

lays all stress on appetite, physical or mental, and none on efficiency and desert, it would be impossible: men's desires are infinite. If the individual's own estimate of his reasonable needs were taken, the socialist treasury would be bankrupt in a week: if official estimate, the prospect of jobbery and tyranny opened up must give the most fanatical pause.

A variant of this proposal is suggested by Sidney Webb, who puts forward the needs of the occupation as the touchstone. "The needs of the occupation" is a delightfully hazy phrase, but seems to imply a grading according to dignity, payment in proportion to the amount of conspicuous waste required in the position, ten thousand a year to the bishop and fifty pounds for the curate. It is hardly an effective slogan for catching the votes of the masses.

Still a third standard is offered, that of service rendered. "The right to the full product of one's labor" is an old war-cry. It has been a standing charge of socialists that under the existing system the worker does not receive this full product, but is robbed by the deductions made by landlord and capitalist. The hollowness of the charge is admitted when, in attempting to apply the principle to distribution under collectivism, it is recognized that deductions must be made for the upkeep of capital. Further, it lies on the surface that a rigid application of this standard would mean short shrift for the weak and the incapable, so a second deduction must be made, and still further allowances are required for the services shared in common. How is the balance to be distributed? How is it possible to isolate each man's contribution to the joint product, to determine what is the full product of his labor? What fraction shall go to executive direction, what to bookkeeping routine, what to manual operation? "To search for the portion of an individual's labor in a social product," admits Vandervelde, "is, in the vast majority of cases, like trying to find a needle in a haystack."

If, however, the absolute contribution of each individual to the product cannot be found out, still, as at present, relative efficiency may be estimated, so far as men in the same occupation go. Very true, and just so far as socialists compromise by taking over features of the existing order, so far do they make their plan more practicable.

Tried by any of the conflicting socialist standards of justice, the existing system of distribution is far from perfect. Yet it may be said to combine in a fair measure what is valid in each of the ideals set forth, and it can be made to conform more closely without abandoning the flexible adjustment of