupation that constitutes their essential means of livelihood. If, instead of repeating with a fastidious complacency the usual commonplace tags about the sole virtue of authority, we accorded them our loyal confidence, they would show what fruitful use they could make of it. Fruitful from the material point of view, because their personal interest would be genuinely linked with the collective interest; fruitful also from the moral point of view through progressive training in those virtues which come to birth only in the exercise of freedom.

This is how it is done: Owing to the variable nature of receipts on the different days of the week, the weekly rest-day made differences in profit according to the day on which it was taken. (Sunday work was provided for by roster.) By calculating for each day the share of the tips to be distributed as if the team were at full strength, i.e. by not deducting for absences, the sum paid out was made equal for all, and the rest-day covered. This practice, introduced spontaneously by the interested parties, cannot fail to win admiration. I do not dwell here upon those institutions of a collectivist character which these porters created for themselves later on, such as sickness and death benefits. In addition, each porter has the right to a ten-days' paid holiday.

CHAPTER SEVEN

General Consequences of Group Work

PART I.—WORK AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

HAVING pleaded at such length in favour of internal structural reform of the business concern, I will now attempt a description of some of the consequences to which work organized by autonomous groups might give rise.

These consequences might be widespread and various, for the equilibria that would be established in the work itself would surely spread their beneficent influence beyond the field of production properly so-called. By this I mean that over and above the hope of achieving a good régime of production as such, the worker would also be offered a chance for the normal and harmonious development of his various aptitudes and talents. In other words, industry offers more than an obviously utilitarian goal. It is the road along which a man's whole being is developed and is thus, or should at least become, a school of life. We may say, indeed, that only by means of a mode of organization of work that offers maximal opportunities in self-government, will the workshop be transformed to such a point as to become a genuine continuation of the school, and of a school that is by no means limited to a purely technical function, but conceivable as a potential means of developing the full social value of the individual.

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Questions commonly studied as belonging to the subject of business management usually include those relating to their general policy, to their internal administration, to their financing, and to their technical organization. We examine their methods of accountancy and, if need be, their situations in regard to the inland revenue and customs authorities, or even to the transport services. Briefly, we give studious attention to everything that tends to ensure their satisfactory operation in the material sense.

Now with all the solicitude for improvement and progress revealed by these studies, it is curious that we should forget that all these elements have to operate through human beings, and that no matter how perfect may be the plans of action drawn up in these various departments, they will not produce their full effect unless we have also contrived to take every man and woman into account in a rational utilization of the *human factor*.

This utilization has touched hitherto only the most rudimentary abilities of the personnel, considered chiefly in respect of its numerically most important categories. As regards the whole of the subordinate staff, although its energy plays so large a part in the life of a business, we can say that only the half of it is utilized or, if you prefer it, only one side of its productive capacity, i.e. that visible activity that we obtain by the mere issuing of orders.

Nevertheless it seems easy to observe that there are always two ways of carrying out an order: a passive way, and an active one. An employee can strictly carry out an order to move an object from one place to another by doing that just sufficient minimum of his duty to prevent our having valid grounds for criticizing him. But

he can also do this work by adding to his strict duty the unpredictable benefits of his own intelligent initiative.

This sums up the whole problem of the utilization of the human factor.

No doubt these human attributes of initiative and intelligence are not uniformly distributed among the members of the personnel of a business. No doubt the tasks that they have given to them do not all demand the same degree of intelligence and initiative.

But is any such uniformity to be found in the other elements of a business? Do not raw materials, for example, differ widely in qualities, dimensions and so on? Now these differences are carefully valued, measured and classified with better production in view, and these valuations and measurements properly belong to the field of scientific work. Here we have scientific method applied to the management of a business: there is no need to labour this point, for these methods have made great progress and yielded obvious results in the course of this last decade.

When we come to the personnel, we rarely find them regarded as a reserve of miscellaneous capacities, justifying planned provision for their utilization, so that tasks would be logically adjusted to scientifically ascertained aptitudes. The personnel is drawn from that vague and anonymous mass that we call "labour". We use "home labour", or we import "foreign labour", and apart from the crude classification of the different trades, we might almost say that from this labour we take no matter whom to do no matter what.

Dare we mention the fact, then, that a man, whatever his social position, is a complex being endowed with extremely variable talents and resources? In appearance,

of course, and according to the well-known principle that " one man is as good as another ", one workman is very much the same as another workman. For all that, this seeming similarity may often hide big differences, and until these have been classified and utilized according to their respective potentialities, we cannot say that scientific organization of work has reached its full development.

It is strange enough to have to remind people of things which ought to be self-evident, but it is none the less true that certain of these statements are necessary.

A moment ago we were trying to enumerate the main elements in the life of a business, and we found that all of these elements were external to man. Then finally we set before them man, who alone is capable of putting life into these various elements, and of positively ensuring their operation.

Now man is a very different element from those previously mentioned. He is assimilable neither with the equipment, nor with the funds with which we finance the business, nor with the raw materials. I know well enough that already, with the object of utilizing the workers' abilities more rationally, attempts have been made here and there to select workers with a view to entrusting them with specific tasks. But this is a procedure which merely takes the work, and not the man, as the starting-point. The interest of the work and of the business is considered first, the man being merely taken as an accessory or instrument chosen for a given occupation. Thus when I was saying just now that we draw from the mass of the workers without bothering about their differences, it was not only of differences of a physiological order that I was thinking, but of all those things by which men " differentiate " themselves from one

another, i.e. those things which make up not only their physical life, but also their intellectual and emotional lives. In other words the workman is a man and, like all living beings, he is capable of acting on his own by virtue of certain laws of life.

There is nothing more regular nor more powerful than the laws of life and of nature. This has long been recognized in connection with many matters to which man's scientific attention has been extended.

It is precisely on the basis of this discovery, in fact, that we have succeeded in making rational use of the great forces of nature. When it was seen that it sufficed to allow these forces to operate in order to produce, with the aid of the appropriate apparatus, a given result, we obtained from gravity the movement of the pendulum, or the rotation of the water-wheel. With heat and water we have utilized thermic energy. It was then that Francis Bacon was able to enunciate his famous axiom: "We only command nature when we obey her laws."

Human science has already derived great benefits from this law of obedience, but precisely and solely in the material order of things, such as those which have been realized by technology.

As for man, nobody, or hardly anybody, has yet perceived that to command him it is necessary first to obey him, that is to say to obey the profound laws of his nature.

In every man, indeed, no matter how rough he may be, nature has set her mark in deep features, which no man can efface. She has granted forces and resources which we must know if we would use them to the maximum, for only if these forces and incentives to action are found in conditions suitable to their natural expansion

can the individual give the whole of the output of which he is capable.

Those who up till now have pitied the lot of the worker, and have pondered over the means of liberating him, have never really gone beyond the realm of sentimental, vague generalizations, instead of attempting to analyse the positive problems that we have to solve. We must, then, discover the laws which determine the satisfaction of every human personality, from the humblest to the most complex. If we are to utilize them, we must know how to recognize the genuine and most secret springs of action.

No doubt it is a long time since the psychology of man was first studied. But as for its application to matters of labour, it is still in its first steps, not so much perhaps so far as concerns research into aptitudes, but in regard to the principles that have to be taken into account if we are to ensure a distribution of tasks that corresponds to the capacities of each.

Scarcely anywhere save in England, or in the United States, where the science of work is studied with so much zeal, has there been resolute examination of problems of this order in a spirit of intellectual liberty that shrinks from none of its aspects.

> "This composite mystery (man)" [says Arthur Pound [1]] "enters the shop and takes his place beside the machine, to use a small but definite fraction of his powers in assisting it to produce and distribute goods. Call him No. 3141 if you choose; nevertheless, he differs from No. 3140 and No. 3142 and all other men living or dead. . . . Labor is more than labor;

[1] *The Iron Man in Industry*, Atlantic Monthly Press, Boston, 1922. Quoted by Balderston, *Group Incentives*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930.

each labor unit is also an individual, immeasurably dear to himself, even in despair.

"What the shop precisely wants, it cannot hire. It may want, though never wisely, mere hands and feet and backs; they do not exist detached from lusts, faiths, superstitions. It may want eyes, sensitive fingers, or specialized knowledge; they are not to be divorced from nerves and prejudices. . . .

"The mental luggage of the man going to the machine may be listed briefly as instincts, emotions, traditions, beliefs, habits of thought and conduct—those qualities of mind and spirit which, in their interplay, not only establish the individuality of their possessor, but also govern his reactions to authority and to the responsibilities involved in home and social relationships."

In a work devoted to the organization of relations between firms and their personnel [1] Scott, Clothier and Matthewson distinguish in the light of psychology the three principal angles from which the worker should be regarded if we wish to obtain his unreserved efforts. He must be examined from the points of view of his *capacities*, *interests* and *opportunities*.

It is certain that an attentive examination of the whole individuality ought to reveal on these three planes and at some stage of development the existence of the particular capital that each man has at his disposal for making his way in life.

When, instead of simply demanding a required performance of the first-comer, about whom one knows nothing, we are able to take account of this inner capital

[1] A. W. Shaw: *Personnel Management*, New York.

of which the man himself is often unaware, we shall be able, according to the foregoing principle, to ask for efforts which will really be but acts of submission to his own inmost nature, and which will consequently unlock forces in him which he could not otherwise have utilized.

This is clearly asking for a revolutionary change of attitude, a *mental revolution* such as Taylor himself demanded, and one which no doubt is more difficult than any other to bring about. That is why we are a long way away from it; why even the Americans themselves, who started along this road before we did, have not as yet managed to complete the course. In June, 1934, the directors of an American textile concern made a summary announcement of their intention to reduce their production by 25 per cent. The workers, being thus informed without any other negotiation of a measure which was going to reduce their wages in large proportion, went on strike and came to President Roosevelt to explain their grievances. The latter, after interrogating the employers, told the workers that the arguments invoked to justify the measure were valid. "Why weren't we told?" the workers then cried. "Are we partners in this business or not?"

The *New York Times*, from which I borrow this information,[1] adds that Mr. Roosevelt afterwards quoted this incident "as an example of those habits of stupid obstinacy which sometimes made a just decision more exasperating than a real injustice."

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A new organization of work based upon group

[1] 8th July, 1934. Section 6, p. 2.

autonomy will give a victorious answer to those accusations levelled against technical progress as a menace to the working-class intelligence.

What arrests the development of intelligence is the impossibility of doing creative work, of putting thought into action. Now, this impossibility does not come from the machine, but from the manner in which we use it, or in which it has to be used. If you put a workman in front of a specified job and order him passively to execute a certain piece of work, it is obvious that in such a case you are " mechanizing " the man. But if instead of working that way you entrust a job to a team with a definite budget, with suitable equipment and, within necessary limits, an exact adjustment of its activity to that of neighbouring teams, you grant it autonomy and at the same moment you operate a capital conversion in the régime of work. If the budget acquired by the group is divided among its members in accordance with the rules of an equitable proportional distribution, and in such a way that those taking part may have an interest in helping each other to increase the share of each one of them, then you will unloose individual ingenuity wherever this potential exists. It is at this moment that a process of natural selection will come into force which is of extreme importance, and which I shall describe later in more detail. Every individuality will now be able to expand and make itself felt. Every thought will be capable of direction towards the betterment of the work, when for the first time the individual and common interests become indissolubly linked.

Autonomous group work affords even an antidote to mechanization, because in the very midst of the most apparently mechanical operations the worker's

mind will be able to take a share in the evolution of processes.

In fact one of the great mistakes of those who observe " mechanized " operations from the outside is to imagine that they are stable, and that the process they are watching will last for ever. Now nothing is more false, and it is easy to understand, as the facts prove every day, that industrial processes can be improved indefinitely. To find a remedy, then, for this famous " brutalization " that is so much talked about by the " intellectuals ", it is enough to associate the workers with the trend of evolution and improvement of the work.

It is a long time now since Jaurès indicated this possibility in a celebrated article in which, dreaming of ways of raising the worker's intelligence, he said that the first consisted in blending

> " the exercise of thought with the exercise of the daily task. Do not allow the occupation " [he added] " which takes nearly the whole of life, to be a routine : the worker should have constant knowledge of the machine that he operates, of the collective endeavour in which he plays his part, and of the processes that he employs." [1]

[1] Vandervelde : *Jaurès*, Alcan. (Article in the *Dépêche de Toulouse*, 1889.) It is interesting also to note that with his vast and comprehensive intelligence Jaurès had perfectly appreciated the problem of mechanization by contrast with so many of his pretended disciples who could only repeat vulgar commonplaces on this subject. Discussing Marat's ideas as to the probable consequences of the *Jurandes* and *Maîtrises*, he wrote : " It is not true to say that the new system of production may have abolished the workers' technical skill ; it has merely transformed it, and besides Marat seems to have no inkling of the revolution in welfare that will be brought about by the intensive production of inexpensive goods." *La Constituante*, p. 580.

No doubt it will be objected that these are just unanswerable prayers, for everyone knows that the evolution of processes has led to such a division of labour that every motive of interest has departed from it. Once upon a time, they repeat, the worker could take an interest in what he was making, when he made a whole article by himself, but now that is impossible because he has only to carry out operations that are subdivided to such an extent that they have put the last full stop, so to speak, to any possibility of intelligent work. How can he find any interest in executing the ten-thousandth part of a motor-car, or of a watch, or of any other article of our industrial manufacture ?

The objection advanced in this form against our existing processes of work has become classical by sheer force of repetition, but its repetition has not increased its validity.

In the first place one might think that, apart from the workers engaged in those famous repetitive processes, the whole of the rest of the population laboured in the atmosphere of artists' studios. But actually there are only a few persons occupied in superior fancy-work, and no one has ever pretended that those not engaged in artistic occupations were necessarily brutalized.

I will not cross-examine any further here those writers who have suddenly discovered, we know not why, this repetitive work. I merely ask them whether they imagine that many kinds of work exist whose execution could be as passionate as the composition of a symphony ? Is it not a fact that for most persons who have to work for a living the main intellectual effort resides simply in the " wangling " to which they have to resort in order to win their " place in the sun " ?

It seems to me that it has long been just this struggle for existence that has kept the precious spark alive.

Let us face the facts, then, and so far as the workers are concerned let us remember that under conditions of ordinary piece-work the desire for gain is tempered by the fear of rate-cutting when earnings have risen above the figures that the foremen judge to be reasonable.

In autonomous group work, this fear having disappeared, since the job is the subject of a contract and, further, there being no more individual supervision, you have the unreserved activity of a man who works "on his own account" and fully enjoys the results of his efforts. To understand this it is enough to remember how material interest will unite the members of the group and how, as a result of this, they will studiously *think out* means whereby they will be able to do in two minutes what used to take three! Observe, then, that autonomous group-work will have the effect of replacing the worker exactly in the position of the artisan, since love of gain, joy in work, invention, and everything that is characteristic of expanding freedom will serve equally to excite his ingenuity.

You wish to safeguard the possibilities of intellectual development? Allow me to assure you that I am seeking the same end, even if I seem only to take the most humble, most elementary or even, if you will, the most vulgar of motives as a starting-point, i.e. self-interest.

I believe, in fact, as a result of a deep knowledge of the workers among whom I have lived for so long, that if we are to advance along the road that should lead them to better things, we must be at once idealistic and practical: we must guard against losing our footing in the real possibilities of the man such as he is, however

much we may dream at the same time of his higher destinies.

I am bound in prudence to think, then, that it is absolutely necessary at the outset that we should base our efforts only upon those motives which are the most commonly prevalent, without for that reason giving up the idea of realizing later on a trend of evolution that will lead towards higher values.

Besides, we must remember that in these groups composed of ordinary men such as we usually find when we recruit " labour ", we are bound to find individualities of various kinds. Let us consider only three types which, it will be agreed, correspond to the most usual average. First, we must have no illusions on the matter, and have the courage to admit that for a long time yet there will be a mass of mediocrities from whom we shall not get anything remarkable under any sort of régime. Next there will be some others who will drive themselves into action to increase their earnings. Then finally we have some active and enthusiastic beings, thirstier for independence, who will constitute a sort of leaven of activity amongst the rest. Among these latter you will always find some who make it a point of honour to be the originators of the " tricks ", even though this should bring them nothing but that halo of glory which acts so powerfully upon human beings. Is that a Utopian idea? Have we not before our eyes the exploits of those many men who accomplish difficult tasks " for the glory of it ", to be the first, to distinguish themselves in other men's estimation?

The field of industrial life—just like that of sport, which almost alone today makes an appeal to the entire energies of the individual—is eminently suitable for excit-

ing individual capacities to the highest level, provided, of course, that its structure is modified sufficiently to permit within it freedom for the expansion of these capacities.

If common opinion has not yet recognized this, it can only be due to the influence of a pernicious class of literature, permeated with classical reminiscences, hostile to labour and contemptuous of the workers.[1] A great number of writers remain, more or less consciously, under the spell of absurd conceptions of the "contemplative life", which evidently can only be realized if there are slaves to provide the nourishment, in the material sense, of those proud personages who have the audacious pretension to live as "pure spirits", detached from the "things of the earth". It is no matter for astonishment that men fed on such arrogant ideas—taking themselves for gods, no more, no less—should feel an instinctive aversion from the men of action who are called to industrial life. Hence so many hostile clichés and erroneous opinions that are spread among the public under their influence, and in which we should really see only these writers' personal revulsion from modes of life contrary to the forms of prestige to which they remain traditionally attached.

In noting the dawning pre-eminence of industrial life Auguste Comte has already remarked "the growing predilection of the most active and energetic men for a mode of existence which adapts itself so well to the infinite variety of human inclinations".[2] The old philosopher

[1] Plato, the "divine" Plato, in his *Treatise on Laws* wrote: "Nature has made neither shoemakers nor blacksmiths. Such avocations degrade those who pursue them. . . ."

[2] *Philosophie Positive*, 56th Lesson. At bottom, the transformations in life which come about through the operation of the active

recognized with a remarkable clairvoyance the possibilities of intellectual development inherent in these new ways of life, instead of seeing in them, as some insist nowadays, a menace to humanity's intellectual destiny.

The specific value of group-work is just that it offers to these different individualities satisfactions in conformity with their hidden tendencies, in conditions most suitable to their development. Moreover, the facts show that the man who has begun under the guidance of mere lure of gain has come later to take interest in the work as such, and in its special enjoyments. Walter Rathenau was surely right when he spoke of the " idealism of industrialists " which one day overtakes the mere profit-seeking motives and carries these men on to a new plane on which their thought is absorbed rather in the special joy of being a chief and commanding masses. Why should we not expect that the worker, though animated at first only by love of gain, might also pass one day to the plane of more lofty enjoyments ?

Many proofs exist of the fact that a great quantity of workers ask for no more than to be able to show a taste for their work. Are they not to be seen, for example, throughout all those little exhibitions in which most of

and energetic men of whom Comte speaks, really menace something quite different from humanity's intellectual destiny. They particularly menace the social situation which the traditional forms of life created in favour of a certain class which has taken the name of " intellectual ", in an attempt to save a last residue of the privileges which a man used to be able to ensure for himself by right of birth. The spectre of an age in which privilege will be replaced by a free and permanent competition in values evidently disturbs those who still enjoy situations which are not due exclusively to personal merit. Moreover, they often go out of their way to make impudent travesties of the meaning of the changes that are becoming manifest.

the products come only from the hands of workers or small manufacturers risen from the working class? Do not all these articles show evidence of the vitality and persistence in these circles of the spirit of invention, ingenuity and love of work well done? Do they not prove that all the talents of the old artisan have only to be reborn and opened up in the ranks of the workers of today? Why, then, all these jeremiads on the so-called progressive disappearance of capacities which are intact there, as good as any that existed in the peak periods of the golden days of craftsmanship? It is just that, as always, it is easier to find fault with appearances than to get to the bottom of problems and, in the case with which we are concerned, to understand that the origin of present evils is to be found in a vice of organization and not in human decadence. Fundamentally, perhaps, it is going too far to speak of a vice of organization. It is truer perhaps simply to say that methods of organization have not yet reached a sufficient level of improvement. The science of work is like the others, it progresses slowly. Going at top speed, it has widened the range of production. It has amplified in a prodigious manner the once unitary production of hundreds of articles, and to do this it has put into practice a range of equipment of extraordinary ingenuity and extent. It has also provoked the appearance of human phenomena the study of which has barely begun, and when I was saying just now that the artisan was only asking to be reincarnated in the worker of today, I was not unaware that the word "reincarnation" is fundamentally but a concession to the widespread prejudice against mechanization, implying that the artisans of the past would have disappeared, buried under the output of the machines. If, in fact, in the

absence of official census figures, we refer back to estimates made of the population in previous centuries, we know for certain that this population was much less than that of today and that, consequently, the work done had only to cater for very limited needs. And when we talk of the phenomena of modern life we are apt to forget that one of the greatest of these has been the prodigious increase in the population. It follows naturally that in a certain sense the working masses of today really have no ancestors. They are the result of a multiplication whose origin I do not know if anyone has defined. Is this multiplication due to the increase in resources produced by human industry, or is the development of industry due to the necessity of catering for increased needs? Those are two questions that I am not going to try to solve. It is probable that the two facts are so bound up with each other, and have so continually reacted upon each other, that it is not possible to recognize which came first. What remains is that we are faced with an incontestable fact: the existence of a new working-class mass, and instead of discussing its origins or its antecedents, it is up to us to take action to develop its dormant capacities. In reality, then, the problem before us is not to bring about the *rebirth* of the artisans within this mass, but to bring about their *birth*, as much in their own interests as in that of society, which can only progress through the elevation of all of its members.

As I have already mentioned, there remains a need, from the social point of view, to fight a form of waste whose consequences have to be considered differently from those with which we are normally concerned: it is the waste which results from the systematic non-utilization of the spiritual capacities of the workers. When

it comes to be understood that waste in human value far exceeds the value of the most precious materials, we shall wonder how we could have stopped so long at the exclusive consideration of how to economize in leavings.

It remains for the science of work to unlock the immense forces which are still dormant in the mass of the population. There lie unheard-of riches of which we can give no idea. We are able to value material riches. We can estimate the spouting period of an oil well, or the milliards of tons still concealed in an iron mine, even the weight of the gases that surround a distant star. But no one could tell what the unknown resources, lying unexplored in the brains of the working masses, have in store for us. In the issue of the most recent schedules of industrial production the public has been dazzled by the fabulous figures of the output of machines, but the output of the most marvellous machine is as nothing beside that which can arise suddenly from an idea. And the source of ideas has not dried up. There is a reservoir of them whose breadth is infinite in the millions of brains which today are asleep. Give them at last, through an intelligent organization of work, freedom to flow, and at the same time you will have opened dykes whose breach will produce prodigious effects.

Part 2.—Equality, Selection and Promotion by the Group

> Only he who has mastered the problems which are near to him, will be able to go further, and propound the solution of vaster problems.
>
> Pestalozzi

Please believe me when I say in advance that I foresee the objections which will be raised to this idea of freedom for the workers! I know well enough—having been so long under their orders—what is in the thoughts of those "practical" men who direct businesses. But it is precisely through having submitted for so long to their laws that I know how I have foiled them, how I have escaped from their grasp, how every day thousands and millions of men evade the false conceptions at present governing the organization of work. It is through having suffered from this blind attempt to adapt man to industry that I have learned what a mistake it is, and that it is industry and work which should, on the contrary, be adapted to man.

The pure and simple authority—of, alas, fallible men—today grades values arbitrarily, that is to say clumsily. It sometimes places downstairs the man who ought to be upstairs, and upstairs the man who should be downstairs, and the resulting inequality is proclaimed normal and inevitable.

However, I am not pursuing the chimera of equality. On the contrary, I believe in the future reign of inequality. But only in the reign of natural inequality, determined

solely by difference in capacities. In other words, true equality will be that which will result from a natural selection of values.[1]

An idle fancy? Every proposition which involves the abandonment of accustomed habits always meets with the same scepticism. Nevertheless, you have only to open your eyes to see how many men have risen from the masses with no other push than the natural and mysterious force which they carried in themselves, and which no psychotechnician had singled out. How many men, drawn from the people, have compelled attention and then won seats in the front row? One becomes a great artist. One becomes, at the age of twenty, a general of the Revolution. Stephenson, still a child, invents his mechanical contrivances. . . .

I can hear some people boasting: "But these are the possibilities naturally created by our régime of democratic liberties." Go gently. Those you mention are only exceptions who have overcome a thousand difficulties, more often than not by chance. The real miracle is that the virtue in these exceptions has not been crushed in the egg.

Now justice would mean that these exceptions should become the rule. Certainly not in the false expectation that all would some day become first-class creations, but through the will to place each one on the departure platform with equal chances, if not with equal means. Those who have hitherto only succeeded by chance ought one day to rise by a natural rule, which will be the rule of trial. It is constant and permanent trial, in fact, that will be the source of the true equality of the future; and who,

[1] Truth to tell, these ideas of equality and inequality will disappear in that much juster one of diversity.

save the incompetent or the lazy, could have anything to fear from that ?

Those who, for example, reduce the social problem to the co-existence of two classes over-simplify the data.

The social scale does not consist of two degrees, but of countless and various individuals *whose place in society has not been determined by any rule, logic, nor natural disposition.* There are doubtless many of them whose situation could not be altered by any social revolution, because such a thing could not alter their ability. Thus it is not a question of putting one class in place of another, but of realizing a state of social harmony in which every man has the feeling of being in his place.

The French Revolution put this word " equality " into its famous formula, but it seems never to have understood nor defined it. The artists commissioned to set down the attributes of the Revolution on canvas represented equality by a level. Being behind their times, as artists alas too often are, they were unaware of the fact that at the same moment the Revolution had invented the metre.

What is the connexion, you will ask, between the metre and the concept of equality ?

Now it is not this measure of length that is important, but the very idea of measurement.

This idea of levelling is indeed a horror which simply turns its back on justice. It should be obvious that men are not equal in ability, and therefore levelling would only be another way of making them suffer. It would merely lead to another form of that inequality of which we complain today.

When, later, Saint-Simon says : " To each according to his abilities," he shows us the road to true equality.

And when, a century after Saint-Simon, industrial psychology is busy putting its measuring apparatus in order, it will do more than show the road. Progress seems to be tied up in some way or other, in every field, with that of instruments of measurement. It is progress in precision of mensuration that has rendered mass-production possible, and through that the democratization of material goods. It is the same progress of some system of mensuration which will enable us to realize the Saint-Simonian idea in its plenitude.

I have no intention, however, of counting upon industrial psychology to assess the values that I am thinking of classifying. I know that this science, with more or less prudence, is creating for itself its own laws and instruments of measurement. With the aid of series of trials, of *tests* as it calls them, it discerns and classifies certain abilities. It sets up as it were a sort of sieve which retains certain elements—the coarsest ones . . ., just like a sieve—and lets others pass through, more subtle and finer ones, for which it is certain that instruments of measurement will never be invented.

No doubt, to make up for the inadequacy of the senses on certain points, man ought to construct instruments. He will never be able to count the revolutions of a motor-car engine, nor judge micrometric differences. But if he can measure the quickness of a bus-driver's reflexes, he cannot express in figures that so-and-so has the soul of a chief, and that such-and-such has a certain degree of poetic sensitiveness.

Now I admit that my curiosity is attracted by just these subtle elements, which conceal in their mystery the great forces of human nature. But then if the sieves of industrial psychology are ineffective for such a purpose,

how are we to gather the dust and study what it contains? Probably an impossible task, if we pretend to attack it directly. Just as impossible, perhaps, as to determine the nature of electric energy. But, indeed, if we are ignorant of the inmost nature of electricity, that does not prevent our studying its effects and canalizing its force!

No doubt it would be even more useful to allow the secret forces that reside in man to act, so as to classify their invisible categories by their effects? If you keep unmoved in a vase a turbid mixture formed by different liquids, they will contrive to arrange themselves gradually in order of density, without your having to interfere. If, in the same way, you bring together men few enough in number to be easily classifiable, *and so that they find themselves bound to each other by an interest which will play the part of the vase*, they will know how to classify themselves spontaneously, after a little groping, so as to assign the portions which, in the common task, best suit their respective abilities. That is the moment when those subtle forces, which passed just now through the sieve, come into play.

No matter how marvellous man's achievement in the domains of science and art may be, it is certain that nothing in this achievement can approach the spontaneous creations of nature. The most marvellous of pictures can never equal a landscape, and no machine can attain to the delicacy of a human gesture. That is to say, that although the human intelligence has horizons before it which seem infinite, our reason should none the less persuade us that it has limits.

We must think of these limits when we search for the formula for an organization of work which will eventu-

ally put each man in the place he is the most worthy and capable of occupying. We must bear them in mind, for the builders of systems always seem to believe that they will construct for humanity the ideal framework in which men will be able to act without jostling each other. There are always men who believe themselves to be gods, and wish to do a creator's job, trying to make us enter by force into the carpentry of their intellectual constructions. Let us remind these foolhardy ones that in this domain, as in so many others, we must leave nature to do her work. Is it not on these mysterious forces that the doctor mainly relies, when he pursues his simple endeavour to help the patient intelligently to cure himself?

The mechanical order which we have always dreamed of causing to reign through the exclusive means of authority is a snare and a delusion. Order cannot reign among men by a mere effort of intelligence, and it is a sign of vainglory to rely thus upon abstract reason as if men were figures or materials that we could arrange, add together and combine to get a permanently invariable result, such as those that we obtain with inorganic bodies.

The proposal to make men work by limited and cohesive groups is not put forward, therefore, as a system, nor as one of these intellectual constructions which I will deal with very shortly. And besides, it offers this advantage over the "systems", that it can be easily submitted to the test of experimentation. Better still, even, this experimentation has been already carried out. The proofs are there, and none of these are against it; the only obstacle is the indifference of those who have not themselves witnessed it.

Moreover, if we wished to build upon this proposition, which has nothing Utopian about it, the possible image of a new life of labour, it would be necessary to conceive of the first group as the point of departure for the selection of those forces and values held in concealment by the mass—the group being the natural, not the scientific, starting-point. When a value has emerged naturally from a group, who can say where it will stop if no obstacle comes to disturb its upward course through the successive levels of the enterprise? There are already great business chiefs who by a miracle, I repeat, have " risen from the ranks ". But when the concern is arranged in such a way that each human value can freely make itself felt, the miracle of yesterday will become the rule, and at every level men will class themselves little by little in a normal fashion, according to the only scale that can be a just one, that which naturally establishes the differences in wills and abilities.

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How have men hitherto proceeded to establish their respective positions?

When able to do so, they have relied upon force for their opportunity. They have also established their positions by right of birth. When they have begun to think a little about justice, they have resorted to drawing lots.

They still proceed, according to the circumstances, by methods of election, of examination, or of competition.

Competition certainly is a means in certain cases of finding out differences in capacities: but for all that it is only an accidental and temporary means. It measures

a capacity at a given time and according to certain circumstances ; its result then becomes fixed, i.e. congealed.

Now nothing in life any more than in nature should be congealed or permanently fixed. Everything in nature is in a state of constant change and adaptability. Situations are neither obtainable nor stable when they have ceased to be justified.

Nature insists upon perpetual trial, and hers is the model that we must imitate by instituting trial by action. That is why the true measure of equality will only be discovered in the realm of action.

There is nothing Utopian in that, for even now competitive tests bring recognition to many forms of talent that previously lacked employment. When in certain cases, already existing within our range of vision, a man has ceased to excel, he falls back to give place to the one who, in his turn, becomes the champion : that is equality.

In the stadium the athlete's crown is always in competition, and no one has ever thought it an injustice to allow one head to pass over another. Discerning selection is not made by favour, and just as the torch passes from hand to hand, so no one can wear the crown for ever. It cannot rest permanently save upon a head which remains capable of proving its merit at any moment.[1]

Naturally such mobility, such instability of triumph, will never appeal to the crowned heads who, having once acquired the honour, would like to be spared its defence. Privilege is so comfortable. But the numberless mass

[1] " Access to every social career should constantly remain open to just individual claims while, on the other hand, the exclusion of the unworthy should remain unceasingly practicable." (Auguste Comte : *Philosophie positive*, 57th Lesson.)

of those who desire the crown will always be ready to enter for the race, and it is with these driving forces that we must organize this new equality.

Thus the equality we have to attain is not to be found in an impossible levelling, but in a constant equilibrium of values, in their logical classification and, to sum up, in their harmony.

The fundamental fact of the social question is that there is no social harmony. There are potential capacities at the bottom which, being unable to rise, find their outlet in the creation of disorder. On the other hand weaknesses from above facilitate and maintain an effervescence which never settles. Society is thus like a vase in which liquids of different density do not succeed in establishing their respective levels.

This equality, which is equitable in quite another way from the theoretical equality of " citizens ", can be measured in no other manner than in action, that is to say by comparing differences so as to put each man in his proper place. In other words, we must realize in men's ordinary activities what has been hitherto achieved only in games and sports.

But it will be asked what comparison can reasonably be made between games and work ?

We can nearly always find errors and prejudices at the bottom of our troubles. In questions of work, those whose first reaction is to refuse the workers any share in initiative base their conviction on the belief that this freedom would throw any organization of work into disorder. The great fear of the masters of industry when confronted with a demand for a modification of its structure is, indeed, very understandable. They know by experience that one thing is essential to the realization

of any comprehensive scheme: unity and independence of command. And they soon recoil when presented with an idea of industrial organization in which they might think that everybody would give orders.

There you have the fundamental cause of the revulsion inspired instinctively by the phrase "industrial democracy". They assimilate this phrase with the sad realities of political life, and naturally think that its application is absolutely incompatible with the idea of sound technical management.

Now if industrial democracy were what they think it to be, they would be right to reject it. But I assert on the contrary that industry will only attain the highest efficiency in a new form of organization in which no kind of initiative, no matter how elementary, will be left unused.

We must, in fact, understand each other, and above all make an exact analysis of the structure of a business and the functions of its organs, in which the most advanced "scientific management" has so far only realized a sort of external and, so to speak, material harmony. The harmony so far attained in the best-organized businesses is only a harmony of observable movements: it has not yet reached the bottom of things in the realm of work. It does not capture the spiritual activity of its participants: it only makes their bodies move.

Now this spiritual activity of which people are afraid, from which they expect nothing but disorder, should be regarded on the contrary as an unused and wasted force. We must take it as the basis of natural selection of workshop values.

It might be thought that this selection could be carried out early in life, in school for example. I believe that

it can only be begun there. The genuine channel of natural selection is the one that opens up in the field of work itself, where it is possible to submit men to continuous and really searching trial: in the place where words do not count, only acts.

*
* *

By the force of things, group-work creates and develops among its members a rigorous solidarity. It is this solidarity which we must analyse in order to discover the sources of the order that it can supply for us, and the justice that it can create.

The group has had responsibility returned to it for a specified task. It is free to entrust the various portions of this task to its members according to individual capacities which have to be assessed. We can be assured that this freedom will not lead to mere fancy or unconsidered choice. For, if you remember, from the fact of the interlocking of the interests of the members of the group, freedom will always be framed, so to speak, by interest. Each man will not only have an interest in giving his highest output, but also an interest in the optimum output of the other members of the group.

This entire solidarity will have educational consequences the extent of which it would be difficult to exaggerate. In the technical field it is obvious that the interlocking of interests can only lead to collaboration and mutual aid. There will be a common interest in the highest output of each individual, and consequently a permanent reason for the members of the group to collaborate on the one hand in the improvement of processes, and on the other hand in the improvement of

the individual aptitudes of each member. Imagine an apprentice in the group. The assistance he can bring from the first day, though elementary, soon deserves a coefficient. But all the members of the group have an equal interest in increasing the value of his collaboration, and consequently in acquainting him as quickly as possible with the various tricks or knacks. Then the progress of the apprenticeship can be measured by the rise in his coefficient.

Technical education is not the only kind which interests us. Moral education, education of character, should attract us fully as much.

If we have rejected the discipline which comes from without, it is not that we do not recognize the need for order. Who could be more interested in the creation of order than those who are so placed as to have the most direct interest in its existence?

Philistines and unbelievers always think that the assignment of coefficients will prove an insurmountable obstacle in a given group, but this is a mistaken belief; it will not stand the test of experience. The group is not a crowd from which nothing good can be expected.[1]

[1] It is important to stress the essential difference existing between a limited group of, let us say, twenty persons at the most, and a large assembly. The large assembly can give way to the demagogic enthusiasm created by an orator, who must always have a large number of people in front of him to develop his powers. In a small group, on the other hand, common sense can triumph over eloquence. "Take hold of eloquence and wring its neck," said Verlaine. The practical way to wring its neck is to reduce its audience. The dangerous impulsiveness of a crowd shows us that we must not take literally the formula which says "The wide world has more wit than Voltaire". We might even ask whether the progress of democracy does not reside quite simply in a kind of "fractional distillation" of deliberative assemblies. The practical growth of procedure by committees, which is the butt of so many

Its solidarity is founded upon solid arguments. Does one of the members wish to maintain that his coefficient deserves to be equal to that of a certain other member? The decision will not involve long deliberations. It will not even include any discussion at all, for here the law of trial soon comes into effect. You think that you are worth as much as so-and-so? That's easy. Make what he makes as well as he does, and in the same time, and we will decide. In this case the loser will not be convinced by arguments, but by facts. From comparison of the work the decision appears, a clear, just and unarguable decision, highly effective for confounding the pretentious. And if he is still discontented he will be the only one, for the evidence of justice will undermine his protests. I only mention these facts because it is necessary that we should register their main features. The facts are there for the following answer: every time such questions have arisen among workmen, they have always been solved with the greatest ease.

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The natural and spontaneous classification of values contained in the group from the point of view of the better accomplishment of the task that is collectively entrusted to them, is not the only advantage that we could consider. To understand it best we ought no doubt to use a word that is more familiar to organizers of work than "selection". The word is *promotion.*

Actually it expresses another side of the problem of

jokes, is for all that an application of this idea. If these committees offer some grounds for criticism, we can at least work better through them than in a large assembly. There, too, we have an application of group-work.

selection, that in which we proceed to the discovery of men endowed with the capacities of the chief.

I have already drawn attention to the " unused forces " that we could discover in the working-class mass.

Living in this mass, some men say nothing. Endowed only with mediocre abilities, a life of mediocrity causes them no suffering. But there are others born in the same surroundings, and compelled to live in them, who have other abilities. Although capable of attaining to a certain level of spiritual life, they are forced to stay below, to live promiscuously among those who are satisfied with a lower kind of life, and they naturally suffer.

Can we not understand how it is among these latter that the rebels are made: their inner capacities, being un-utilized in the building of order, find an outlet in forms of activity which often lead to mischief? It is their way of regaining some form of equality. You never managed to discern in them qualities of leadership which should have been worth some kind of promotion for them in the regular hierarchy of values. It is you, then, who carry the responsibility for their taking promotion in the ranks of the irregulars.[1]

The solution of labour troubles is in the rational organization of equality, i.e. of promotion. In the army of labour it is also necessary that each private should know that he has a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack.

The American experts whom I have already quoted were perfectly right in devoting attention to the ability to seize a *chance*, for this constitutes an enormously power-

[1] . . . There is no doubt that we must look for the origin of a great number of strikes in the need for some change, and for some diversion in the grey, drab life which results from extreme monotony, as much in the factory as in the family. *Times Trade Supplement*, 4th June, 1921.

ful incentive. Doubtless it is not everyone who wishes to " take his chance ", as those whose duty it is to recruit leaders know only too well. But when the man who has nurtured this secret desire has not found the regular way to satisfy it, he has become a ferocious enemy of the business, or in any case a germ of trouble, and of the same nature as its counterpart which appears as a result of the accidental obstruction of a physiological organism. The free circulation of forces must be assured. We must even add that the somnolent will have to be awakened. We must remember that in industry as in military life, problems of staff establishments and of command are of capital importance.

This reference to military life is no irrelevance, as it is only there, curiously enough, that due thought has been devoted to the importance of psychological factors as means of raising a unit to its maximum efficiency. An officer destined to handle men receives instruction that is by no means confined to the technical side of the soldierly art. It has been rightly assumed that if this man is to be sure of being followed by his men in times of danger, he must also be trained in the handling of souls. It is striking here to find recognition of the fact that for deeds of the greatest moment, in which a man risks his life, more powerful forces must be evoked from the depths of the human entity than the mere spirit of obedience, or even than that of fear. So stress has been laid upon the virtues to be possessed by an officer : to the vigour of his orders must be added force of example and courage. It is recognized that he must be able to make vibrant those innermost chords that lie wrapped in the mystery of the soldier's conscience. In a way, and maybe without conscious recollection of Francis

Bacon's saying, it is also considered that if he is to exercise effective command of a man in critical hours of mortal danger, those profound laws must be discovered which give him an irresistible drive.

Examining this aspect of command in a justly famous article which should be known to all who are interested in these problems, Lyautey declared that under the new conditions of modern warfare the soldier's " moral grip " had become a prime necessity.

> " Owing to the short duration of the period of service and the increasing intervals between wars it follows that when the next struggle comes every soldier will come under fire for the first time. And what a fire !—Fire of the most murderous kind, loosed forth from an unknown distance by an invisible hand—the most terrible sort of war without preparatory inurement. In the face of such violence done to all natural instincts, occupational training, material discipline, repressive methods will cut a poor figure if the officer has no other secret to back his authority, and if his glance, his word and his heart have not learned, from the very first day of their meeting, to find the way to these eyes, these ears and these hearts of children suddenly subjected to the horror of such a test ".[1]

The function of internal command in a business is not so very different in character from its military counterpart as one might imagine. In the workshop, as in the army, it is better to lead than to command and, indeed, the great majority of men hate to be commanded.

[1] *Le Rôle Social de l'Officier.* Revue des deux Mondes, 15th March, 1891.

Just as in the officer's function there is the exercise of the technical capacities of military art and then of those qualities which go to make a chief, the function of command in a business can be considered from two distinct angles. The chief there should also have technical capacity, and generally *it is only according to this that he is chosen.* Nevertheless, like the officer, he also must handle men, and it is precisely on this point that the training of business staffs is very often inferior to that of the army.

This does not mean, of course, that I am suggesting here methods analogous to that of the army and besides, since it is only a question of creating order in the group, it is clear that the chief of this group would, in relation to the whole business, be only a subaltern.[1]

But precisely those who have had some experience of labour know that the greater part of its troubles is caused by the lack of knowledge of the psychology of the men who occupy the subordinate grades. When we ponder over it we can only be alarmed at the evils that must inevitably arise from this mere fact that the choice of these chiefs is not controlled by any rational rule. We are beginning to take trouble over the vocational guid-

[1] It may not be out of place here to recall an historical memory which deserves not to be forgotten: When during the wars of the Revolution, France was deprived of the commissioned ranks of her army, all or nearly all of them having passed into the ranks of the *émigrés* of the army of Condé, it was often inevitable that the soldiers, abandoned to themselves, had to find their own chiefs from among their number. The Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr, speaking in his memoirs of the volunteer battalions of 1792, declares that " the majority of these choices were excellent. The soldiers have always looked for those whom they believed to be the most capable of commanding and maintaining a good discipline." (Quoted by M. J. L. Puech: *La tradition socialiste en France et la S.D.N.*, Garnier. See below, p. 196.)

ance of children, so that they may be directed towards those occupations which are best suited to their aptitudes; we are beginning to think that we ought to check the efficiency of the reflexes of a candidate for a motor-driving licence; has not the moment come when we should also think that we should have a check upon the mental health of men called upon to command others? When will someone show up the importance of questions of character in such matters as the management of a team or of a workshop? Who will enlighten us as to the number of conflicts arising from no deeper reason than the psychological shortcomings of a foreman? We carefully measure the quality and quantity of the raw materials we use, but many men's very existence is left open to the risk of "incompatabilities of temperament" by giving the right of discharge to choleric, vindictive or unstable heads of departments who can freely persecute any subordinate whose physical appearance inspires them with instinctive antipathy. . . .

In the same article of Lyautey's from which I quoted just now, the importance of the choice and supervision of subordinate heads, "so often persons who should be watched", he says, is clearly indicated. "It is in this intermediary sphere," he then adds, from his exact knowledge of military life, "that it has been possible for denials of justice to occur." But everyone familiar with industrial life knows that the same remark could be made there every day, and that innumerable conflicts begin from there.

I must now add for the benefit of those who, in connexion with the appointment of chiefs, are afraid of the word *election*, that there is no need here to confuse this process of choice with that of elections in the political

sphere. It is much more in the nature of a function which will decide itself by a sort of tacit agreement, confirming the ascendancy acquired by the best man over his working comrades.[1] Truth to tell, the function of this group chief will not have the nature of a function of command; and perhaps the fairest thing to say of this man would be that he will be "first among his equals".

In the pamphlet which my friend Maraux has devoted to the *commandite* [2] he has found a striking formula in this connexion, a real workman's formula, when he says that in reality, when the work is there, "it is the work which commands". One could not better express the spontaneous way in which the jobs can apportion themselves naturally, even that of the chief, when he has succeeded in installing harmony in an homogeneous team.

Let us imagine the new industrial life as it will be when chiefs are able to emerge from the mass by such natural means. Then, in the army of industry, each workman-soldier will be able to find "a marshal's baton in his knapsack", just as his ancestor could hope to "pass master". This army, in fact, needs chiefs of all grades, who could be drawn from the ranks by a process that we could copy from the revolutionary armies of '92 —leaders like those who commanded the soldiers of the year 2.[3] The Dubois-Crancé law, which was prepared and applied by Carnot's ingenious and active collaborator —those in the ranks of the workers ought to remember this—provided for the election of chiefs *from grade to grade*, each office being elected *by those of the grade immedi-*

[1] Remember that this is not a matter of pure theory, because numerous cases of application have enabled us to confirm the value of this proceeding.

[2] See Bibliography, p. 267.

[3] See page 193, note.

ately below. Observe to what point the industrial imitation of this procedure could reduce to more reasonable proportions the ambitions of those who claim nothing less than to have the managers elected by the workers. On the contrary, at each grade, men can perfectly well appreciate the qualities required to establish order in the immediate environment which they know. There is no demagogy in such a proposition. The workers have sufficient capacity to appoint a team-leader; the team-leaders to appoint foremen or sub-managers, and so on. Obviously, this process will not enable us to select from the working mass capacities that are not to be found in it, e.g. engineers. But it is surely possible nevertheless to make provision whereby the workers could nominate those of their number who are most suitable to receive the necessary training for promotion? Although I reported just now the favourable evidence of Gouvion Saint-Cyr regarding the value of officers nominated by the soldiers of the Revolution, I am not unaware that Jaurès, on the other hand, has mentioned many cases of incompetence.[1] But these mistakes were certainly due to the fact that in the enormous improvisation of the revolutionary period the soldiers often appointed men for whom there was no time to give the instruction necessary to round off those natural qualities that had been recognized in their election.

The field of labour is quite different. It does not impose the emergency measures of a time of tragedy. And if those responsible for the solution of such serious questions as these will allow themselves to be guided therein by the spirit of justice, the peace of the workshop would be so much the better for it.

[1] See *L'Armée Nouvelle.*

PART 3.—THE WORKSHOP OF TO-MORROW: A SCHOOL OF LIFE

> For him who knows the compulsory vices
> of the slave, freedom is the possibility of virtue.
> MICHELET

At the beginning of this part of my study devoted to the possible consequences of work organized by autonomous groups I showed how, by this method, the workshop could take on the features of a school.

This is not yet the case with the workshop of the present day, which has the aspect rather of a barracks. We might even borrow another comparison from military language. In considering the moral separation that exists between the management and the whole staff, its hierarchy of subordinates, its machinery of authority, and the mass of executants, we might also say that it all gives the idea rather of an army of occupation watching over an enemy country than of an harmoniously united ensemble. I had one day a striking vision of this state of things when I found myself in the office of a "staff manager", and watched him listening to reports on minute details of the workshop. There was something like the feverishness and uncertainty of a military headquarters when an unexpected attack has been reported.

Curiously enough, although the existence of this situation is often denied, the mention of it to some heads of businesses causes them a certain uneasiness. And without generally doing very much to change this atmosphere, they sometimes show an anxiety, by means of certain public pronouncements, to create the illusion of

a state of harmony which they know does not exist. That, as will be understood, brings little enough satisfaction to their personnel!

How can we change all that?

I have reminded my readers of the fact that there are those who dream only of reform in proprietorship of the enterprise, but so far as I am concerned, and I have already said so, my belief is that this change of atmosphere will only be obtained by a transformation of the working régime, and when this régime has acquired its full *educative* value.

It would be a mistake, moreover, to believe that the popular education which might be achieved through the medium of the work itself could confine its benefits to the limited radius of the workshop.

You will allow me, then, to overstep those narrow boundaries within which I have confined myself in the course of this study, in order to have a glance at wider horizons. I might say, for example, that modern working conditions are probably at the bottom of certain social troubles which would be difficult to explain in any other way.

The working methods of the past are never mentioned except to express regrets about the quality of present-day work. Those who make this complaint have probably forgotten to note that the constitution of big modern businesses has caused other kinds of wastage, which are no less real and important.

The man of the past lived in a little group or, perhaps, in two little groups: the one constituted by the family; the other by the workshop. That meant that his existence unfolded itself in front of witnesses who exercised an almost continuous control over his life.

Whether in the family or in the workshop, the circle in which he lived was a small *society* where he found himself in constant contact with other beings towards whom he had to adapt his own activities. In these contacts, in this adaptation, he underwent a sort of permanent lesson in sociability. He learned there that he was not the only person, and that he must support others as others must support him.

On the other hand, as extreme division of labour had not yet been reached, he had to think of his work. In this way his moral and intellectual life had at once support and sustenance.

Now the character of the working-class situation of today is not always observed with sufficient attention to notice the whole of the extent of the changes that have overtaken it. For widely varying reasons the working-class family no longer shows as much cohesion as formerly, possibly owing to the fact of the increased mobility of the population. The time is past when generations succeeded each other in the same villages, and everyone knows how easily the youth of the countryside is itself " uprooted " by all sorts of influences which I shall not examine here.

It is this " uprooted " individual who enters the workshop, where he finds no new subsoil.

Those who study the division of labour in order to observe its effects often overlook certain aspects which are more serious than those to which attention is usually paid. For division of labour results not merely in a limitation in the variety of movements. Its most important consequence is probably the isolation of the individual, his separation from every human tie, his lack of practice in collaboration and mutual aid. He no longer

has to make an effort to adapt his activities to those of others, for now all this labour of adjustment is provided for mechanically and, so to speak, outside of him. The *planning department*, *methods of organization*, all the minute preparatory work that is the mark of modern production have absorbed, exhausted, centralized that spiritual activity which used to be the complement of the workers' purely physical exertions.

Being no longer compelled to make this effort of adaptation, of harmonization of his movements and of the whole of his life to those of his neighbours, the worker naturally tends to lose the special benefit that the exercise of this effort used to bring with it, i.e. the development of a social sense.

However, in spite of this diminution of his being, this worker is still a man, that is to say that he is still made up of the same organs and, in particular, he is still provided with a brain and with feelings. Only, as his work relieves him of thought, his brain no longer has nourishment. And as he is away from his family, neither his feelings nor his intelligence have, any longer, any objects of attachment.

All of which brings us back to saying that even if the man is attached to his work from such and such a time of day to such and such, his thought and his sentiments have become floating entities which can be tossed and swept away by the smallest breeze from outside. . . .

May we not suspect that here we have the underlying source of the astonishing ease with which the various forms of what nowadays we call " extremism " can be disseminated ? Neither work nor social life contains any longer the only elements which give value and relish to existence. So we should not be surprised if the first

charlatan who passes by can capture attention, and if idle minds greedily take possession of the doctored food that he offers them. When we lifted the exercise of intelligence out of the workshop into the planning department we simultaneously opened the door to extremism, for the brains that would otherwise have been concentrated upon the completion of the job, having no longer any regular mental sustenance, have come to ruminate on other things.

Let us observe the manner of the spread of extremism. We shall easily find that it develops precisely where the men have been dispossessed of all spiritual nourishment because of their ordinary conditions of existence.

So they follow the agitator who contrives with his verbiage to fill the void that was in them, and that is their own manner, so to speak, of demonstrating that " man does not live by bread alone ".

Incidentally I venture to say that, in my opinion, there is no other explanation for the numerical weakening of all ordinary social organizations which have given their members neither food for idealism nor any intellectual or moral props amid the realities of life.

And so it is, then, that if we want a sentiment of necessary social discipline to percolate afresh into the masses, we must recapture some means of giving spiritual nourishment to the individual; we must guard against this emptiness of mind and soul that results from the assignment of tasks in which there is neither joy nor initiative.

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If the development of new patterns of life prevents our restoring the bases of a moral balance in the disci-

plines of the family, we can observe the appearance, however, of new disciplines which, on a much wider plane than that of the family, are surely destined completely to transform the appearance of society.

I have neither the ability nor the leisure to attempt here either a complete picture or a detailed analysis of these new disciplines, and I will confine myself merely to indicating their character by means of one or two examples taken at random from present-day reality.

The whole problem of the formation of the disciplines required for the new organized society of tomorrow is bound up with the development of our ability to obey laws.

I have already briefly indicated in a previous chapter that working harmony will only be attained when we have succeeded in setting up a new form of organization in which the workers will obey laws, not men.

Let me now linger for a moment upon this essential idea, which is found to be the very basis of every potential development of our individual freedom, and consequently at the centre of the endeavour I am trying to pursue here on behalf of the workers' freedom.

The moment has come, in fact, to refute with all possible vigour the gross untruth we hear propagated persistently on all hands about this weakening and "decadence" of individual freedom as the price that we must pay for the material advantages ensured for us by scientific progress. Now, on the contrary, it is certain that individual freedom never had before it such large horizons as those which the new forms of social organization will ensure for it.

No matter how paradoxical this may appear through the contrast of the words liberty and obedience, it is

none the less easy to demonstrate that the development of individual freedom will automatically follow our capacity for obedience to laws.

The single example of the motor-car driver (already quoted) enables us to demonstrate how obedience to a discipline of common interest really provides us with a development of our individual freedom: From the fact that we have agreed collectively to keep to our left, it follows that our individual freedom to drive is facilitated and consequently increased, whereas the false freedom that would permit everyone to zigzag from left to right would finally thwart our freedom to move on.

But I will now take a less simple example, and one which will offer the advantage of showing us how in the society of today social disciplines are being prepared which will be more and more necessary in the society of tomorrow. In this way we shall see what is the nature of these disciplines, and how they are developing under our eyes, despite the prophets of disaster, and without our even noticing them, so perfectly compatible are they with our solicitude for the most complete individual freedom.

I shall take this example at random from the immense swarm of societies of all kinds which characterize the incessant progress of our social organization, and whose internal life is found to be exactly like the real school where the man of today makes a slow apprenticeship in the disciplines of tomorrow.

When a building is in course of construction everyone knows that the workers in various trades succeed each other, from the navvy who digs the foundations right up to the decorator who gives the last touch. Everyone also knows that this succession is not marked in an abso-

lutely rigorous manner, so that workers in trades which converge the one after the other in this collective endeavour can be simultaneously on the spot.

Let us remember now that these various trades have generally become dangerous owing to the use of scaffolding, to the possibility of dropping materials, and to everything that can contribute to the insecurity of a building-yard. The daily history of these trades is thus filled with accidents which, long since, have given rise to numerous legal disputes which are particularly worth following to their conclusions.

Damages for accidents, and the allocation of aid and indemnities to their victims, lead first of all to investigation of responsibilities: hence the disputes to which I have just referred. For example, a workman having fallen down a still empty staircase, the mason comes and says that to prevent this accident he had installed a barrier, but that afterwards the parquet-layer had lifted it away because it interfered with him in his work. A hundred cases of this kind might thus enable the various trades, when an accident has happened, to throw the blame on one another and open the door to endless discussions.

Thus it came about that the corporative organizations of these various trades got tired of this state of affairs, and especially, no doubt, of meeting the costs of proceedings resulting from it, and united to form a joint body which, being placed in a sense above them all, could impose upon each of them in the matter of prevention of accidents a *discipline* which they were unable to exercise spontaneously.[1] They founded a Society of Prevention,

[1] See my book, *Employeurs et Salaries en France*, p. 232. Alcan, Paris.

whose delegates had the right to visit all the building-yards indiscriminately, to compel the installation of protective devices, thus creating on their own initiative an authority superior to each of them, and alienating, so to speak, their individual freedom to protect their own workers.

But would anyone dare to suggest that the development of a discipline of this kind, of which thousands of different examples could be discovered, constitutes a menace to our will for individualism? Would anyone pretend that the fact of driving on the left, or of being more effectively assured against accidents are typical examples of a horrible conformity? While keeping to the left can I not go where I wish? Is a workman's freedom endangered by his life being made safer?

I think, then, that here we have found the type of this future freedom for which Carlyle a century ago demanded "some new definitions". It is under this form that we can perceive how, in the future, the individual will be "free in an organized society" without any of his personal tendencies—save those which may harm others—being unjustly compromised as they are today.[1]

[1] When we speak of the "decadence of freedom" (see M. Daniel Halévy: *Décadence de la Liberté*, Grasset, Paris) should we not perhaps ask ourselves whether we are not witnessing merely the decadence of a certain kind of liberty at the same time as the birth of another? When the "conscious and organized" worker tries to transform the right to join a union into the obligation to do so, he is acting against the freedom of the man who wishes to remain unorganized. He is logically driven, however, by the common interest of the workers, who say then to the man who remains outside the ranks of a union: "If you do not come with us, you become the accomplice of the employer in resisting our demands." In this case the organized worker has not alienated any freedom other than that of "desolidarizing" his comrades; and on the contrary, as an individual, he has increased his individual

In any case, and so as not to dwell longer upon the general ground on which I have thus ventured, it is certain that the freedom conceded to the workers operating in an autonomous group would place them exactly upon this plane of the "free individual in an organized society". From this moment onwards they would be obeying men no longer, but only the laws of the work and would consequently be put into the most suitable position for developing their educable qualities.

That is why I say that from this moment onwards the workshop would take on the aspect of a real school of social life, where the workers would once more find those forms of spiritual nourishment of which the existing industrial organization has dispossessed them.

I know well that for some years people have begun to devote some attention to the problem of working-class education, but against those attempts made here and there to develop the education of the workers we could make the complaint ordinarily advanced against schools in general: between school and life a gulf is fixed which the most ingenious educators have not yet contrived to bridge. The school teaches in a marvellous order what men have already succeeded in learning. But life is an essentially moving environment in which the human logic of a programme has disappeared, where one is always in the presence of weighty unknown factors and where, nevertheless, it is necessary to act without delay.

The working-class education of which I am thinking

means by the whole force of the group to which he belongs. The "freedom" of the non-union worker is of the same nature as that claimed by economic liberalism, and which led in fact to this "unfair competition" which the America of today is trying to destroy, after having been the land of its most magnificent blossoming.

is really too much inspired by the methods of the school, whereas it should try to approximate to life, i.e. to work, in which is passed almost the entire existence of the workers to whom it is supposed to be addressed.

What must we do to disengage a method of *education* from the practices of *instruction* pure and simple? For the workers do not stand in need exactly of professors, but rather of this "professor of energy" that every man meets with in the circumstances of life, when he is in a position to run risks and take decisions. Now, energy and character are in no wise developed by reading books or by listening to lectures.

Just as the blacksmith learns forging by forging, energy is formed by action, and this true working-class education will only be attained by means which are a long way away from what the professors can do. These latter can only teach what they themselves have learnt, whereas the worker should learn things which no one could teach him, because they have to come from his own experience. It is not a matter of his becoming merely an educated man, but of his becoming a *man*. He must become capable of passing from an imposed discipline to discipline by consent, from servility to dignity. . . .

Some Americans are preoccupied with this problem like ourselves. Let us hear what one of them says about education:

> "Education must afford the training to enable the individual to meet in action the problems arising out of the new situations of an ever-changing environment. Education, accordingly, would consist of acquiring facility to act in the presence of new experience. It asks not how a man may be trained to know, but how

a man may be trained to act. It is concerned with precedents only so far as they lead to initiatives. It deals with the oncoming new in human experience rather than with the departing old." [1]

These are typical words which admirably underline the notion of movement in which we must prepare ourselves to live. Let us consider the same idea again in another form :

" In American industrial usage the word *stable* does not imply a static condition such as, for instance, does its usage in chemical literature. Several centuries of experience in a dynamic frontier environment have made it impossible for the American to think in terms of unchanging social institutions. Therefore the word stable as applied to social concepts does not exclude the factor of change. It connotes adjustment and balance in the midst of change when it is desirable and to prevent it when undesirable, and some measure of regulation of the direction and extent of change." [2]

Who more than the worker lives in an atmosphere of movement like that evoked by Dr. Person ? And who cannot see the forced delay that will be caused by any method of education that may be prepared for him if it is not closely adapted to the very life of labour ?

It is the workshop itself, therefore, which must be transformed into a living school, so that the worker who has to live there will be able freely to expand such resources as he may have in him.

[1] A. S. Dewing : *The Case Method of Instruction*, McGraw Hill, New York.

[2] Dr. H. S. Person, late Director of the Taylor Society : *Report of World Social Economic Congress*, Amsterdam, 1931.

We may remark that this proposal to found working-class education upon the practice of group-work shows an essential difference from all the " systems " hitherto imagined after the idea that they could bring some final solution of the " social question ".

On the contrary, this conception is nothing other than an educative method closely resembling that of the new methods for the education of children which have begun to make appeal, like that of Montessori, to the free initiative of the young pupils, in contrast with the old methods of authoritarian discipline.[1]

Consequently, being an educative method, it promises nothing of the absolute or rapid. It is an appeal to endeavour. It gives expectation of trials, errors and checks. It is evident that if in a group formed at random there is found, unfortunately, no minority of men able to raise themselves above the others and exercise their ascendancy over the group, the result will be mediocre, or even frankly bad. Certainly, the formation of a group will not automatically bring intelligent men to birth in its bosom, if it finds none in it. This alone is true, that every time they are there, one can be sure of attaining high results, and this is a rule that will never be disproved, if we refer to the cases of application already observable.

In the course of recent years, and among other experiments that I did not mention in Chapter Five, there is one which began in the worst of conditions and for a reason that it is important to note. Its formation was not provoked by an " animator " like the one I mentioned in my description of the luggage-porters' co-operative, but by

[1] These new methods of education have been summed up in the expression : " The active school." Refer on this subject to the works of M. Ad. Ferrière.

a group of men belonging to the Board of Administration of a consumers' Co-operative Society, i.e. placed outside the group. These men offered freedom to the workers, instead of waiting for them to claim it for themselves.

It is natural enough that the idea of group-work should have attracted the attention of certain directors of the co-operative movement who, like all other industrialists or traders, were at grips with the problems of labour. That is why the directors of this co-operative [1] had the idea of changing the conditions of work in the bakery attached to its services, by entrusting the manufacture of bread to a team of bakers constituted as an autonomous and responsible group.

This was an experiment which showed precisely to what point it is necessary that the group should include at least one man capable of exercising an ascendancy over his comrades. For a long while, even though these bakers were left free to select their own chief for themselves, no personality of this order revealed himself among them, and the one whom they were nevertheless obliged to choose, for the sole task of ensuring a better co-ordination of their work, was not capable of adequately facing up even to these modest functions. There followed such serious inconveniences that at one time the Board of the co-operative considered the possible necessity of terminating the experiment, by putting the bakers' team back, as formerly, *under the orders* of a chief appointed according to the ordinary procedure.

Two or three of the co-operative's directors, however, who had firm faith in the idea of the group, insisted that the experiment should be extended, and this authorization was granted to them despite certain serious incidents

[1] The Co-operative of Caudry (Nord). See Appendix A.

which were caused by the workers' inability to govern themselves. For example, they showed themselves restive, or at least indifferent, to the use of instruments of control whose utility was as indisputable as that of the thermometers used to ascertain the temperature of the ovens. This hostility had even manifested itself in reprehensible behaviour. Moreover, the quality of the production was found to be directly affected by the inadequacy of the internal discipline of the group. For example, arriving too late at their work, the bakers thought that they could retrieve lost time by forcing the temperature of the ovens, which then burned the outside of the bread without cooking the inside enough.

I cite this far from encouraging example so as not to hide any of the difficulties that may have to be foreseen.

But as I said, certain directors of the co-operative insisted nevertheless upon the road of freedom and, little by little, the value of the men's services improved. The continuation of this experiment even showed us that those concerned were led to the spontaneous discovery of the methods of organization of work which best suited their special needs. They proceeded on their own to a specialization of the jobs, dividing themselves into teams, each of which took responsibility for a particular operation. Apart from the manager, who acted as a sort of administrative chairman and liaison officer with the Board of the co-operative, the bakers' group decided to give general authority for the work to a chief of manufacture, who also was elected, and who, in addition, exercised the part-time function of chief kneader.

Thus this little internal evolution led to the delegation of certain of their number for the duty of making the dough, others for its division into rolls, etc. Then, in

each of these new subdivisions a worker acted as head of a row while working at the same time. Finally these workers introduced what is, it seems, an innovation in oven work: whereas this process, which is particularly tiring, is ordinarily carried out by the same workers, they all decided to take it on in turns. It is thus curious to note that even in a circle that was ill-prepared for such responsibilities, the workers proceeded spontaneously to a new division of labour. Further, they also freely constituted a discipline committee which examines faults committed in course of work, and then demanded that a conference should be held each month between representatives of the co-operative society and the group, to exchange any observations arising from the operation of the service.

Such facts as these show us how great might be the value of investigations into such complex problems as those connected with "industrial relations". They reveal to what point it might be possible to submit these relationships to genuine laboratory research, if we really wish to follow the empirical road opened up by Godin's experiments.

These investigations should demonstrate above all that work itself—under certain conditions of freedom, it should be understood—is a true method of cultivation and education, and certainly the most effective and complete of all. By an intimate blending of hand work and the necessary use of the various applications of the sciences, work can become an extension of the school and its purely instructional methods. The introduction of pre-apprenticeship into school curricula has already given us a glimpse of the blending of the school with the workshop. When, on the other hand, a new organiza-

tion of the workshop puts the workers there in a position to make wider use of the data furnished by the pure sciences, this joint endeavour will at last be completed, and there will no longer be an absence of continuity between abstract instruction and a too material practice. And if ultimately the workers have to solve for themselves those problems of discipline and human relationships to which all collective action inevitably gives rise, they will be subjected at the same time to those moral tests which alone can develop and fortify in them man's highest capacities.

Only then could they gain access to the veritable joys of work, which can only arise and expand in the free play of the forces that compose the personality. If the artisan of olden times really knew these joys, can we not cherish the hope of their recapture, by replacing the modern worker in those conditions of freedom which characterized the artisan's situation? When in an autonomous group he will be able to give free rein to his individual capacities, the elements of joy in work will become reunited, and the dreams of the French Utopians of another age will at last become capable of realization.

To my knowledge, only in recent years M. René Favareille has suspected [1] the possibility and value of a revival of the guilds. The moment seems to have come indeed to recall the fact that it was these guilds which, in the Middle Ages, took charge—according to the idealism of the period, an idealism which it is our duty to renew—of the construction or of the decoration of so great a proportion of the cathedrals, which alone among our great national monuments bear witness to the existence of a genuine popular culture.

[1] See *La Dotation Syndicale*. Berger-Levrault.

Who can say what a new solidarity of labour will give us one day, when state-controlled centralizations have come to an end? What unknown Parthenons will rise anew from the soil, when the joy of work has eclipsed the hideousness of the kind of activity that thinks only of money? I know that I am appearing to depreciate the spirit of gain, the motive of self-interest, from the management of the business down to the lowest grades in the workshop. No doubt. But at the same time I would extend justice to all.[1]

Then, by thus liberating individual tendencies and initiative the range of which we do not yet know, we would simultaneously liberate the efforts of the indifferent, which would surely come to bloom in a co-operative atmosphere. Their torrent will rise from the depths of the soul of the people, bringing new blood to the *élite* and eventually creating an aristocracy of the spirit, whose qualifications will no longer be based upon privilege or money. The cathedrals are there to prove to us what things men could found upon their craft as well as upon their creeds. Who dare say that this upthrust of the thirteenth century will not be born again, if we are able to discover a new structure for industry?

As I have not overworked my quotations in this little book I will allow myself to give here a passage that is little known to the younger generations and which, in my view, ought not to be forgotten, for it contains promises which I for one would never renounce:

"I ask then why, seeing that apprenticeship should be the theoretical and practical demonstration of

[1] See *La Cité Moderne*, by Jean Izoulet, on the identity of justice and interest. Albin Michel.

industrial progress, from the simplest elements to the most complicated constructions, and seeing that the labour of workman, journeyman or master have only to continue, on a vaster scale, that which apprenticeship began, I ask why the whole life of the worker could not be a perpetual enjoyment, a triumphal procession? . . .

"It is an intimate pleasure, to which solitary reflection is no less conducive than the excitements of the workshop, which the working man experiences from the full exercise of his faculties: bodily force, manual skill, quickness of mind, strength of idea, pride of soul through the sentiment of difficulty overcome, of nature served, of knowledge gained, of independence assured; communion with the human race through the memory of ancient struggles, solidarity of work and sharing of welfare.

"The worker in these conditions, whatever his bond of union with creation, whatever his relations with his peers, enjoys the highest prerogative of which a human being can boast: he exists by himself. Nothing in common between him and the multitude of the beasts who consume without producing, *fruges consumere natos*. He receives nothing from nature that he does not transform; in exploiting her he purges her, fertilizes her, embellishes her; he renders to her more than he borrows from her. Were he lifted from the midst of his brothers, transported with his wife and his children into solitude, he would find in himself the elements of all wealth, and would at once re-create a new humanity.

"From now on why should not work, developed and maintained according to the principles of industrial

genesis, fulfilling all the conditions of variety, health, intelligence, art, dignity, passion, legitimate reward, which are its essences,—why should it not become preferable, even from the point of view of pleasure, to all the games, dancing, fencing, gymnastics, entertainments and other see-saws that poor Humanity has invented in order to recuperate itself, by a gentle exercise of the body and the soul, from the fatigue and ineptitude brought upon it by the servitude of labour ? " [1]

Distant horizons ? Undoubtedly. But the hope of brighter days than those known to the worker of today must remain the encouragement of those who mean to act. And if I had to sum up in one word the effort that I would like to see undertaken, it would be in this one : education.

That word conjures up in advance, indeed, the inevitable gradualness with which this transformation will be brought about. It may also bring out the contrast between the propositions that we have been discussing and the politicians' promises. For all that, the promises for the future contained in our proposals are certainly not less sure, and if this future is still a long way off, that is no reason for discouragement. As a Chinese proverb puts it : " A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

[1] Proudhon : *De la Justice*, 6th Study, Marcel Rivière.

Appendix A

The Bakers of the Co-operative Society of Caudry (Nord)

By way of documentation, here is first the text of the principal articles upon which the Society of Working Bakers of Caudry was regularly constituted. It will be followed by the text of the contract drawn up between this society and the Consumers' Co-operative Society for undertaking the making of bread.

Article 1. There is formed between the parties now concerned and all those who, following the same occupation and adhering to the present statutes, shall be subsequently admitted thereto, a private civil society of variable membership, which shall be called the "*Coopérative de fabrication du pain*", and to which each member will contribute his industry as a working baker.

Article 2. The object of this society is the exercise of its members' occupation in the work of making bread required by the Co-operative Society known as "*L'Union des Coopérateurs du Cambrésis*".

Article 3. The life of the society is fixed at ten years from this day. It can be dissolved before the time fixed for its expiry or prolonged beyond it by decision of the general assembly of members, in the manner to be stated below.

Article 4. The registered office is at Caudry, rue de Cambrai, 43.

Article 5. Any person whose adherence shall be judged useful to the society may apply for admission on condition that he undertakes to fulfil the obligations resulting from the present statutes. Applications are to be submitted to the general assembly of members, which will pronounce final decisions of admission or rejection.

Article 6. Every member undertakes to work in execution of the work undertaken by the society to the best of his ability. It is forbidden to devote attention to other work without the authorization of the general assembly.

. . . . . .

Article 21. The society is administrated by a manager chosen from among its members, appointed each year by the general assembly and always eligible for re-election. For the first year the first-named party, M. Ernest Boyron, is appointed as manager of the society, to remain in office until the general meeting of 1932. The manager has disposal of the most general and most extensive powers for the administration of the society. He has the right of signing for the society and will exercise this right only for the business of the society.

Article 22. The manager will keep the accounts of the society. Each month he will distribute the profits among the members proportionally to the number of hours of work provided by each.

Article 23. An annual fee can be awarded to the manager by the general assembly.

Article 24. Each year the manager will present to the general assembly a report of work accomplished and a balance sheet. The general meeting will decide if there

is occasion to devote a portion of profits earned to a reserve fund. The remainder is to be divided among the members, *pro rata* to their hours of work, account being taken of advance payments received by each of them. The general assembly has the right at any time to assign special bonuses to certain members whether by reason of the quality of their work, by reason of their special competence or, finally, by reason of special services that they may have rendered to the society.

Article 25. The general assembly, ruling according to the conditions indicated in Article 18 above for the modification of the statutes, can prorogue the life of the society or pronounce its impending dissolution. On the expiry of the society or in case of impending dissolution, the general assembly will nominate one or more liquidators, who will have the duty and power to continue its provisional operation, to terminate current business, to sell, even by private negotiation, the mobile and fixed assets of the society, to settle liabilities and pay the liquidation charges. If the liquidation involves losses, these will be shared between the members per head. If it leaves a net credit, this credit will be shared between the members, *pro rata* to the hours of work given by them to the society.

A copy of these articles has been deposited with each of the record offices of the Cambrai Tribunal of Commerce and with that of the Justice of the Peace of the canton of Clary, 31st January 1931.

For extract and quotation :

N. Lefèvre, Notary.[1]

[1] Extract from the *Reveil du Nord*, 1st February, 1931. (Legal announcements.)

CONTRACT

Between the consumers' co-operative Society "*L'Union des Coopérateurs du Cambrésis*", limited company of variable capital and personnel, of which the head office is at Caudry, 71, Route de Ligny, represented in the present transaction by M. Buiron, Nestor, managing director, acting by virtue of a decision of the Board of Administration dated 7th December, 1930, of the one part,

And M. Boyron, Ernest, manager of the breadmaking co-operative, living at Caudry, 43, Rue de Cambrai, of the other part,

The following is decided and agreed:

"*L'Union des Coopérateurs du Cambrésis*" entrusts to the breadmaking co-operative the manufacture of bread necessary to its members, on the following conditions:

The breadmaking society must make each day the quantity of bread that will be indicated to it at least two hours before the commencement of work.

The total order will be delivered to the manager of the said society or to its delegate, and must be completed each day by 10 o'clock in the morning.

"*L'Union des Coopérateurs*" places at the disposal of the society all the equipment necessary to this manufacture. An inventory of this equipment shall be drawn up by the two parties and annexed to the present contract.

The breadmaking society must maintain the equipment in good condition of cleanliness and working order, carry out all repairs to it that do not require replacement of parts by a specialist worker and will notify the Union of parts to be replaced and repairs for which it is necessary to bring in a specialist worker. The replacement of parts and repairs which the breadmaking society cannot

carry out by itself will be carried out with care and at the expense of the Union, at least insofar as they have not been rendered necessary by a fault, negligence or abuse on the part of the society or of its members. In this case the Union will have the repairs done and will debit the society with their cost.

The cleaning of the bakery, as well as all maintenance work, will be the responsibility of the "*Union des Coopérateurs du Cambrésis.*"

The supply and storage of flours, the supply of barm, salt, heating, motive power, lighting, will be the responsibility of the Union.

No raw materials other than those supplied by the Union can be used for the making of bread.

The breadmaking society must execute by its own members only the work put in its charge by the present contract.

The Union undertakes no liabilities in regard to the members of this latter society.

The breadmaking society shall receive as its remuneration a commission of 71·26 francs per 1,000 kilos of bread delivered for sale. This bread must give satisfaction to the consumers by its good quality, presentation and shape.

The breadmaking society guarantees to the Union an average minimum production of 128 kilos of bread per quintal of flour used per month. If the average production does not reach this proportion, the society will be debited with the difference, and will have to make it good within the period that shall be prescribed. In default of payment within the time allowed, or if the minimum output is not achieved for two consecutive months, or during three months in the same year, the

Union reserves the right to rescind the contract forthwith and without compensation.

The schedule of output and of commissions will be drawn up each month in accordance with the quantities of flour used, returned to account in the bakery, or in accordance with the general counting-house of the Union.

If the Union requires the breadmaking society to make other (bakery or pastry-making) products (crescents, cakes, etc.), a special convention shall determine the quantity of flour to be allowed, as well as the special remuneration allowed for this manufacture.

The breadmaking society will deliver the bread at the normal weight that it should have according to its form, in accordance with local custom. If the Union cannot or does not wish to proceed with the daily weighing of all the breads, they will be assumed to have the right weight.

To determine the weight of the flour used, the control will be effected by means of the invoices of issue to the bakery and by stocktaking.

The Union reserves the right to rescind the contract without delay and without compensation in the event of the breadmaking society's inability in practice to ensure the manufacture of the quantity of bread ordered by the Union.

In every other case, the breadmaking society of the one part, the "*Union des Coopérateurs du Cambrésis*" of the other part, must give mutual notice one month in advance. If the Union does not wish the breadmaking society to continue in operation during this period of one month, or if the breadmaking society does not ensure the making of bread during the same period, the party which does

not respect the period of notice must pay to the other, as a penalty clause, the sum of 10,000 francs.

The Union must furnish to the society, not later than one month after the breaking of the contract, its account for output and commissions.

The registration from this moment in fixed title shall be at the charge of the Union; the proportional title shall be at the charge of whichever of the parties, by its deed, shall render it exigible.

Done at Caudry, 12th January, 1931, in triplicate copies, of which one is for registration.

Appendix B

Example of Apportionment of the "Mixed or Quoted Commandite"

(*Commandite cotée*)

Suppose that a sum of 1,500 francs has to be divided between three workers to whom have been allotted proportional shares at 3, 2 and 1·5; that is to say that when the first receives three francs, the second receives two, and the third one franc fifty. In the case under consideration, the sum has to be divided not only in these proportions, but also according to the number of hours worked by each.

The operation is done in the following manner:

If we suppose that the two first have the right to a hundred hours each, and the third to eighty, you have to multiply the number which determines the proportion to be received by each by the number of hours to which he has a right.

Thus:

For the first	. . .	3 × 100	= 300
For the second	. . .	2 × 100	= 200
For the third	. . .	1·5 × 80	= 120

The total of these three products equals 620.

Divide the sum to be shared by this last number:

$$\frac{1{,}500}{620} = 2{\cdot}419$$

Each of the workers will have the right to a sum equal to this last coefficient multiplied by the product of his hours by his proportional number. Thus, by this rule, the shares received by each of the workers are as follows :

1st : 2·419 × 300 = 725·70
2nd : 2·419 × 200 = 483·80
3rd : 2·419 × 120 = 290·28

1,499·78

Appendix C

Workers' Documents

Report of the Eight Hours' Committee to the Congress of the Metallurgical Workers' Federation, 1905 [1]

Members of the Committee : Petit, Séverac, Lemaître, Taillandier, Leliévre, Sirot, Sauvage.

Discussion : Night meeting. Petit, reporter.

After an exchange of views, Petit proposes the abolition of piece-work and of sub-contracting, to be replaced by work in equalizing *commandite* such as that described in a report approved by the Tinsmiths' Union and similar parties of the Seine Department, and circulated to all delegates to the Congress.

After a long discussion on equalizing *commandite* work and the eight hours' day, citizen Petit is commissioned to sum up the Committee's conclusions in a report to be presented to the Congress on the following day.

*
* *

Comrades,

I have just submitted for your examination and discussion an idea of a new organization of work, which

[1] I reproduce this document for its historical value only, and without comment, the whole contents of this book sufficing to indicate my position. I could not, for example, advocate on my own account the idea of equal sharing, which I regard as chimerical.

we consider to be the indispensable corollary to the eight-hour day.

This idea answers perfectly the fifth question as regards the suppression of piece-work and sub-contracting and the application of the eight-hour day on 1st May, 1906.

I will say more; it completes this workers' victory in the conquest of the eight-hour day, by opening up to the proletariat a new era of free evolution in organization and administration of production, permitting the workers from now onwards freely and progressively to reduce the duration of their labour in harmony with the productive power created by the development of mechanization.

By its principle of equality and its combative force, this form of organization of work *can alone* enable us really to reduce unemployment in a large measure, to bring wage rates to the maximum, to prevent the excessive rise in the selling prices of the majority of foodstuffs, clothing and manufactured articles; so true is it that the law of wages, known as the iron law, is absolutely valid only where organization of the workers does not exist, or exists only in a weak degree.

This new form of work is called: *The equalizing and syndicalist commandite.*

I will now explain to you:

1. Why we are partisans of the equalizing and syndicalist *commandite*, and why we should like to see it become the general and common demand of all the workers.

2. What the equalizing and syndicalist *commandite* is, its social function, and its importance in case of a general strike of revolutionary expropriation.

The reduction of the working day to eight hours will have the following happy consequences:

1. Reduction of unemployment in a certain measure,

this not being due to the fact of the reduction of time spent in the workshop, but owing above all to this fact, which has been proved by experience, *of greater consuming power acquired by higher wages, and by the greater needs created by leisure*;

2. Intellectual development and superior morale of the working class, being now able to work up its education, to teach itself;

3. Reduction of alcoholism proportionately to its leisures, to the awakening of its conscience, to its knowledge;

4. Affirmation of the right to material life through the minimum wage.

Such are the material and moral advantages which the application of the eight-hour day will give us. But appreciable as they are, we regard them as very inadequate.

It is after a serious examination of the consequences of the application of the eight-hour day that we found ourselves obliged to find for the worker a system of organization, of association, which assures to him the fruits of his victory and protects him in a sure and effective manner against *authority*, the arbitrary power of the master.

When we find that in countries where the working day is short and the wage high, such as in Australia, in Victoria, in the United States, in England, the masters only wish to employ vigorous and quick workers, we consider that for all these reasons, in view of this new situation created for the proletarians by the application of the eight-hour day, we should set up in opposition a new workers' organization, or more exactly improve our unionism by associating the workers even inside the workshops.

If we do not wish any longer to remain at the mercy of the masters' fancies, if we wish to enjoy in the widest possible measure the fruit of our labours, if we wish no longer to be the playthings of the tricks and speculative fancies of our masters, if we wish to suffer less from their *arbitrary and powerful authority*, if we wish that our comrades who are classified as unskilled, that those whose hair has grown white in the factory, if we wish finally that the militant ones will not be consigned in advance to unemployment, *we must gain mastery in the workshop by uniting our interests by means of a communist association.*

It now remains for me to explain what a *commandite* is, how we conceive of its social function, its superiority over piece-work and day-work and its importance in the case of a general revolutionary strike, that is to say, one of expropriation.

Thus, important as may be the conquest of the eight-hour day, we regard it as very inadequate if we consider that the masters preserve all their authority and the worker, despite his minimum wage, remains at the mercy of his master's whims.

The worker still remains isolated, compelled to bargain alone with the master, the foreman, for his work or for a rise in his wage. Further, the jealousies, the rivalries between workers will still remain with the differences in pay and the aristocracies of the trades.

The dawn which is rising ought to lead us towards social equality. It is in the association known as the *commandite* that we wish to take the first steps towards it.

The Equalizing "Commandite"—Definition and Fundamental Bases—Organization—Administration and Operation—Conclusions

The commandite is the autonomous and equalitarian organization of the workshop by the workers themselves.

In a *commandite*:

1. The masters' authority is exercised only outside the workshop: it is exercised only upon the products of work done, and the producers themselves manage their production;

2. All the workers are equal and enjoy identical situations, whatever may be the nature of the work that they do inside the workshop.

It is work done in common upon equalitarian bases, identifying the workers' interests even inside the workshop, thus uniting them in a single unit *vis-à-vis* the master.

Fundamental Bases

To give all the advantages hoped from it, the *commandite* should include the whole of the useful personnel of an establishment (excepting manager and office staff).

There should not be therefore as many *commandites* as trades represented, but one single *commandite* divided into as many trade teams as the workers interested shall judge to be necessary.

The *commandite* does not make choices among the workers under pretext of occupational capacities, each one being employed on work corresponding to his aptitudes.

The equalizing syndicalist *commandite*, in contrast with the method practised by upper-class exploitation, which consists in rating individual value and thus creating

rival, jealous and discordant hierarchies of workers, bases its morale upon the logical and human principle of the equal utility of the various forms of work, all being indispensable, and, starting from this principle, ensures an equal wage for all its members without distinction of type of employment or sex.

The *commandite* should be based upon a minimum wage and a maximum of hours of work.

For example, 1 franc per hour, and eight hours of work.

The *commandite* takes on new workers and, in case of a falling off of work to be done, sets up an unemployment roster.

The exclusion of a member of a *commandite* can only take place after a general meeting of the *commandite* and if sanctioned by the interested union.

Besides, considering that the *commandites* should be federated, and being for this reason the complements of their federated unions, they should understand each other so as to share the unemployed workers in all establishments.

In this manner there will no longer be any " workshop kernels " working the whole year while so many workers are unemployed for most of the time.

Unemployment Regulated through an Equalizing Roster

Unemployment is understood here as an extreme reduction of hours of work, going as far as four or even three hours of work per day; and at this rate alone, if it was not yet enough, it would be time to examine the complete unemployment roster.

For we do not recognize as logical and human this

system which consists in throwing on to the pavement hundreds and thousands of workers to ensure for the remainder, the " kernels, the pillars of the workshop " an almost normal day.

For it is this system which drives numbers of workers to commit all sorts of meannesses to become " part of the kernel " ; it is this system which facilitates lowerings of the wage ; it is still, and it is above all, this system which creates groups of fiercely selfish workers who are the " kernels of the workshop ", who are almost always opposed to the trade-union movement, always of the masters' opinions. They even dare to deny the existence of a social question, and do so to legitimize their indifference and apathy ; they sometimes even dare to make fun of the thinking and militant syndicalist minority.

The equalitarian unemployment roster, by suppressing the causes of mean and shabby actions of certain workers, will raise their morale, will develop among them a greater sentiment of dignity, of pride, of solidarity, will compel them all to recognize that there is a social problem to solve, and to take part in the syndicalist movement.

This practice of *equality* in the wage, in unemployment, will prepare for revolutionized tomorrow the final conquest of social equality, that is to say of welfare and of freedom, then become a common patrimony.

Each *commandite* remains under the control and dependence of unions and federations, who will have to set up a general regulation of the *commandite* system, with the duty of serving the bases and lines of conduct of the *commandites*.

But for their internal management, for the points of detail, varying with latitudes and temperaments, each *commandite* retains its entire autonomy.

Organization, Administration, Operation

The workers in a given establishment who wish to organize themselves in a *commandite* hold a general meeting of the workers of the said establishment (manager and office staff excepted).

At this meeting a syndicalist delegation will be present, with the duty of furnishing all additional information of which they may stand in need, and seeing that they organize themselves on the principles of syndicalism, in conformity with the principles described above.

It is clearly understood that workers hitherto not unionized become members *ipso facto* of their respective unions.

They nominate a Committee composed of one, two or three members of each trade or speciality represented in the establishment.

This Committee studies and classifies the different types of work and, according to this classification, defines the number of teams that there is occasion to form, and the nature of the work that will devolve upon each.

It will make a report on this to be submitted to a second general meeting which will be attended, like the previous one, by a syndicalist delegation.

This report is examined, discussed and then adopted, naturally with modification if necessary.

This report will indicate the internal constitution of the *commandite* or, more exactly, it will outline its basis.

Administration

After having reached agreement on the Committee's report, they proceed to the nomination of a Council of administration of the *commandite* and of a Committee of control.

The Council of administration is composed of four members :

1. A delegate.
2. An assistant delegate.
3. A book-keeper.
4. An assistant book-keeper.

The Committee of control, according to the importance of the establishment, is composed of three, five or seven members.

The workers of each team nominate their team leader.

All the members of the Council of administration, of the Committee of control and the team leaders must be submitted for re-election every three months.

They are re-eligible.

In the interests of all, it is necessary to choose those most capable of filling these functions, but sincerity and devotion should guide the workers' vote.

Allocation of Functions

The delegate is in charge of relations between the master and the *commandite*.

He is the indispensable intermediary between the master and the workers.

He receives the orders, he distributes the different pieces of work to the team leaders and should come to an understanding with them for their execution, so as to avoid all waste of time.

The assistant delegate replaces him in case of absence.

The book-keeper, aided by his assistant, is in charge of the double accounting of the *commandite* :

1. He tariffs the finished work, grouped by the team leader and centralized by him in a big-book.

2. He prepares statements of daily and weekly attendance, and of apportionment.

The functions of the book-keeper are very important, they involve the keenest sense of responsibility in the organization of the work.

Each team has an attendance-sheet, which is renewed each day.

In regard to names, there are columns where each one signs on arrival, morning and evening.

If one wishes to leave the workshop before work is finished, he informs the book-keeper, who marks the hour of leaving.

At the end of the day he totals up each member's hours in a special column.

On Saturdays, there are six sheets of the same nature. He totals the number of hours of the six days on his weekly apportionment sheet and so registers, in regard to the names of all the members of the *commandite*, the total number of hours of each one.

To determine the price per hour each week, as payment is made weekly, the book-keeper totals the work done by the various teams, carefully deducting payments on account for work in progress, and the settlements for finished work.

Having determined the figure for the total weekly attendance, he divides the total sum paid for the finished work by the number of hours : the hour-price or standard hour is thus settled.

Thus again, regarding the weekly situation as to attendance and apportionment, at the side of the names of the *commandite* members we find six columns indicating the hours worked each day, then a column totalizing the six days ; beside this, in an apportion-

ment column, the sum that each man has the right to draw.

For example : a worker has forty hours in his week : the hour is one franc. The book-keeper puts 40 francs. Another worker has fifty hours : the book-keeper puts 50 francs.

The rate of reward is equal for all : there is no individual bonus.

The book-keeper keeps a cash-box for the payment or receipt of the small sums of money necessary for apportioning to the centime the hourly-rate to all the members of the *commandite*.

The sum, in fact, has to be divided exactly : the figures do not always lend themselves to this, by several francs ; the *commandite* cash-box receives the portion which cannot be divided in equalitarian fashion.

This box serves also for the payment of union dues and strike subscriptions.

The book-keeper and his assistant cost all the jobs according to tariffs discussed and approved by the *commandite*.

These tariffs have to be deposited with the unions concerned, who have to watch so that no competition for labour can occur as between *commandites*.

Control

The Committee of control verifies the production of all the *commandite* members, the state of jobs in progress, and controls the actions of the Council of administration and the team leaders.

The Team Leaders

The team leaders, as we said already, are nominated by the workers in the team.

Their sole function is to watch over the conscientious execution of the jobs entrusted to their team.

Fears and Objections

Parasitism.—The workers are grouped by affinity of work, employed according to their aptitudes. Will not the *commandite* be a nest for the lazy ?

Our answer is no.

Each team leader has a standard of production for his team, he notes the number of hours taken on each job by each member ; to that has to be added the hours of attendance of the team leader and the time that he himself will have spent over certain jobs.

It follows that at the end of each week, the team leader knows the production of all the members of his team.

These latter announce their number of weekly hours. With these two factors, we establish a mean of production per hour for the different jobs. For example, a worker will have forged or turned, adjusted, set up, tucked in, soldered, etc., so many pieces of forging, turning, adjustment, fitting up, tucking in, tinning, etc., in forty-eight hours of attendance, that is to say a complete week's work. By a simple division, it would then be very easy to establish the mean or stint of production per hour of each worker.

A worker's average does not carry over a week but over several weeks. It is, in fact, difficult to establish the exact mean each week. More or less good tempers,

difficulties of execution, loss of time, etc. ; human nature has not the automatic output of a machine.

The foregoing applies to individual or speciality jobs, such as garnishing, detached pieces, etc.

For work carried out in common, the control is easier, for there is community in the execution. One man's work controls another's, each isolated part adapting itself and pushing forward the completion of the work to be done.

Each worker being obliged to furnish an average or stint of production, the *commandite* cannot be a nest of sloths, or lead-swingers.

Overproduction.—If the *commandite* does not engender parasitism, neither does it create overproduction.

Let us look at the question under its primary aspect. The workers are controlled by their average or stint of production which has been obtained by the centralization of the weekly averages established on the different jobs.

The man working in common, no longer having this personal bait of gain, which is the consequence of individualized piece-work, has no interest in forcing production.

If he did this, he knows well that he would render himself liable always to produce the same amount of work so as not to deserve the reproaches of the *commandite* and his exclusion from it. He would be obliged to maintain his hourly average and this would be an impossibility.

Individually one can, for a time, even without being eager for gain, overproduce. In a *commandite* it could not be done. The will has its limits and the most insatiable producer would finally slow down before the

normal work of his comrades; so much more so in the *commandite* because the worker knows that in addition to his normal personal production he will benefit, according to the number of hours of attendance, from the general weekly benefits of the *commandite*. He has no more interest in overproducing and, if he would, he could not do it.

Besides, there is another and serious guarantee against over-production in a *commandite*.

As we have seen in the *fundamental principles*, each *commandite* being the complement of the syndical organization, is under the direct dependence of its respective union. Now, in the case of isolated workers, the union is powerless to force them to slow down the production of the hours of work, whereas in that of the *commandite*, the union intervenes and after an examination of the situation it can say: "You will reduce your day's work, or else you will go elsewhere."

Day-work.—Day-work is only given to workers from a small proportion of the proletariat that can call themselves secure in their work, and who have belonged to firms for a relatively long period. The mass vegetates, drags itself from place to place finding, whether by the piece or by day-work, sorry occupations. It is the fatal law of capitalism, obliging us to live contrarily to the dictates of progress, to have monopolized for its own sole profit, together with all means of existence, all progress, which in this way turns back against the workers, and seems to be the cause of their denudation.

Supply overtakes demand. The master class finds itself faced with the immense reserve of workless. There is only an embarrassment of choice. Do we believe that even if wages were advantageous (this is only a

hypothesis) they would continue to be paid? If he started again, would he give fixed rates? We do not think so. Let us admit, however, this hypothesis. Faced with union organization, the masters grant remunerative wages. But would not the worker still be, in the organization of his work, in the workshop, under direct dependence of the master, of the foreman? Would he not still submit to all their exigences and vexations? For a wretched rise of 0 fr. 05 per hour would not the worker be constrained to show a little zeal for work?

With bonuses, profit-sharing, occult promises, the master would find certain means of overproduction, rivalry and discord among the workers.

REPORT OF THE SECOND SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL LABOUR CONGRESS OF AMIENS (1906)

The XVth National Corporative Congress, considering that piece-work, whether applied in the workshop or at home, favours overproduction and unemployment, divides the workers by stirring up among them petty jealousies and personal rivalries, without the freedom of piece-workers being any greater than that of day-workers: that it permits the masters to reduce the militants to starvation by putting them in situations unfavourable to production.

That in the corporations where it is henceforth impossible to substitute day-work for piece-work, because in these corporations day-work tends often enough to render competition among the workers sufficiently harsh; and tends also towards the elimination from the workshops of weak producers, who may be physically inferior, or worn out by the work.

The Congress indicates as a palliative or cure for piece-work the system of the *commandite*, a form of collective piece-work, which tends towards the relative independence of the producer in the workshop, permits of regulation of production, of the suppression of competition between workers and the utilization of the efforts of the inferior hands ; which is the best school of working-class solidarity and education ; which permits, by a rational production, a tendency towards the reduction of hours of work and towards the preparation of workers for the administration and management of the social organs of production.

But, noting that on the other hand this system of the *commandite* has given good results in certain corporations, in which syndicalist organization and education is strong, it demands a working-class consciousness which is insufficiently developed in the majority of other trades.

Resolved that it is necessary to make the most active propaganda in favour of the suppression of piece-work in the home and, in cases where that would be impossible, to introduce into working-class circles the idea of the equalizing *commandite* to prepare their minds for its industrial application.

Appendix D

Co-operative Contract Work in New Zealand

(Public Works, e.g. Railway permanent way etc.)
From Official Documents of the New Zealand Ministry of Public Works (1926) [1]

General Conditions

1. The Resident Engineer or other responsible Government officer letting a co-operative contract shall prepare a plan and specification for such co-operative contract showing accurately the quantities of work contained in such contract, and shall fix a price to such quantities of work as will permit a fair average workman to earn a daily wage equal to the current rate of wages in the district in which the work is located.

2. When a co-operative contract is let, the Resident Engineer, or other Government officer letting same, shall supply the co-operative Contractor with a copy of the plans and specifications relating to the contract, and also a schedule of quantities and prices, signed by him, and shall also keep the contract plans, specifications and schedule, signed by the co-operative Contractor.

3. After a co-operative contract is signed, the quantities shall not be altered or varied unless the scope of the work is definitely reduced or increased; but if the scheduled prices in the contract are found to be too high or too low, the Engineer or other officer in charge of the work may, after giving the co-operative Contractors six clear days' notice in writing, reduce or increase such

[1] See page 138.

prices and fix them at such rate as will permit a fair average workman to earn a daily wage equal to the current rate of wages ruling in the district where the work is located, or the engineer or other officer in charge may, in his discretion, after giving the co-operative Contractors six clear days' notice, terminate the contract.

4. When the nature of the material encountered varies, the rate at which the new material is to be shifted shall be fixed at the earliest date possible, and the amended price shall cover all such material shifted whether before the fixing of the new price or subsequently.

5. Each party shall appoint one out of their number to act as Contractor for the party, who shall be responsible for the proper carrying-out of the work, correct levels, etc.; also two of their number (the Contractor and another) to be their authorized agents, to receive all moneys due for work done, and to sign receipts on behalf of the party for sums paid. Should either of these men neglect his duty, or be found to be in any way unsuitable, the officer in charge shall have power to call upon the party to appoint some other member in his place; or if a majority of the party are dissatisfied with the Contractor or authorized agent, they may at any time revoke their appointments and appoint other members in their places; and, immediately on any such revocation and appointment being made, the same must be notified to the officer in charge by a notice in writing signed by a majority of the party.

6. The Contractor shall execute and complete the works under the direction of and to the satisfaction of the Engineer, who shall be the sole arbiter as to the meaning of all or any part of the contract, and whose instructions shall be followed by the Contractor.

7. All Government plant, tools, etc., hired to the Contractor shall be returned in good order and condition; the cost of any necessary repairs for damage suffered at the Contractor's hands shall be deducted from the amount of contract.

8. All liabilities to the Government for material, plant and stores shall be deducted from amount of contract.

Payments will be made monthly, or as nearly as may be, at the rate of 90 per cent. of the value of the work done, according to the estimate of the Engineer, and the balance, less any liabilities, as soon as possible on completion of the contract.

9. All pegs shall be preserved or accurately dropped down to formation-level. The cost of replacing any pegs which may have been lost or displaced shall be deducted from the amount of contract.

10. Slips of a quantity under two cubic yards shall be removed at the cost of the Contractor. Over that quantity they shall be paid for at schedule rates, or, if not provided in the schedule, at a rate to be fixed by the Engineer.

11. The Government reserves the right to stop the works or to reduce or increase them at any time by the officer in charge giving notice in writing to the Contractor that the works are to be added to or diminished or are to cease, and the giving of such notice shall have the effect of adding to or deducting from the amount payable or of determining the contract, as the case may be. In the event of this right being exercised by the Government, the party shall accept payment of the full value of the work done up to that date as discharge of all claims against the Government on account of the contract. The measurements of the Engineer shall in all cases be taken as final.

12. When one or more men are absent on behalf of the party they shall be paid the same as if at the work, but when otherwise absent from the work the Contractor shall at the first ensuing payment deduct from the wages of such man or men a sum equivalent to the time absent according to the average rate per day since last payment; in cases where there has been no previous payment, from the time the party began working. All such money to be divided among the rest of the party.

13. The Engineer or Overseer shall have power to discharge from the work any man or men for neglect of duty or other misconduct; but no man shall be discharged by the Contractor without the sanction of the Overseer or Engineer except for gross misconduct; and all money due to such person or persons, after having been adjusted according to clause 12, shall be handed to the officer in charge by the Contractor at the time when the next payment is made, who shall pay it to the workman. Any dispute arising as to the amount shall be settled by the Engineer.

14. Should any one leave work through illness his place shall in all cases be left open until the subsequent payment, after which the Overseer in charge shall have power, subject to the wish of the Contractor, to appoint a substitute, or to let the men at work finish the contract; and the wages of the man invalided shall be paid according to clauses 12 and 13. If unable to come himself he shall be allowed to authorize some person in writing to receive the money on his behalf.

In the event of any one leaving the works without permission for any cause other than illness, he shall in no case have any claim upon the earnings of the party except up to the date upon which he ceased to work, nor shall

he be received back into the party except with the consent of the majority of the party.

15. The whole length of the contract, as far as completed, shall be kept open for traffic at all times unless otherwise directed, and provision must be made during the progress of the works to keep open all tracks impinging on the road.

16. The work shall be continuously and diligently carried on by the whole party and completed without delay.

17. The Contractor shall keep an accurate record of the actual time worked by each member of the party, which he shall hand over to the officer in charge at such times as it may be requested.

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NOTE: In reply to a request for information regarding the enduring value of Co-operative Contract Work, the present New Zealand Minister of Public Works (Mr. R. Semple) wrote as follows (February, 1939):

". . . The co-operative system continues to be used as much as possible on Public Works undertakings in New Zealand, with eminently satisfactory results. Not only are works carried to completion with the utmost despatch, but the men themselves have an incentive to give of their best. This is reflected in the fact that the average earnings of co-operative contractors are usually about 25 per cent. higher than the earnings of men engaged on daily or hourly rates of pay on the same unit basis; while works undertaken by co-operative contract are invariably completed more economically than would have been the case had they been carried out on a day-wages basis. . . ."—[Translator.]

Appendix E

Is it Possible to Advance the Co-operative Idea in Situations where the Subdivision of the Business is not Feasible?

The attention that we have drawn to the possibility of subdividing the business into autonomous compartments should not make us forget that our principal objective is to offer to the workers some possibilities of intellectual development in a mode of organization that is co-operative in its basis. Must we then give up hope of attaining this objective in those industries which have evolved in such a way that the possibility of subdivision does not exist in them?

This possibility of subdivision only exists in fact, as a rule, where the personnel is numerous, where individual work plays an important part and where, for reasons other than the foregoing, questions of order arise more urgently than elsewhere.

This means that we must not lose sight of those enterprises in which the numerical importance of the personnel becomes less and less, and where the work reduces itself to functions of supervision. This is true of the electrical and chemical industries, and of cotton and artificial-silk spinning, in which a small number of persons have only to control the working of powerful machinery.

By reason of these differences of a technical order, must we then abandon the idea of finding some means of

adapting the co-operative idea? I do not believe that it should have become entirely impossible for that reason, and no doubt only those interested who have an intimate knowledge of the internal life of such establishments could discover upon what motives of interest a form of co-operative work could be based.

I have already indicated in another work [1] how they have succeeded in starting some new forms of co-operative work in an American railway company.

To the example furnished by the initiatives taken in the *Baltimore and Ohio* Railroad Company I would like to add another less well-known case, which is that of an experiment which was interrupted, however, by the great economic crisis. This particular case offers us in effect an example of the way in which an attempt was made to tackle the main problem in one of those industries in which the application of the co-operative idea is found most difficult, i.e. the textile industry.

From the social point of view the year 1919 showed an entirely special character.

Throughout the world the populations subjected to the burdens of war had experienced such a state of exhaustion that its termination raised a sort of immense hope which was translated in every country by much effervescence among the working masses, leading to strikes on an unprecedented scale.

This was a straw fire, after which a certain number of theorists declared that the workers' leaders had missed an unlooked-for opportunity to " make the revolution ".

No doubt if it had only been a question of making a political revolution in the ancient manner, the masses

[1] *Standards*, Grasset, Paris. American Translation, *Robots or Men?* Harper, New York.

were ready to go over the top. But the social revolution is not a matter of barricades, and as it was a question of nothing less, in the revolutionary mind of the period, than of putting the responsibility of social management in the hands of the workers, it had to be known first if the workers were *capable* of assuming it. It was not enough to " occupy " the factories as in Italy, in 1921 ; they had also to make them function, for which a competence is required which cannot be improvised.

Thus the revolution of 1919 misfired, but on a few points, arising from the contracts created by discussions between the workers and their employers, certain indices of possible changes were thrown up. There were such in France, where some important *collective contracts* date from that period.

America, although it has not suffered in the same manner, was caught up in the same movement, and the business that we are about to study in no wise escaped it.

This business, manufacturing sheets and pillow-cases, known under the name of the Naumkeag Company, has been in existence for nearly a century, having been founded at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1839. Originally it was organized as a cotton-spinning mill to provide for the needs of the United States, which had been considerably inconvenienced in their supplies by the blockade of England in 1812 during the Napoleonic wars.

From the social point of view its history has nothing to distinguish it from similar businesses unless from the fact that its relations with its personnel generally appear to have been peaceful, and it seems that until 1919 no strike had been known.

In this year the personnel left the factory for several

weeks. When they came back, following negotiations between the workers' Union and the management, the two parties declared their desire to make every effort to diminish as far as possible the importance of causes of friction and misunderstanding which could scarcely fail to arise in a business employing 2,500 persons. It was also understood that efforts would be made in common to increase the production of the enterprise both in quantity and in quality. These intentions were even taken as a basis of an agreement, that was signed some time afterwards, between the management and the Union with which the workers were affiliated. This agreement began in fact by declaring that it was recognized as desirable that the workers should be organized.

After this declaration, the agreement which put an end to the dispute mentioned the following points:

Minimum wage for women; collective contract; abandonment of the demand for raising of wages; authorization to collect Union dues in the factory; establishment of a committee of shop stewards and foremen to examine individual complaints.

Some time later, the conversations between the Union and the Company having continued, a new agreement was signed on the following bases, which I find detailed in an article from the pen of the President of the Union, John P. O'Connell.

First: The party of the second part agrees to a cordial and full membership recognition of the bona-fide trade unions of its employees, known as the party of the first part, as their proper agents in matters affecting their welfare, and further agrees that these trade unions are acceptable. It recognizes them as desirable, not only in

regard to the welfare and protection of their members, but also desirable to the management, inasmuch as the co-operation of their members is essential to the continued and successful operation of the Mills.

Second: The party of the first part agrees to promote in every legitimate way the distribution and sale of "Pequot" sheets and pillow-cases, and other products of the party of the second part, and pledges its support in a constructive and responsible way to the end that quantity and quality of production may be maintained, and further pledges its co-operation in effecting such economies in manufacturing as may be brought about by the introduction of improved machinery.

Third: The party of the first part realizing that continuity of operations is essential to the successful operation of the Mills, agrees that in the event of differences which may arise in respect to details of operation, compensation, hours of labour, working conditions, or any other matter of controversy between the management and the employees, a period of not less than sixty days shall be allowed for the proper and orderly holding of conferences between the management and the executive or other committee of the Union, and further agrees that no action tending to disrupt production shall be taken before the expiration of the said period.

In the event of unauthorized cessation of work by an employee or group of employees the said party of the first part agrees to use every effort at its command to assist in maintaining continuous operation.

Fourth: The party of the second part appreciating the advantage of a spirit of co-operation and loyalty inspiring the personnel of its employees, and desiring to further cement the feeling of friendly and sympathetic under-

standing, agrees to use every effort to maintain good working conditions, fair wages and continuity of employment.

Fifth: Representatives of the party of the first part shall meet with representatives of the party of the second part at regular intervals, preferably once a month, or as often as necessity may require, for the discussion of any questions that may arise and for the further extension of the spirit of loyalty, helpfulness and co-operation.

Sixth: This co-operative agreement is binding upon both parties in spirit as well as in letter, and shall be changed only by mutual agreement, after notification in writing, served by either party upon the other at least sixty days before such a change is to become effective.

Seventh: This agreement shall be operative for the period of one year from the date of acceptance, and either party may withdraw from this agreement on sixty days' notice.[1]

After the signature of this agreement, monthly conferences discussed all questions that ordinarily occur in the life of an industrial concern: Means of resisting competition. Quality and quantity of production. Regularization of employment. Technical modifications and improvements of the product.

At the end of 1929 this last point in the discussions took on a particularly serious importance as a result of the circumstances created by the spectre of the economic crisis.

The management then submitted to the workers' Union information which showed that the sale of the firm's products was meeting with grave difficulties, caused by

[1] From the *Bulletin of the Taylor Society*, New York, April, 1930.

the lower prices which its competitors could offer on the market. This information showed that it had become necessary to bring down the costs of production if the competition was to be successfully met.

In order to bring about this diminution of the costs of production, the management presented a plan for the reorganization of the business which included some important modifications in the state of affairs formerly existing, and in particular a new schedule of wages. This new schedule of wages was established in such a manner that no member of the personnel would have to suffer a reduction in his daily rate. On the contrary, certain operations allowed of the attainment of a higher wage, with the assurance that every increase in the wage would be attained only by an improvement in the equipment, and not by an increase in the work required from the individual concerned.

The details of these various propositions were examined in the course of several conferences held between the management and the representatives of the workers' Union, and these latter recognized from them that it was inevitable to realize a reduction in the cost price. However, having reached this point in the discussion, they hesitated to accept the consequences without proceeding to a deeper examination of the question.

It was then that the president of the Union, Mr. O'Connell, went to Philadelphia to explain the problem to Mr. Morris L. Cooke, a well-known engineer, a member of the Taylor Society and himself also a former collaborator of Taylor's.

The result of this visit was that Mr. Cooke put another engineer, Mr. Francis Goodell, at the disposal of the Union, who went to the Naumkeag Company's factory in

which, with the consent of the concern and the approval of the workers, he set to work for two weeks upon an intensive study of the conditions of work and of its general organization.

The report established by Mr. Goodell led to this conclusion, that it would be necessary for a technician who was particularly well versed in the new methods of work should be engaged by the Company, and that he should work with a committee formed of representatives of the management and of the Union, upon the establishment of new methods. These methods were defined in the following report handed to the Company's representatives by the workers' Union:

1. *The Proposal Proper.*—Each question under discussion shall be settled separately and upon the basis of analytical research. It is believed that this analytical approach will not only settle these points now at issue, but will supply elemental facts leading to other forms of economy, aid in the selection or rejection of new equipment, and above all, give practice to both parties to our agreement in discussing upon a factual basis matters at issue.

(*a*) This research work should be headed by a technician employed by the Company. The Union would accept someone recommended by Mr. Morris L. Cooke as having the requisite viewpoint.

(*b*) It is also proposed that the present machinery for discussion be supplemented by a committee on waste elimination. This committee would act, or appoint individuals to act, as aid to the above-mentioned technician, and have the power to review the facts leading to manufacture recommended by the technician. This

committee confines itself to such constructive proposals, under provisions somewhat as follows :

> " The parties to this agreement, recognizing their common stake in eliminating waste, and realizing that wasteful practices generally result, not from intention but from lack of common understanding of such practices and their injurious effect upon both earnings and wages :
>
> " Hereby agree to set up a joint research committee composed of three (four or five) representatives of the Union, whose duty it shall be to ascertain the facts and to devise methods of co-operation for the elimination of waste and the improvement of working conditions as related to quality and quantity of production. This research committee shall in no case entertain complaints or grievances, but shall concern itself exclusively with constructive suggestions for the promotion of the common interest of the parties signatory to this agreement in eliminating waste."

This committee should be furnished not only with relevant figures obtained by research but it should also be furnished with factors of the major cost and quality problems arising from competition which confront the management. It will then be possible also to indoctrinate the employees at each operation with a concrete picture of their part in the goal, to wit, costs and quality which enable " Pequot " to compete successfully.

(*c*) Although the employees may realize at times that the costs must be upon a sound basis, they do not have any way of knowing the effect of their output upon the costs nor any goal which is present at all times. There is a psychological need for concrete and immediate facts of

this nature if habits of economy and pride in achievement are to be further developed.

This procedure, first of research and second of joint factual consideration, will furnish the machinery for sufficiently frequent and constructive discussions. This is now lacking and to this lack is due the dilemma with which both parties are now faced.

2. *Master Planning.*—The Union realized that the elimination of waste in its several forms is partly dependent upon other considerations than this matter of adequate machinery for constructive discussion. They cannot indefinitely continue to endorse a programme which will reduce the labour requirements per unit without reasonable assurance that the sales problem is being met in the same forward-looking and resourceful spirit. At present they are concerned about the distribution in a time of unprecedented change in this field. They can co-operate fully upon the basis that, humanly speaking, the future sales are under control, and that plans are made ahead for preventing sudden drops in production due to failure to forecast sales, and to co-ordinate the forecasts with the labour requirements in terms of the next succeeding years.

The need for reasonable security is the foundation for continuing co-operation, as Mr. Morris L. Cooke wrote in a recent article:

> "To manufacture effectively the working force must be backed by an effective sales force and a socially minded sales policy. In other words an industrial establishment is an organism, and each function must operate in harmony with all the others. Little is gained by special pressure at one point if it

is not related to the common effort. . . . Far-sighted employers are coming to look upon continuous employment as one of the first requirements of good manufacturing and are learning how to provide it. In such plants the workers have every incentive to give waste elimination their wholehearted allegiance."

If there is not now the necessary sales planning to give assurance to the employees, this lack should be the major concern in order that the place of "Pequot" in the market may not be injured by the many powerful changing elements in the field of distribution—the increasing chain-store development, the general dissatisfaction with and review of present sales methods, the introduction of new basic fabric and the intensive study of product design.

3. *Unemployment Reserve.*—In the event that this sales planning is adequately carried out, it should become possible for the management to develop plans running at least a year or two in advance, which provide for an even or increasing staff coupled with a decreasing cost. The Union feels that steps should be taken to work out a financially sound unemployment reserve fund. They do not insist that this fund be started at once, but believe that with a competent sales-planning function, which is integrated with the other administrative functions of financing, buying, manufacturing and planning labour requirements, such a fund will not be a drain upon the Company. On the contrary, it will give two vitally important benefits: first, it will provide a valuable stimulus to continuing and far-sighted sales administration, and second, it will liberate an unprecedented degree of co-operation.

In addition, such a fund should not mean a heavy outlay. With adequate control of the distribution problem, the amount expended may be trivial. And the financing may be made conservative by limiting the amount of liability to the amount of the reserve.

To sum up, the Union believes that the Company can supply the conditions which will cut waste in line with their proposals by supplying the machinery for constructive discussion, by getting and giving out the facts relative to cost requirements, and supplying in some way the confidence that lower costs will not only work to the ultimate benefit of all concerned, but that readjustments within the Company, or from the Company to other companies, will be made in conformity with the practical needs of the employees.

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All these data having been accepted and put into force, we are now confronted with a new experiment, of a particular *case* from which we can still derive some interesting information.

If we examine all these details attentively we shall see if such an experiment does not justify all that I have said on the possibility of giving nourishment to the intelligence and initiative of the workers, even in an industrial organization constructed upon the most scientific bases.

Expressing her interest in this experiment, Miss Frances Perkins, Industrial Commissioner [1] of the State of New York, begins by declaring that all those who

[1] Subsequently appointed Minister of Labour in the Roosevelt Administration.

strive to contribute to progress in the régime of work seem to her to be engaged "in a great philosophical enterprise, an effort to create out of a society which is frankly industrial, a civilized society".

This declaration seems to me admirably to characterize these kinds of effort that one finds in the United States in this domain, and to supply an answer to those who are in too much of a hurry to pronounce final condemnations upon American industrial life. These latter are like a person who, coming into a laboratory where experiments are in progress, goes out before they are finished declaring that they are useless.

Without troubling further over certain objections which she knows of and mentions, Miss Perkins shows that she knows where she is going, and defines this aim very clearly:

> "If people could once become as interested in the entire industry as the old shoemaker used to be in the shoes he made for his friends and neighbours, we should have a truly civilized society. For the most part, in the development of a machine and scientifically managed industrial life we have management having all the fun and the worker having nothing but the drudgery. . . . Scientific managers have had a great time and a lot of fun in the last ten or fifteen years. . . . If the workers come to share in that, we shall have not only civilization but a happy industrial civilization."

Although this enthusiasm of mine has often been reproved, I can only salute with joy the profound understanding of labour matters which appear in these declarations. Whatever people may think, I find a prodigious

interest in observations which touch the fundamentals of these special problems, and particularly when they show with evidence that the men who formulate them are not like what we imagine the admirers of mechanized life to be, and are able to understand the great human possibilities that can be found in scientific organization of work.

Thus Mr. Francis Goodell, the engineer called in by the workers to help them in these circumstances, makes the following declaration, among his other observations on the "Naumkeag Experiment":

> "I often think that the main job of the industrial engineer is to liberate the ability which has somehow been lost because of our misconception of the nature of organization. I am convinced even that the greatest waste existing in industry of today is that of this constructive spirit which we only begin to use in such experiments in collaboration.
>
> "No doubt this kind of task is difficult, and particularly for the workers who agree to undertake them. They require that eminently rare quality of courage. We cannot solve them with the same ease that we can show in eloquent platform speeches, and that is why the politicians do not like to be drawn on to this field where the vanity of their words would be too easily exposed."

And the evidence of Mr. Francis Goodell has a particular value. As anyone can imagine, and as I have not failed already to point out, he also says: "There is of course a large number of employees who have little conception of what we are trying to accomplish."

This observation is very true, for as I tried to show, men are not equal in value, and the principal thing is that, in a new type of organization, each man can regularly find a place which corresponds to his value. In every working mass, like that which we can find in such an establishment, we must not imagine that every man will demand the responsibilities of which I am thinking. The greatest number will, on the contrary, be satisfied with a quiet job, in front of a machine where no more will be expected of them than a certain amount of work which they think they can do.

But will you not have attained a big result if you have obtained the active collaboration of those who, in this mass, feel a taste for something more than a passive attitude ?

Mr. Goodell has observed them very exactly and has been able to perceive how the more deserving workers have been able to rise above the mass, for he writes again :

> " The Union leaders, including the members of the committees and those other operatives who come into contact with our studies, are asked (and it is often no easy task for them) to have the courage of their convictions and defend an unpopular step if they are genuinely sold on its value to the Union."

He also observes, as a remarkable change in the spirit of the workers, the fact that at a recent election the whole list of workers who had already collaborated in the measures of reorganization had been re-elected.

I know well that the eternal partisans of " all or nothing " will not be satisfied with such meagre pro-

gress, and that they will regard it with contempt. But just as science only advances step by step, and by successive gains, so these difficult labour problems will never receive a complete solution at a single blow, but will progress painfully over all the obstacles that are created and multiplied by human frailty.

Study the effort constituted by this new experiment: you will find that its central line leads also towards this *unity* of the enterprise the slow formation of which I have tried to show.

It demonstrates also, as I declared at the beginning of this chapter, that there is no insurmountable reason why it should be impossible, in no matter what industry, to look forward to the discovery of a mode of organization which can make appeal to working-class intelligence.

*
* *

As one can appreciate by the preceding account, the question of participation in the profits of a business has only been raised in the form of the general advantages which the whole personnel would discover with the development of the stability of this enterprise.

It is nevertheless perfectly conceivable that this question may be raised and examined, particularly in these special cases where it is not possible to proceed with budgetary subdivision.

I do not intend here to undertake a detailed study of this question, which in any case I find less fruitful than that of subdivision by autonomous groups. I would merely like to take one of these cases here because of certain particular conclusions that it will enable us to draw regarding a possible limitation of the interests of

capital, this limitation being able to offer advantages of a different kind in general from those which I find in the operation of the groups.

This particular case is that of the Rowntree Cocoa Works at York, England.

In matters of remuneration, this house considers that it ought to pay a wage to the workers and to capital. The workers will receive the wage fixed by the tariffs of their respective unions. Capital will receive interest at seven and a half per cent.

Mr. B. S. Rowntree himself writes in this connexion [1] that he considers that the wage tariff established by the Unions is the only sound basis on which such a system can operate. In its absence " there would be no guarantee that what was being paid to the workers as their share of the profits was not being found in whole or in part as a result of the payment of lower wages ".

The wages of the workers and of capital being paid, and after deduction of the ordinary reserves, the salaries and wages of workers and employees of all grades, as well as capital, receive, when the circumstances permit, a supplementary distribution determined in the following manner: half of the sum to be divided is allocated to the personnel; a tenth to the Management; and the remaining four-tenths to capital.

I only mention Mr. Rowntree's system, however, for its demonstration of the possibility of limiting the interest of capital, for it will be remembered that I examined above the great disadvantage of profit-sharing, which requires the whole of the personnel to envisage the business as a totality, within which the interest of the individual becomes more difficult to discern.

[1] *The Human Factor in Business*, Longmans, London.

The idea of a limitation of the interests on capital might appear too audacious and even chimerical if we were not able already to quote cases of its application such as the one I have just described. If in spite of that we regarded its general adoption as impossible, I would say that we shall never be able entirely to get away from it.

At bottom, and in the last analysis, I wonder whether it would not furnish the only certain source for the development of consumption, which is recognized more and more as the only possible origin of the stability and development of businesses. Besides, I have had the pleasure to see the idea of limitation of capital expressed by a man who is nothing of a Utopian or an extremist, but seems to have meditated on the problem long enough. Considering the means of provoking the voluntary co-operation of the personnel of businesses, here is the basis on which Mr. Wickham Steed, former director of *The Times*, thinks that it could be obtained :

> " The fundamental principle of such co-operation is that after a rate of interest whose limits will be fixed by the current price shall have been paid to capital considered as an indispensable factor of production, the producers, whether workers or organizers, from the last apprentice up to the managing director, will have the right to an unlimited remuneration if, by working in co-operation, they are capable of earning it." [1]

[1] See Mr. Steed's Halley Stewart lectures, 1933, published under the title " A Way to Social Peace ". George Allen & Unwin, London. pp. 103–115. Mr. Steed disclaims authorship of the plan, which emanates from New Zealand (The Valder Scheme).— Translator.

The mode of distribution thus envisaged by Mr. Steed is probably the only practical basis upon which we could realize the genuine solidarity of the members of the business.[1]

[1] There actually exists in the United States an enterprise which since 1917 has given itself up with great success to an experiment of particular interest and of which I would willingly have added a description to the preceding one. I have nevertheless not done so at all, fearing to spread myself out too far over ground that is somewhat different from that on which I have remained with the central idea of this work. I am, however, anxious to make known this experiment which was tried by a man who was driven by motives almost identical with those of Godin, Mr. Williams Hapgood, Director of the Columbia Conserve Company. (Indianapolis, U.S.A. Capital in 1930 : 350,000 dollars.)

Mr. Hapgood has gradually transferred into the hands of the personnel the entire management of the business, and he declares today that the policy thus followed constitutes the principal reason for the commercial success of this Company. He has described his experiment in a brochure obtainable from the above address (*An Experiment in Industrial Democracy*).

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Index of Names

Antonelli, E., 25 *n.*
Apostol, P., 118 *n.*

Bacon, F., 163, 191, 192
Balderston, C. C., 113 *n.*, 164
Bat'a, 86
Beneker, G. A., 102
Bertholet, R., 137 *n.*
Buisson, F., 11
Butler, W. H., xvi

Carlyle, T., 5, 205
Carnot, 108, 195
Charvet, L., 87
Citrine, Sir W., xiv
Comte, A., 5, 110, 172, 173, 184 *n.*
Considérant, Victor, 66, 76
Cooke, M. L., 253, 254, 256
Cordier, H., 140 *n.*
Coste, Ad., 79 *n.*, 90
Courau, R., 44 *n.*
Crane, Frank, 65

De Coninck, M., 81, 82
Dennison, H. S., xiii, xiv *n.*
Descartes, 64
Devinat, P., 85 *n.*
Dewing, A. S., 208
Dubois-Crancé, 195
Dumont, C., 120

Fauquét, Dr., 153
Favareille, R., 213
Fayol, 68
Ferrière, Ad., 124 *n.*, 209 *n.*
Ford, 79
Fourier, C., 6 *n.*, 54, 79, 124
Fournemilh, 150
Fournière, E., 49
France, G. E., xiv

Gide, C., 6 *n.*, 151
Godin, J. B., 29, 54, 55, 56, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 89, 123, 125, 131, 265
Goodell, F., 313
Gosling, H., 28 *n.*
Guitton, H., 60 *n.*
Guyot, Y., 87 *n.*

Halévy, D., 205 *n.*
Hall, Patricia, xv *n.*
Hapgood, W., 265
Huxley, Aldous, xiii

Izoulet, J., 214

Jaurès, 18 *n.*, 19, 21, 78 *n.*, 107, 109, 110 *n.*, 168

Landauer, 86
Lefebvre des Noëttes, 37, 38
Locke, H. W., xv *n.*
Lockhart, L. P., 103
Lyautey, 192, 194

Mackay, R. J., xiv *n.*
Maquenne, P., 22, 23
Marat, 168 *n.*
Maraux, C., 120 *n.*, 195
Marx, K., 22
Mayo, Elton, xv *n.*
Mercer, W. T., 28, 29, 95, 96
Merrill, Frances and Mason, xiii
Michelet, 47
Mill, J. S., 520
Mirabeau, 78, 79
Montesquieu, 152 *n.*
Montessori, 209

Napoleon, 109
Neumeyer, W. W., 86

O'Connell, J. P., 250, 253
Owen, R., 54

Pawlovitch, 43
Perkins, Frances, 258, 259
Person, Dr. H. S., 208
Pestalozzi, 177
Pic, P., 133
Picard, R., 25 *n.*
Plato, 172 *n.*
Pound, A., 164
Proudhon, 125, 153, 216
Prudhommeaux, 30 66 *n.*, 74, 75
Puech, J. L., 193 *n.*

Ramsay, M. de, 107 *n.*
Rist, C., 115 *n.*
Roosevelt, President, 166
Rorty, M. C., 82, 84, 104
Rouzaud, 136
Rowntree, B. S., 263
Ruskin, J., 4, 5

Saint-Cyr, Gouvion 193 *n.*, 196
Saint-Simon, 179, 180
Schloss, D., 115 *n.*, 138 *n.*
Scott, 165
Scott, Peter, xv
Séailles, G., 19
Semple, R., 246
Shaw, A. W., 165 *n.*
Shaw, G. B., 140 *n.*
Steed, W., 264
Stern, E., 85, 86 *n.*

Taylor, 40, 166
Thomas, Albert, 1, 2, 8, 19
Turenne, 107

Urwick, L., xiv *n.*

Vandervelde, E., 21, 22, 24, 168 *n.*
Vauvenargues, 32
Verlaine, 188 *n.*

Washington, 107 *n.*
Whitehead, T. N., xv *n.*
Williams, J. H., 87