

conditions is that it must be satisfied that there is a substantial alteration in the conditions affecting the industry concerned, or a further substantial variation in the present cost of living extending over a substantial period of time.

The Vicious Circle

Within a fortnight of the adoption of a new scale of payment for the drivers of New Zealand, the employers announced certain increases in the cost of haulage. This "pass-on" principle operated a few days later over the delay to shipping through quarantine precautions. Up went the price of imported coal. Thus the public learned a lesson, somewhat expensive, in economics. It realised once again that the consumer pays for everything, and that there is no mysterious process under which labour can extract a few extra shillings for its share in production, without the cost of the article being increased. In some industries, the cost of production is discussed in connection with awards and retail prices. More and more the whole process of price-fixing is coming into the arena of debate, and we shall eventually reach the point at which the profits of employers will be subject to regulation. Under war conditions this has of course been done, and it affords an important precedent for these times of industrial uncertainty and discontent. Wage increases, followed by price increases which absorb the gain of the worker constitute a vicious circle which the world has travelled too long for general satisfaction. If an increased wage was followed by an improved production, the capitalist would be tolerably satisfied, but the worker, often under a sense of injury, a feeling that the "vicious circle" system has beaten him again, adopts a go-slow policy, and the industry is worse off than ever. A fuller partnership of the worker in the industry seems the only practical solution of this never-ending trouble, but where are we to find the men bold enough and possessed of sufficient initiative and imagination to make the big experiment? Events have marched so fast in five years that we are now on the eve of this development, and it is to be hoped that the business and professional men who have banded themselves together to take a practical share in the Dominion's politics will adopt this radical plank for their platform, and endeavour to carry it out in their own industries. A wide adoption of co-partnership (not a mere bonus system, with some mystery still remaining in regard to the monetary turnover) seems the only solution of a distracting problem. Some hopeful people have been predicting an easier labour situation when all our soldiers have been demobilised, and are at work again, but unfortunately the Dominion is much worse off than five years ago in the vitally important asset of active workers. Over sixteen thousand able-bodied men who went away to fight will unfortunately never come back. Thousands of their comrades return physically disabled, and therefore add to the country's economic loss, while the immigration of able-bodied men which used to substantially add to the useful population before the war had perforce to cease for nearly five years. From this cause alone New Zealand has suffered a loss of at least 50,000 people. As a partial set-off against the community's loss of able-bodied men there is the greater activity of women in many occupations. But a big loss in labour-power is one of the results of the war, and although the difficulty of finding suitable work for many returned soldiers will occasionally

raise a cry of unemployment, the position in a broad sense will be one of extreme labour shortage. The country's development has had to be suspended for several years, and the public will now expect the Government to vigorously accelerate its public works. But how is this going to be done with available labour, without cramping existing activities? The only recourse is in a strong immigration policy. This will be badly hampered while fares are more than twice the pre-war figure, but an early improvement in that respect should follow the repatriation of our soldiers and the resumption by the shipowners of their liners.

Town Planning Conference and Exhibition

With very commendable thoroughness the Honorary Organiser of the Town Planning Conference, Mr. Hurst Seager, has planned on comprehensive lines so that the gathering will be highly educative to the delegates themselves. It must be admitted that the conference will not be wholly constituted of town planning enthusiasts. Probably the latter will be in the minority. They will have with them a large number of local administrators who think that town planning is largely a "pull down" fad. What they will realise, we hope, after the Conference and Exhibition is that it affords a scientific, thoroughly practical system of building-up—a system in which imagination and foresight combine for the avoidance of expensive errors. This realisation will be brought home first to representatives of towns which have spent large sums in street-widening and improvements. The proposed exhibition in the Wellington Town Hall has been thoughtfully devised so as to provide pictorially, an education in the principles of the science. Ancient and Modern Cities constitutes a section in which town planning efforts from early days can be illustrated. The first town planning was for defensive purposes; we now plan to secure beautiful and hygienic conditions of living. The section devoted to Civic Utilities and Adornments should prove very illuminating to those who have just allowed these things to be created to meet the need of the hour. We hope to see a good section under the heading of Dominion Towns, a section demonstrating that the enlightened planning instinct was with us in the earliest days of settlement, and that all it needs to-day is a general stimulus. A housing section will show what has been done in the garden cities and industrial villages, the attempts to face the housing problem for the New Zealand worker, and the latest development in domestic labour saving, the communal kitchen. Another section will be filled with diagrammatic evidence of the progress of sanitary science, and plain testimony regarding the health-value of town planning. Competitive designs have been invited under seven headings: 1. Outline of scheme for a garden city; 2. A Garden suburb; 3. A civic improvement; 4. Workers' homes; 5. Photographic studies; 6. Posters; 7. Paintings. We hope to see a good response to this competition from the Dominion's Architects, who will thus take their proper place of prominence in a great and growing movement; The details of the competition have been well circulated, and we need only add a reminder that the poster competition closes on Monday, March 31st, and for the other sections on Thursday, May 1st, with Honorary Organising Director, Parliament Building, Wellington