

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON PROFIT SHARING.

(Fifteen questions were submitted for discussion at this Congress.)

FIRST QUESTION. Is the free agreement expressed or understood, by which the workman or employee receives above his usual salary or ordinary wages, a share in the profits, without participating in the losses, whether individually, in money or otherwise, jointly and collectively, under the form of accessory advantages, or in other ways, conformable to natural law and to equity? 464

SECOND QUESTION.—Where it is the desire of the master of an industry to secure to workmen in addition to their wages, advantages intended to increase their well-being in the present and to give them a security for the future, without, however, charging the price due them, by adopting the system recommended by Mr. Eugel Dollfus, of subtracting an annual amount from the general costs. Is it not possible for him to make use of the principle of profit-sharing among the workmen?
Should participation, regulated according to a determined quantity, be calculated from the total amount of commercial and industrial profits of the concern? Should it not, on the contrary, be regulated in an establishment by means of a series of distinctive inventories, by special kinds of work, by groups or bands of workmen? 467

THIRD QUESTION.—May not participation too narrowly restricted to the supplementary profit, which in each workshop may result in exceptional economies of time, material or fire, be apt to become confounded with bonuses, and over-salaries paid from the general expenses? Has not this latter system the disadvantage in certain cases of leading to the overdriving of the workman? 471

FOURTH QUESTION.—When stipulated participation, whether united or not to the business profits proper, leads to the fixing of a determined amount, does it not, even when the master's authority is beyond dispute, offer to workmen the guarantee of a controlling influence on the accounts by means of an expert accountant? 472
Thus organized, does not stipulated participation offer the advantage of obliging the business-man himself to keep a regular system of accounts?
Is it not adapted to facilitate the transference of the establishment into the hands of the staff, by preparing it for transformation into a co-operative association of production?
Is not this transformation still better prepared for when the workmen, having become shareholders, share in the losses, if there be any, as well as in the profits.

FIFTH QUESTION.—In order to strengthen the guarantees offered the sharers in stipulated profit-sharing, would it be advisable to establish certain rules for the inventory, particularly as regards the wear and tear of goods, and the deduction made by the chief, previous to any division of amounts for reserve and management? 475

SIXTH QUESTION.—Should the division of profits be made at so much in the franc, of amount of salary or wages without distinction? Or, on the contrary, should the division be made in accordance with the position held or with length of service? 476

SEVENTH QUESTION.—Is it to be preferred that the amount of profits to be divided, either whole or in part, should, by some means, be created a saving for the future benefit of the participants, to the payment being made in specie? 478
II. If the answer be in the affirmative, must life rents be abolished in order to arrange for the creation of a patrimony for the participant's family, as has been done by M. DeCourcy, by means of capitalization at compound interest of the individual books, or by means of insurance? 479
III. Is there sufficient cause to demand of the Legislature the establishment of a public bank in which may be placed the collective savings arising from participation, coöperation, subsidies from masters, and syndical taxes and other sources? 480

EIGHTH QUESTION.—Is not collective profit-sharing, which is intended, by means of a common undivided fund, to provide an aid in the general interest, preferable in certain industrial centres to any gift made separately to the individual? 480

NINTH QUESTION.—In order that profit-sharing, instituted by a master, should in certain cases prepare the way to an Association of Productive Coöperation, should choice be made—in preference to investments retained in their entirety as a provident fund—of an obligatory or free disposition of the profits in shares or interest bearing portions, destined later to transform the workmen into co-proprietors, or, it may be, into sole proprietors of the factory? 481

TENTH QUESTION.—If the profits are to be devoted to life insurance, should not the preference be given to mixed insurances?
If the profits are intended to constitute a special retiring fund belonging to the establishment, and connected with a mutual aid society, or founded by one or more syndicates, in order to organize the fund should not tariffs or taxation and rates of pensions be adopted, in conformity with tables of death rates and mathematical rules often overlooked or unknown? 483

ELEVENTH QUESTION.—Could not the amount of profits to be divided be, to a certain extent, usefully employed to encourage individual savings by the grant of an exceptional rate of interest, or by advancing money to the workman to assist him in the purchase of a house? .. 486

TWELFTH QUESTION.—Is not profit-sharing a means of facilitating professional instruction by reason of the stability of workmen who are heads of families? And reciprocally, are not the good workmen formed by the professional teaching given in the establishment likely to lead to the founding and maintaining of profit-sharing in an industrial establishment? 489

THIRTEENTH QUESTION.—How far and in what way may the principle of sharing the net profits be applied to agriculture? 491