

Whitley Report
in Whitley Plan
Control

The question of the control of industry has been much canvassed on all sides during the year (1917). The immediate interest centres largely round two events, the extraordinarily rapid and extensive growth of the Shop Stewards' Movement and the publication of the Whitley Report. The Shop Stewards' Movement is a most significant sign of the times. The shop steward has long been a recognized part of the machinery of Trade Unionism; but under the stress of war conditions he has assumed an altogether new importance. The shop steward has been no longer a mere collector of Trade Union dues - he has assumed negotiating and propagandist functions, and the shop stewards over a whole district have shown a tendency to join together in unrecognized Workers' Committees which have arrogated to themselves considerable industrial power.

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The Shop Stewards' Movement is essentially a movement for securing control by the workers. The idea of control, both in the form of a demand by the workers and in that of a method of securing "industrial harmony", had come to the front before the publication of the Whitley Report by the Ministry of Reconstruction. The National Guilds League and the shop stewards in different ways, but with an essential unity of immediate purpose, were preaching the need for the workers to wrest from the employers a measure of workshop control, while Mr. Sparkes and others were putting forward ideas for closer co-operation

T.W.I.