

THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

A FORTNIGHT ago I spoke

about the remarkable changes that are taking place in Soviet Russia. Since then I have read two very interesting books about that country. One, "The Soviet Five-Year Plan," by H. R. Knickerbocker, is a description of the progress of industrialisation in Russia and its possible effects on world trade. The other is "The Challenge of Russia," by Sherwood Eddy, a writer who has made several visits to Russia before and after the revolution, knows the country well, and gives most interesting accounts of the industrial, social and religious developments there. I shall quote freely from this book in the course of this talk in which I propose to deal with some aspects of the now famous Five-Year Plan.

As you probably know, the whole economic organisation of the U.S.S.R. is controlled by the Supreme Economic Council. The various industries are managed by trusts or boards responsible to this Central Council. The Gosplan or State Planning Commission set out to transform the whole economic life of this vast country—to organise on up-to-date lines all industries, including transport, power supply, building, manufacturing, mining, forestry and agriculture. This involves not only the most daring and ambitious schemes that have ever been conceived for the rapid industrialisation of a backward country, but also the creation of a new spirit of enterprise in the people.

Millions of people had to be inspired with a sense of partnership in social production, and with the incentive to spare no efforts in raising standards of efficient production. Not the least part of the achievements since the plan began in 1928 has been the remarkable enthusiasm of the masses of the people in carrying the plan into effect.

Interest has been aroused and maintained by means of propaganda through posters, newspapers, radio talks, motion pictures, electric signs, and even by slogans set out in the form of patterns in flower-beds in public parks and gardens. The imagination of the younger people in particular has been captured. They are eager to do great things—to build the biggest hydro-electrical works, the largest tractor factory in the quickest time with the most up-to-date machinery in the world. Challenges are issued by a group of workers in one factory or farm to turn out more than their quota with less waste at lower cost. Pressure from below is exerted on the management of different works to keep them up to the mark. Meetings of workers in a particular factory will demand that their managers speed up the work, cut out waste and increase efficiency so that their factory can outstrip others in production.

Workers are stimulated by piecework wages, by public honours and by rewards.

By

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*Being the second of a series of talks from 3YA on
"Russia To-day."*

Few countries are so little understood as modern Russia. Yet that vast country teems with interest. Its development is vital to the modern world, for it has set upon a plan that is steadily evolving a new and better Russia. Now when the wheels of industry are retarded by one of the worst trade depressions of modern times, Russia alone provides employment for her millions without artificial methods. What is her secret? Mr. Lawn, in his timely series of talks, explains.

These rewards have usually a social value. For example, last October a Moscow factory that had exceeded its yearly quota received a reward of 750,000 roubles to be used for the building of model homes for the workers. In the Ilytch metallurgical works at Kharkov, four of the best workers and two of the best engineers were given travelling scholarships

abroad because the output had increased over and above the goal set by the Plan.

Eddy says that the spirit of achievement and emulation reminded him of a football season in America, and the Russian correspondent of the London "Economist" describes it as "the expression of the delight which Young Russia feels at the sudden discovery of the country's vast and hitherto unexploited material resources." The younger generation of Russia is deeply thrilled and believes that the Five-Year Plan is the gateway to

a new epoch.

The expert planning, efficient management and the enthusiasm of the workers have resulted in several industries exceeding their quota each year, and over the whole of Russia is heard the slogan, "The Five-Year Plan in Four Years." The Planning Commission is already at work on further plans, and a Fifteen-Year Plan is predicted. It is this spirit among the people that has enabled them to endure hard work and much sacrifice during the first years of the Plan.

It was of first importance to double and treble the output of the heavy basic industries, i.e., to construct gigantic iron and steel works, to develop coal mines and oil fields, to build great industrial towns with factories and houses for hundreds of thousands of workers.

IN the meantime the lighter industries have been of minor importance. The people are prepared to suffer a temporary scarcity of boots and shoes, clothing and various commodities, some of which are comforts and some almost necessities.

They believe that when the Five-Year Plan is completed there will be plenty of food, clothing, shelter and comforts for all.

Now for a few instances of their achievements. Let us deal with education first. In the days of the Tsars 60 per cent. of the people were illiterate. Now there is compulsory education for all children from eight to eleven years of age, and widespread facilities for education for persons of all ages. In 1923 there were 4½ million pupils attending all schools. By 1930 there were over 12 million in elementary schools and about 10 million in other educational institutions including schools for adults. The aim is to have no illiterate people by 1934.

Eddy says: "In no other country, unless it be Japan, has the aesthetic side of life been so fostered and developed among the common people. In no other country does one find the art galleries, museums, the opera, concert and theatre, all of the highest quality, so thronged with working men. . . . The art collections from the palaces of the nobles, like the palaces themselves, are now all socialised and made available to (Concluded on page 8.)



RIGOLETTO

An outstanding feature of Monday night's programme from 2YA will be the performance of the famous quartet, "Fairrest Daughter of the Graces," from the opera, "Rigoletto." The parts will be:

RIGOLETTO Keith Grant
GILDA Mrs. Wilfred Andrews
DUKE Denis Sheard
MADDALENA Amy Woodward

The Quartet.

Rigoletto and Gilda find the Duke making love to Maddalena. In this, the most wonderful of all quartets, the respective emotions of four of the actors are vividly brought out. Here is consummate art which gives us the tender pleadings of the Duke, the coquetry of Maddalena, the fierce cries of the outraged father, and the heart-broken sobs of Gilda, who sees another woman in the arms of the man she has given herself to. What do the words matter, be they Italian, French or English? The music speaks in language common to us all.