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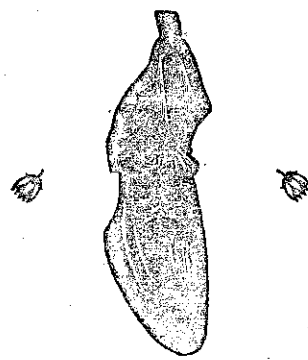
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POOLING THE WORLD'S LABOUR PROBLEMS.

PLAN TO SAFEGUARD THE WORK- ERS IN THE TRADE WAR OF THE NATIONS.

Let every thoughtful person consider this question: How is it possible to appease the ever-growing demands of Labour for a greater share in the national income, whilst, at the same time, preserving the financial stability of the country? Increased national production, though an essential factor in the solution, is not sufficient. The problems of Labour have now a world significance. The matter must be approached in a co-operative international spirit.

The lesson of all strikes recently is this: Unless Labour can be satisfied of the existence of a constructive and progressive policy guaranteeing that there shall be no return to pre-war conditions, it will proceed to such extremes as will face the country with two alternatives: the supersession of Constitutional Government or civil war. Whatever one may think of the rights and wrongs of this point of view, it is useless to blink the fact that it represents fairly accurately the standpoint of Labour.

A strike is, generally speaking, the reflection of grave discontent. Contented men do not strike, and it is not in the nature of the average workman to be discontented seriously without good cause. It is axiomatic that if the differences between the workmen and the employers are to be amicably composed, and if the strike menace is to be removed, there must be sympathy with the legitimate wish of Labour for a larger share in the good things of life, and this sympathy must be translated into action. This seems elementary enough.

But the other side of the question is equally elementary. If one nation adopts this liberal attitude towards Labour, but other nations do not to the same extent recognise their responsibilities, the first nation will be placed at a most serious commercial disadvantage to the others. It is obvious that if manufacturers, owing to the adoption of a progressive labour policy are unable to produce a given article at less than one shilling whilst another manufacturing country, owing to the existence of less humane labour conditions, can produce the same article at sixpence, the English manufacturers cannot compete in the world markets with those of the latter country.

CONCESSIONS MUST BE GENERAL.

The fact that, sooner or later, the labouring classes in that country will probably rise and overthrow their Government does not help our manufacturers, who, by then, will probably be bankrupt! It must, therefore, be recognised that if Labour is to receive substantial and permanent benefit, its rights must be recognised internationally. Any substantial concessions to Labour which are not to be applicable (with the necessary modifications to suit local conditions) to the industrial world in general must undoubtedly prove disastrous to the trade of the giver. In other words, the nations must pool their Labour problems.

The best hope of—and the ready-made machinery for—effecting this lies in the League of Nations. The international labour organisation of the League met at Washington recently. That it intended to grapple squarely with the difficulties is shown by the agenda which, amongst other vital matters, includes the following:—

- (1) The application of the principle of the eight-hour day and of the forty-eight hours week.
- (2) The prevention of, or provision against, unemployment.
- (3) Women's employment generally including the question of maternity benefit.
- (4) The employment of children.

It is too much to expect that these problems will be solved in a day; it will be lucky if any of them have been solved in a year. Indeed, when it is remembered that some forty-five States have been invited to participate in this conference, and that these States are in all stages of labour development, it would be absurd to expect the conference to achieve very much at its first meeting beyond clearing the ground for future activities.

ENGLAND SHOULD LEAD.

The procedure will necessarily be slow, owing to the language difficulty. Resolutions passed at the conference will be conveyed to the various Governments, either in the form of recommendations for adoption or as draft conventions for ratification. In the most favourable circumstances, therefore, some considerable time must elapse before the conclusions reached by the conference can have the force of law. But the guiding principles of the League of Nations are that the workers shall not be regarded "merely as a com-

modity or article of commerce," and that the standard of remuneration shall be "a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country," and by resolutely dealing with the Labour situation in the spirit of these principles, it cannot be doubted that this conference will do much to lay the foundations of a happier and more prosperous world.

The question, then, resolves itself into this: Will the people generally give the International Labour Organisation a chance of doing its work? In this, the world looks to England for a lead. It is a matter of faith and patience. The composition of the conference will be two Government delegates, one employers' delegate and one workers' delegate for each member-State. This insures the adequate representation of all interests.

In addition, a large number of experts attended. Mr G. N. Barnes and Sir Malcolm Delevingne represented the British Government. Mr Stuart Bunning, president of the Trades Union Congress, represented the workers; Mr D. S. Marjoribanks, of Messrs Armstrong, Whitworth, represented the employers. The workers' experts included Mr Henderson, Mr Clynes, Mr Bowerman, Mr Sexon and Mr Tom Shaw, whilst Mr Bellhouse and Dr Legg represented the Home Office and the Ministry of Labour.

The problems of Labour do not merely involve the existence of our trade and financial stability; they strike at the very roots of Constitutional Government itself. Side by side with the new international labour organisation of the League of Nations stand various international bodies, the principal of which are the International Trades Union Congress and the Socialist Internationale. These bodies have grown up, partly owing to the need for an international forum in which to discuss labour and social problems. They are representative of only one class, however, and have no constitutional authority.

If the League organisation is made a success these voluntary bodies will exercise a valuable supplementary influence. But there are not wanting signs that certain of the more fanatical of the workers would be glad to overthrow constitutionalism and replace it by some scheme of government of their own contriving, and if the League organisation gives no reasonable promise of bringing about many reforms, there is the possibility that, in the resulting despair, these extremists may succeed in turning organised labour in a body towards the Internationals, which, for labour purposes, would then supplant the League. And this would be a disaster.

THE BEGINNING OF THINGS.

OPENING CHAPTERS OF MR H. G. WELLS'S GREAT NEW YORK.

Mr H. G. Wells is a writer utterly undismayed by the poet's warning that "by ambition the angels fell." The scheme of his great new work, "The Outline of History," now on sale at local book-sellers, the first part of which has been published by Messrs Newnes this week, is set out in the opening sentence:—

This "Outline of History" is an attempt to tell, truly and clearly, in one continuous narrative, the whole story of life and mankind so far as it is known to-day. It is written plainly for the general reader, but its aim goes beyond its use as merely interesting reading matter. . . .

This outline deals with ages and races and nations, where the ordinary history deals with reigns and pedigrees and campaigns; but it will not be found to be more crowded with names and dates nor more difficult to follow and understand. History is no exception amongst the sciences; as the gaps fill in, the outline simplifies; as the outlook broadens, the clustering multitude of details dissolves into general laws.

COMMON ORIGINS AND INTERESTS.

The necessity for the knowledge of universal history has been proved by the tragic history of the past five years. "There can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas." We must know our common origins. We must realize our common interests.

It (the "Outline") is an attempt to tell how our present state of affairs, this distressed and multifarious human life about us, arose in the course of vast ages and out of the inanimate clash of matter, and to estimate the quality and amount and range of the hopes with which it now faces its destiny.

Hitherto universal histories have almost all been mere bald "encyclopaedias of history." Mr Wells has written a coherent, dramatic, and thrilling story. The work is all his, but he has had expert "counsel and direction" from such authorities as Sir E. Ray Lankester, Sir H. H. Johnston, Professor Gilbert Murray, and others.

"THE MAKING OF THE WORLD." The first section of the "Outline" is devoted to "The Making of the World."

The language is admirably simple. The facts are expressed in easily-understood phrases. Physical circumstances have vastly changed since the world began:—

It must have been in days of a much hotter sun, a far swifter day and night, high tides, great heat, tremendous storms and earthquakes, that life, of which we are a part, began upon the world. The moon also was nearer and brighter in those days and had a changing face.

No one knows how life began on the earth, but Mr Wells is able to collect a whole series of intriguing facts from "the record of the rocks." Life first appeared in the seas.

Through long ages, through the earliest Palaeozoic time, it was no more than a proliferation of such swimming and creeping things in the water. There were creatures called trilobites; they were crawling things like big sea woodlice that were probably related to the American king-crab of to-day. There were also sea-scorpions, the prefects of that early world. The individuals of certain species of these were nine feet long. . . . There were plant animals, rooted and joined together like plants, and loose weeds that waved in the waters. . . .

This Primitive Life was at once modified and developed by natural selection, which Mr Wells explains with characteristic clearness, and, in the beginning, natural selection worked very rapidly:—

With such simple and lowly beings, however, as first appeared in the primordial seas, growth and reproduction was probably a matter of a few brief hours or even of a few brief minutes. Modification and differentiation of species must accordingly have been very rapid, and life had already developed a very great variety of widely contrasted forms before it began to leave traces in the rocks.

INVASION OF THE DRY LAND.

In two fascinating chapters Mr Wells tells the story of "the invasion of the dry land by life" and the circumstances that caused "the changes in the world's climate." The Mesozoic period followed the Palaeozoic, and reptiles crawled over the face of the earth.

The earliest known reptiles were beasts with great bellies and not very powerful legs, very like their kindred amphibia, wallowing as the crocodile wallows to this day; but in the Mesozoic they soon began to stand up and go stoutly on all fours, and several great sections of them began to balance themselves on tail and hind-legs, rather as the kangaroos do now, in order to release the fore-limbs for grasping food. . . .

But the largest and most diversified group of these Mesozoic reptiles was the group we have spoken of as kangaroo-like the Dinosaurs, many of which attained enormous proportions. In bigness these greater Dinosaurs have never been exceeded, although the sea can still show in the whales creatures as great. Some of these and the largest among them, were herbivorous animals, they browsed on the rushy vegetation and among the ferns and bushes, or they stood up and grasped trees with their fore-legs while they devoured the foliage. Among the browsers, for example, was the *Diplodocus carnegiei*, which measured eighty-four feet in length, and the *Atlantosaurus*. . . .

FIRST APPEARANCE OF MAMMALS.

Mammals made their first appearance during this Mesozoic age:—

The Mesozoic mammals or mammal-like reptiles, for we do not know clearly which they were, seem to have been all obscure little beasts of the size of mice and rats, more like a down-trodden order of reptiles than a distinct class; probably they still laid eggs and were developing only slowly their distinctive covering of hair. They lived away from big waters, and perhaps in the desolate uplands, as marmosets do now; probably they lived there beyond the pursuit of the carnivorous dinosaurs. Some perhaps went on all fours, some chiefly went on their hind-legs and clambered with their fore-limbs. . . .

These little Theriomorphs, these ancestral mammals, developed hair. Hairs like feathers, are long and elaborately specialized scales. Hair is perhaps the clue to the salvation of the early mammals. Living lives upon the margin of existence, away from the marshes and the warmth, they developed an outer covering only second in its warmth-holding (or heat-resisting) powers to the down and feathers of the Arctic sea-birds.

This opening instalment of the history of man will assuredly whet the appetite for more. Great Britain will soon be full of literary Oliver Twists.

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As Love does when he bends his bow
With one hand thrust the lady from,
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