

way than he proposes. There is not a business executive in the country who has not been doing with might and main precisely what Prof. Beard says should be done—planning and scheming, in every conceivable way and from every possible angle, the effective and economical production and distribution of goods or services. What has brought these plans to naught is not the lack of someone in higher authority to tell the executive that he is wrong, but the lack of a market after his planning of production and distribution has been proved all too successful. The planning for the automobile industry is now done by Sloan of General Motors and Henry Ford, with the others planning to stick close by them. If, under Prof. Beard's plan, the planning of the automobile industry could be better done by either Sloan or Ford alone, as the head of a syndicate in Washington, it would have no effect on the number of people able and willing to buy automobiles. The automobile industry is producing half as much as it could produce because that is all it can sell, not because there is any lack of effective planning by the heads. The fact that production was curtailed when consumers could not consume, shows efficient planning.

Better planning and better organization of production and distribution is something we have been, and are, constantly working toward, and it is well that we continue progress along this line of technological development, but technology gives no hint of the answer to our problem. Planning and organization are now at a high point of efficiency, and the present machinery, now rusting for lack of adequate use, is sufficient to accomplish all that could be hoped from Prof. Beard's complex and wasteful scheme.

If we suppose that planning and organization are now raised to the eighth power, so that by walking one block from my house I can gather the ingredients of breakfast, it works splendidly so long as I have something to give in exchange therefor. But if we suppose that Prof. Beard would, by a brilliant stroke of technology, raise planning and organization to the tenth power, so that by standing on my doorstep and raising two fingers the ingredients of breakfast are immediately placed at my feet, what good does it do if I am broke? Someone must render an equivalent for that service and the goods served, and if I cannot do so, then planning and organization raised to the tenth power has not answered the problem. The present eighth-power planning and organization would function with astonishing effectiveness if the non-consuming consumer had a job so as to produce goods or services to exchange for the goods and services gladly placed at his command by the rest of the world.

In this discussion the problem has been stated, but no attempt made to answer it, the purpose being mainly to show the utter ineptitude of our embryo Stalins, to focus the public gaze upon the futile flounderings of a "master mind" in action, to prove that the "Five Year Plan for America" is an intestinal disturbance and not a trumpet call to action. The "master minds" have got us into the

"picklement" we are in, and they should be made to look ridiculous. We should take every opportunity to puncture their hot-air balloon and set them back on earth before the unthinking believe them to be a star of hope in the black sky of present distress. They are full of wordy darkness and the light is not in them.

What is the answer? That is another story for another time. Poverty is the problem—poverty which is made by human law and which has no place in Nature's plan. If we throw the skunk out of the henhouse we will have eggs to eat. By simply following Nature's plain commands, the problem tends to solve itself without any need to invent complex machinery, for right does not have to be invented, merely discovered.

"Would ye but understand!
Joy is on every hand!
Ye shut your eyes and call it night,
Ye grope and fall in seas of light—
Would ye but understand."
—Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

EDWARD WHITE.

The Unemployment Drive

AS I listened to the address of President Hoover on the evening of October 18, broadcast over a nationwide hookup, it seemed to me that a very tired man was speaking, a man worn out with anxieties over the condition of the nation, which he would do anything in the world to remedy if he only knew how. It was, nevertheless, one of the best efforts of his life, as he threw his heart into an appeal to those to whom the world has been good to relieve the distress of those to whom it has not been good.

To those who are still in darkness as to the source of the world-wide paralysis of industry and trade it was a wondrously moving and pathetic address; to those—and there are more than is generally supposed—to whom the world's condition is but the natural consequence of the world's economic sins, which they can specify, the address was intensely pathetic. As one of these, I was reminded of a hen which has escaped from her enclosure seeking, as night comes on, the hole by which she escaped, running frantically back and forth in front of it but never seeing it.

The charity for which the President so earnestly appealed, no matter how generously it may be given, can never be a satisfactory substitute for justice—it can never reimburse those who have been disinherited of their natural right to earn a living. That age-old idea of appeasing the gods by sacrifice is still true, but it has been transformed—we must appease outraged economic law by the sacrifice of all that is wrong in our economic arrangements.

The Pope of Rome has issued an encyclical letter appealing to the Church to engage in a "crusade of charity," and prelates, priests and clergymen of all denominations have been praying and urging prayer for the idle. It is all well meant, but we may doubt if any of them has ever

thought of the insult to the competency of the Almighty that is involved in asking Him for the relief that is so obviously within our own power. Granaries and warehouses filled to bursting with food and other commodities bear witness that He has heard and answered these prayers before they were uttered.

There is much in the "economic" literature of the day that smacks of what Thomas Carlyle wrote to John Stuart Mill a century ago—in 1833, to be exact:

"It seems as if all men had engaged to one another that sincere speech should cease, and that henceforth nothing but a hollow jargon, without significance, arising from no belief and producing none, should henceforth form the utterance of man to man. It is a miserable mockery, a thing one's heart gets sick of."

The thing of which poor old Carlyle complained as he searched vainly but honestly for a remedy for the distress of his time, and struggled manfully to make the philosophy of Saint Simon fit the needs of the people, may be seen not only in the current twaddle about the good times coming, but in the platitudes about international cooperation indulged in by "statesmen" whose economic philosophies are the utter negation of cooperation. It may be seen in plans allegedly designed to balance production with the public buying power, though it is a mathematical certainty that curtailing production to fit sales can only result in more unemployment and still smaller sales, and that no plan can succeed that does not contemplate bringing the earnings of the nation's workers up to the value of its productions.

It may be seen in the mouthings about "natural economic law" by men who apparently know little or nothing about natural economic law, or else purposely defy it. It has been said by reputed leaders of economic thought that the clouds lowering on the horizons of the nations are of no particular nation, but have merged into an all-embracing cloud which encircles the earth. If this be true, and it certainly has all the earmarks of truth, it stands to reason that no mere local remedies can be relied on to lift the cloud—that it is due to some common cause. If it be true, it is evidently connected, if not directly due, to the damnable game of "beggar my neighbor" which the nations have misnamed "Protectionism," and which has been played by all the nations so effectively—even "Free Trade" Britain collects larger revenues from customs duties than does the United States—that all the nations have been beggared, and while they all clamor for markets, all markets are closed against goods pressing for exchange.

Why do men and nations continue to ignore the fact that "natural economic laws" are universal laws, as all-embracing as the law of gravitation, the laws of chemistry or any other natural laws, and that the evils resulting from ignorance of their workings, or in defiance thereof, cannot be averted by prayer or by local application of quack remedies? "Things are what they are, and con-

sequences will be what they will be. Why should we deceive ourselves?"

There is a real and growing fear that civilization is in danger. Passing over the question of whether this thing called "civilization" is worthy of its name, or worth saving, we may as well understand now as later that if we would save civilization from being overwhelmed by a wave of pseudo-radicalism, we must inoculate it with a true radicalism that correctly diagnoses its ailment and prescribes the true remedy; that tells us truly what it is which "converts the march of beneficent invention" which has raised civilized life above the level of the brute and the savage, into the blight of which many of our so-called economists are loudly complaining.

This diagnosis was correctly made and the remedy pointed out by Henry George half a century ago in his book, "Progress and Poverty."

STEPHEN BELL.

We've Made Some Progress

"FROM all parts of the civilized world come complaints of industrial depression; of labor condemned to involuntary idleness; of capital massed and wasting; of pecuniary distress among business men; of want and suffering and anxiety among the working classes.

"All the dull, deadening pain, all the keen, maddening anguish, that to great masses of men are involved in the words 'hard times' afflict the world today.

"This state of things, common to communities differing so widely in situation, in political institutions, in fiscal and financial systems, in density of population, and in social organization, can hardly be accounted for by local causes.

"There is distress where large standing armies are maintained, but there is also distress where the standing armies are nominal; there is distress where protective tariffs stupidly and wastefully hamper trade, but there is distress where trade is nearly free; there is distress where autocratic government yet prevails, but there is also distress where political power is wholly in the hands of the people; in countries where paper is money and in countries where gold and silver are the only currency.

"Evidently, beneath all such things as these, we must infer a common cause."

That might have been written today. As a matter of fact, it was written fifty-two years ago, by Henry George, in "Progress and Poverty."

Reading it over, it is easy to be pessimistic, to say we have made no progress.

But we have.

When George wrote that, it was "socialistic" and "anarchistic" to suggest that the "common cause" of hard times was an inequitable distribution of wealth.

Today, even the most respectable people, even churches, say so. This newspaper has been saying so for a long time.

That's progress. Just as soon as a majority of people decide that wealth must be more equitably distributed—and there is almost a majority now—we shall take steps in that direction.—Seattle Star.