

side of our industrial legislation. Both have synchronised. It is easy to govern a city in a state of siege. It is easy not to injure industries in years of plenty and in a land of abounding natural resources and of almost illimitable extent still awaiting settlement. Mr. Aves points this out, and rightly adds that the true test of the value of our industrial legislation has yet to be made, when we enter a cycle of depression. The tables referred to must never be severed from the record of our history during the period covered by them.

He sees and vividly appreciates this aspect of the problem. He concludes his Report with a number of luminous and profoundly suggestive paragraphs on pp. 124 and 125, from which, in illustration and emphasis of the analyses contained in his Report, space will enable me to quote only two. He says:—

There seem to be at once great scope and need for the influence of fuller knowledge, of the wider publicity of conditions held to be to the common welfare, and of appeal to sentiment and sympathy, the whole to be combined with the power to impose the pressure of more exacting restrictions or obligations in proven cases of gross dereliction of social and industrial responsibilities. But the lesson of experience does not appear to carry us farther than this on the direct line of legal fixation of wages.

He approves of the moral, but distrusts, if not condemns, the economic, results.

To a large extent in this respect Mr. Aves agrees with the conclusion I have reached from the historical side. At any rate, from the point of view of one who takes the full political responsibility for his share in this work, it is now almost an evident conclusion that there is not sufficient warrant for the dogmatic assertion of the Australian Socialist, that industrial conditions limited by State control is a panacea everywhere for such of the Social evils as are attributable to the existence of the wage-earning system. On the other hand, it is equally clear that some benefits, rather moral than economic, have followed from