

Whitleyism on Its Trial.

It is the fashion nowadays to criticise Whitleyism: and the process has been occupying the minds of small and great within and without Parliament, industry and the Civil Service. Mr. W. J. Brown, a member of the National Whitley Council and General Secretary of the Clerical Officers' Association, has added to the number of publications dealing with the subject by issuing "A critical Examination of the first year's working of the Whitley System in the Civil Service." He justifies the pamphlet by asserting that it breaks new ground. The attempt is to examine the utility and disadvantages of Service Whitleyism from the point of view of the Staff, to analyse the weaknesses which have been revealed and to suggest ways and means whereby these weaknesses may be overcome.

After tracing the origin of Whitleyism to the system of collective bargaining practised by Trade Unions for decades past and enumerating the successive steps which led to the adoption of the principle in Civil Service negotiations the author summarises "The Credit Side." Contrast is drawn between the ancient and modern forms of Service agitation, the advantage secured by Whitley methods being stated thus:—(1) A machine has been provided whereby the elected representatives of the staff are in close and continuous contact with those responsible for Service administration; (2) The staff has been compelled to put its own house in order (3) It acts as a useful deterrent to the administration; (4) It is steadily welding the Service into something like a conscious whole. As to the tangible results achieved, whilst we are urged to adopt the "long view," attention is directed to the Reports on Cost of Living and Reconstruction and to the settlements effected in respect of Assimilation and Temporary Staffs. Passing to the Debit Side, Mr. Brown admits that it would be idle to pretend that the work of the National Council has given universal satisfaction either to the Staff Side members or the bodies they represent: but attributes this largely to

the exaggerated hopes originally entertained. Nevertheless, the cause of a good deal of the discontent has a reasonable basis in the weakness revealed in the work of the year, these being, briefly: (1) Shortcomings of Disposition, and (2) Shortcomings of Machinery—on both both Staff and Official Sides. These defects of disposition and machinery are dealt with at length, and general Service opinion will, we imagine be with the author when he states that "the most striking of the defects of the Staff Side—which appears to be paralleled on the Official Side—is the absence of adequate machinery for making known the decisions reached." Again, it is most encouraging to lay critics to read "the second defect is the unwholesome secrecy which in Whitley matters has developed into a sort of cult, and which does a lot of harm." We have often heard the complaint "too much machinery." In this matter the author agrees that "the passage of a motion from the rank and file to the Staff Side of the National Council resembles nothing so much as a switchback." What an opportunity the Service humorist, if such a thing exists, has missed in this matter! Imagine such a gentleman explaining the intricacies of the Whitley "velocipede" to an interesting circle of admiring relatives.

However, we cannot do more here than refer the reader to the pamphlet under review. The Service owes a debt to Mr. Brown for his frank and lucid exposition, which should find a ready sale amongst all grades. "*Whitleyism on its Trial*," by W. J. Brown, Clerical Officers' Association, 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.2. Price 6d.

Social reform is not to be secured by noise and shouting, by complaints and denunciations, by the formation of parties, or the making of revolutions, but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought there cannot be right action; and when there is correct thought right action will follow. Power is in the hands of the masses of men. What oppresses the masses is their ignorance, their shortsighted selfishness.—*Henry George.*

Good men must not obey the laws too well.—*R. W. Emerson.*

Civil Service Reform in U.S.A. Forty Years Ago.

The subject of our Civil Service remains, in effect, just where it was on the opening day of the session. This is a subject of the highest importance. A considerable proportion of the party in power demand a most radical and sweeping change in the manner of appointment, term of service, gradation and payment of the administrative officers of the government. A portion of the minority have also espoused, professedly at least, the same view. Another class, with the President at its head, persists in doubting the applicability of the principles of the English Civil Service to our own, and declares its conviction that a fixed tenure of office, with restrictions on the manner of appointment, is the more desirable method of reform. The growth of our Civil Service makes this question of the greatest moment. To each of the classes above mentioned the course proposed by the other is fraught with the utmost danger to the republic. To the so-called Civil Service Reformer anything less than the English system is simply an extension of a corrupting influence which he believes bids fair very soon to undermine all public morality and put afar off the millennium. To the other class, the system proposed by the "Reformers" is the beginning of the end of Republican institutions. Both are undoubtedly sincere and there are facts which tend to support the views of both. It is a subject demanding the fullest consideration, but, except as a cloak for a fight of factions which has prevailed in the majority, the session has done nothing toward securing a solution.

There is no wealth but life. Life including all its powers of love, of joy and admiration. That country is richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his power, over the life of others.

The blindness of men is the most dangerous effect of their pride; it seems to nourish and augment it, it deprives us of knowledge of remedies which can solace our miseries and can cure our faults.