

PRIVATE.

# Fabian Research Department.

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## Memorandum on the work of the Committee on the Control of Industry to 31st August, 1913.

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For the information of those members of the Committee who were unable to be present during the week's conference at Barrow House, Keswick (July 18th-25th), the following abstract of progress is submitted by the Chairman (Mrs. Sidney Webb).

In this work the Committee is much indebted to C. Morgan Webb, its first Hon. Secretary, who had unfortunately to relinquish the post from ill-health. The work was then taken over as Hon. Secretary by H. Gillespie. The Chairman and Hon. Secretaries of the Sub-Committees have been Miss Atkinson, Mrs. Bonhote, Mrs. Bernard Drake, Mrs. W. P. Reeves, and Lawrence Tiffen and Sidney Webb; whilst Julius West, succeeded by W. Mellor, have served as Secretaries.

The Committee has held eight meetings, besides the week's conference at Barrow House. The four sub-committees have met, in the aggregate, twenty-one times. Memoranda were prepared and printed as to the exact subjects and methods of the enquiry; and on this basis a really large amount of voluntary work has been done. The number of individual members of the Committee who have sent in notes or reports of personal investigations, of material abstracted or of books translated, or who have volunteered for similar work at 37, Norfolk Street, is about 125. On all the subjects taken up a very extensive collection of material has been made, which has been sorted and classified, and, to a great extent, abstracted on sheets.



## **SUB-COMMITTEE I.**

### **(ASSOCIATIONS OF WAGE-EARNERS).**

A careful enquiry has been made into the feelings and desires, objects and methods, of all the English Syndicalists to whom access could be obtained. A detailed study has been made (chiefly from documents and books) of French Syndicalism; and a less elaborate one of the United States varieties of Syndicalism and "Industrial Unionism." Full information has been obtained of the history (and recent liquidation) of the Italian Glassblowers' Company, which has been claimed as a successful Syndicalist experiment. A report has been drawn up by G. D. H. Cole on "What Validity does our Enquiry show Syndicalism to Possess," and another by H. J. Gillespie and W. Mellor on the nature and extent of Syndicalism in the United Kingdom.

With regard to Trade Unionism, a complete survey has been made of Trade Union organisation in the United Kingdom in relation to the question of amalgamation or federation of unnecessary separate Unions. A personal inquiry has been made into the organisation of Trade Unionism in Germany, with special reference to the relation of local branch to head office and of sectional craft to the industry as a whole. An elaborate Memorandum on this has been prepared by W. Stephen Sanders. Personal enquiries into the organisation of Trade Unionism in Belgium and France have been made, and memoranda prepared, by C. M. Lloyd. Schemes for the improvement of Trade Union organisation in Great Britain have been prepared, and are being considered and revised by detailed enquiries.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE II.**

### **(ASSOCIATIONS OF PRODUCERS).**

An extensive enquiry has been made into the real constitutions and position of all the Association of Producers (self-governing workshops) existing in the United Kingdom. A list has been made, and particulars obtained, of all those that have failed within the last twenty-five years. Studies have been made (from books) of similar associations in France, Belgium, and Italy. An elaborate memorandum of provisional conclusions as to these associations in England has been prepared by Mrs. Bernard Drake.

Profit-sharing and Industrial Co-partnership schemes have been re-examined and submitted to the detailed criticism of Trade Unionists and other workmen, economists, employers, etc.



### **SUB-COMMITTEE III. (ASSOCIATIONS OF CONSUMERS).**

A detailed study has been made of the actual working and results of more than twenty separate Co-operative Societies in different parts of Great Britain. A report on the features thus revealed has been prepared by Mrs. W. P. Reeves.

A detailed personal investigation has been made into the organisation and working of the productive departments of the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE IV. (PUBLIC SERVICES).**

The "Municipal Trading" and the relation to employees of a number of important Municipal Corporations have been investigated in detail. The actual organisation and working of the manufacturing operations of a large Government Department have been personally studied. The statistics of the trading operations of all the municipalities in the United Kingdom have been analysed on to sheets for further investigation. A detailed monograph on the comparative results of municipal and joint stock enterprise with regard to electricity has been prepared by C. Ashmore Baker.

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The material thus obtained—to which additions are still being made—is now being gone through. The first rough draft of a general report, covering the whole field of the enquiry, is now being written by Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb (nearly half completed). It will then be considered in sections by the Sub-Committees; completed as to particular points by individual members; submitted for revision to such experts as will help us; and then considered by the Committee as a whole.

It will evidently form, with appendices, a thick volume, which will, it is hoped, be issued by July, 1914.

The total receipts of the Committee from subscriptions and donations to August 31st (apart from what has been received in advance for 1914) amounted to £466 9s. 10½d. The total expenditure to August 31st (for printing, postage, purchase of books, office rent, travelling expenses of special investigators, and salaries) amounted to £351 11s. 2d. To the balance of £114 18s. 8½d. thus available must be added £100 received in advance for 1914.



## THE NEW INVESTIGATION.

The Committee decided that the next subject to be taken up for investigation should be Industrial Insurance. In view of the uncertainty as to the actual results of the National Insurance Act in the United Kingdom, and the very serious criticism that is made of the vast system of insurance of burial money for infants and children, the subject demands investigation. The matter has suddenly become very urgent. The Government intend to introduce, *in the very next Session of Parliament*, a further amendment of the Insurance Act, restricting, in one way or another, the benefits promised, especially as regards the four millions of insured women. There is, unfortunately, every probability that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, alarmed at the consequences of the actuarial mistakes that have been made, will attempt, by new regulations, to cut down benefits in all directions, with the effect of further diminishing a provision which is far from being adequate for the needs of the sick poor. In order to make out a case for this Bill, the Government have appointed their own private Committee of Enquiry, which is to report in February next, and will, we fear, make the kind of report that the Government require, and publish only such evidence as is thought convenient. If the interests of the millions of insured persons are to be effectively protected, an independent enquiry into the facts is indispensable. This duty seems to fall to the Fabian Research Department.

In view of the urgency of the matter, it is proposed to begin at once; to prepare the necessary printed memoranda, schedules, questions, etc.; to call in aid all the members of the Fabian Society who are prepared to help; to ask for the assistance of members of Insurance Committees and Approved Societies, as well as of doctors, nurses, and Councillors and Poor Law Guardians all over the kingdom; to engage a competent investigator acquainted with the subject; and to concentrate attention for the first six months on the working of the Act, so as to get the facts that will be needed by the Members of Parliament, the journalists, and the public for accepting or amending the forthcoming Government Bill. Both money and personal help are therefore urgently required. We must raise £1,000 within the next two years for this job. Towards this two promises of £100 each have been received. Members are asked to see if they cannot promptly get additional promises for this special work, of amounts small or large.