

# INDUSTRIAL SUCCESS

## Economic Research Needed

(By T. S. OPIE, B.A.)

National power and prosperity nowadays do not depend upon the possession of large territory and a large population. Quality, not quantity, control of brute force, not brute force itself, have been the working ideas of the new era ever since the industrial revolution completely transformed the conditions of human existence.

In the modern struggle for a comfortable standard of living only the nations which are great producers can hope to survive. The rattle of the sabre and the roar of the printing press are greatly over-estimated forces compared to the hum of the reaper.

This conception of the industrial basis of national power is well known, but one of the main essentials of productive efficiency—economic research—has been neglected in Australia contrary to the practice of other nations. The most successful manufacturer is the one most capable of utilising the results of scientific research, the knowledge and experience of others.

Production is not merely a matter of physics and chemistry, but of economic relations and conditions. An economic environment has arisen with mushroom-like rapidity, which most nations have attempted to analyse and understand, for to do this is to control.

Australia, on the other hand, seems content to go along with a few Government statistical publications and a few treatises compiled as the result of private enterprise. These works are excellent and serve their purpose, but they by no means exhaust the possibilities of statistical enquiry. Other countries have established bureaux which carry on the work of the Year Book departments, and, what is more, attempt to explain and interpret results.

### ATTITUDE TO ECONOMICS.

There is a section of business men in South Australia which evidently believes that "studying economics" means "studying how to become the complete Bolshevik." It is probable that these men confuse Upton Sinclair with Shiel Nicholson, and regard the equation of exchange formula as the "red flag" in cypher. But the economist is quite distinct from the social reformer.

Remoulding things in general nearer the heart's desire is not the job of the genuine economist. He leaves that to those whose delight in building systems is similar to that of various German philosophers who succeeded Kant. "Redraggers" are the result of an unbalanced temperament and economic ignorance. Therefore it is difficult to understand the attitude of the man who declared that economics should be "academic" or, in other words, "up in the clouds."

A supposed science that left the realm of fact and sported in a fairy world like mediaeval philosophy would be futile and dangerous. All above there would be light and all below darkness and gnashing of teeth. Mankind surely has had enough of the academic economics which in the past nearly ruined trade and industry. Scientific analysis is the key to progress. When problems are left unsolved or explained by the emotions and imagination something unfortunate for everybody is sure to happen.

### MATERIAL AVAILABLE.

Australia is a young nation, and in the process of evolving a prosperous industrial system. But, because of this, economic forces can be discerned more clearly and the results of economic research can be utilised without much disturbance to production. Moreover, large numbers of individuals competent to handle economic problems are being trained at the various universities.

Adelaide, for instance, has the largest class in economics of any Australian university and probably of any in the Southern Hemisphere. Facilities for economic research in the way of scholarships, on the other hand, are so meagre as to be valueless.

If one wishes to gain a vivid idea of how backward Australia is in these matters I would advise him to look up how many institutions in the United States are engaged in the solution of the problem of personal selection, for instance. If a great industrial country like the United States has so realised the necessity of economic research that hundreds of institutions—

public and private—are devoted wholly or partly to it, Australia could not do better than follow its example. The Government would also profit if it had a little more authoritative information concerning industrial and financial conditions. Royal Commissions might then prove unnecessary.

Lately there has been much talk concerning the apprenticeship, arbitration, and other economic problems. But they will remain problems and wax more complex unless adequate information of their conditions is available.

### SPHERES OF RESEARCH.

Labor, finance, trade, and agriculture are the spheres where extensive information has now become a pressing necessity. England has an important school of agricultural economics at Oxford, but Australia, although it exports millions of bushels of wheat to the mother country, has none. So long as local farmers cannot think through the Utopia of co-operation to the fundamental issues of effective economic organisation of labor and natural resources, agricultural conditions are not likely to improve.

Business men are not eager to employ job-seekers who answer the usual "What do you know?" with the fatal, "Nothing much." Nevertheless if the same question in regard to economic conditions were put to Australia as a whole, the answer would be the same, only more so.

If Australia does not immediately realise the exigencies of the situation and erect institutions for economic research the problems seething beneath industrial life will boil over and an industrial earthquake will result. One would think that the method of war finance of the Commonwealth Government would have induced its successors to institute a thorough enquiry into wartime economic conditions. On the contrary, a "wealth census" and a few price investigations are the only records of the most interesting period in the economic history of the world.

### Our Public Holidays

We in Australia have a good number of public holidays; and among various sections of the community the question has sometimes been asked whether we have not too many. This or that celebration or holiday has been deemed by some to be unnecessary; for example, Eight Hours Day, Cup Day in Melbourne, and so on. There is no doubt that from time to time a merely sensational occurrence captivates the popular mind to such an extent as to receive undue perpetuation. An instance of this is the so-called Guy Fawkes' Day, which, however, is now celebrated only by unruly boys, young and old. But such a day as our Proclamation or Commemoration Day is of the utmost national importance. It is an anniversary that is comparable in significance and interest, if not in historical origin, to the Fourth of July in the United States, the Fourteenth of July in France, and the Festival of the Statuto in Italy. It is to us in a political sense and from the point of view of national development what Christmas Day is to us in a religious and moral sense. The birth of a nation and the foundation of a State—especially if that nation and that State be British, inspired by the fine traditions and ideals of their founders—signalise events that are indeed of international importance.

### Spirit of Celebration

Our spirit and attitude in regard to national celebrations, religious and secular alike, are not always in keeping with the true meaning and aim of such anniversaries. The solemnisation of the birth of the Redeemer not infrequently degenerates in some quarters into unseemly and rowdy hilarity, excessive bouts of conviviality with an aftermath of indigestion and other ailments, and into an inundation of infelicitous Christmas cards. Easter and Whitsuntide in England are also looked upon as nothing more than occasions for oppressive excursions and bean-feasts. And the perversion of secular holidays is often still more lamentable. Granted that, as the Latin poet says, it is pleasant to be foolish sometimes; but it is highly questionable—to say the least—whether these notable days of our calendar should be devoted merely to irreverent folly and irresponsible dalliance. It would not, surely, be difficult for the civic authorities to organise public celebrations of, say, the Foundation Day, comprising a pageant or other beautiful ceremonial, dignified and symbolic, and stately, stirring music. An occasion of this kind does not call for mere flag-waving or spread-eagleism. It should be on the one hand a national thanksgiving, and it should produce on the other hand a national heart-searching and self-communing. Every milestone in our course onward may be a source of gratification, but it also gives us an opportunity for reflection—for thinking of our national origin, growth, and true goal to be aimed at; of the great founders of our country, who gave it bounteously of their genius, energy, and sacrifice, and bequeathed us a heritage which we must jealously guard; and of the conditions necessary for promoting our true advancement conformably to such spirit and tradition.

### National Destiny

In recent years the world has undergone enormous changes. Some nations have more or less gone forward, others have gone backward. The world, indeed, is constantly changing. Empires have existed that are no more. Nations have arisen, flourished, declined, and have disappeared. But this degeneration is not necessarily inevitable; it is due to causes which can be controlled and counteracted. It is national character that dictates national destiny. There are no predestined seeds of decay in the body politic. The only destructive forces are those that have carelessly or blindly been admitted into the hearts and souls of the people. Let only such sources of degeneration be eradicated, let only all sections of the people co-operate gene-

rously and resolutely, remain united, hold fast to the true national ideal, be animated by worthy aspirations, follow unswervingly the best light and leading, and then we may rest assured that in the dim and indefinite future no historian will contemplate the ruin of such a people and record the decline and fall of such a commonwealth. The greatness of a nation does not depend merely on the extent of its territory and its commerce; it depends more on the greatness, on the enlightenment and nobility of its citizens. In view of the present state of the world, national character is now more essential than ever it was. We are now at the crossroads; habit may be sufficient for our course along the clear highway, but at the crossroads character and knowledge and steadfast determination are necessary. And it is on these commemorative anniversaries that we may take thought of our true aims, duty, and interests, and resolve with all the strength of our will to co-operate and act accordingly, in order to attain and preserve the national welfare.

## Graduate and Business Man

Mr. F. W. Eardley, B.A., was appointed to the Adelaide University staff in 1900 as accountant. He was then an Associate of the Institute of Accountants. But he did not leave his studies there. The academic life seemed to have an appeal to him, and, although he was called to the office of assistant registrar in 1911, he found time between duties and writing and reading to take his degree in arts.



Mr. F. W. Eardley, B.A.

At a recent meeting of the University authorities Mr. Eardley was appointed acting registrar as from the New Year. It is predicted that he will take the chair which Mr. Charles Hodge occupied for 40 years as registrar. Mr. Eardley's intimate knowledge of University life and his acquaintance with the business side of the institution fit him for the position.

The period of expansion of the University began in 1898, when Sir Thomas Elder left some thousands of pounds to the institution. Mr. Eardley declares that there were not 500 students in the cloistered halls when he first became associated with the place, and less than 300 attended the Elder Conservatorium. Totals last year amounted to almost 4,000 students, plus 600 at the Conservatorium.

As regards hobbies, Mr. Eardley has to confess that reading is his main concern, while gardening, walking and golf, with some tennis, help to keep him fit. He tackles a stiff job with philosophy.

He had addressed many a literary society, and is a writer who has studiously avoided the publishers. Even his articles to the press have been published anonymously.

There are few more popular men on the University staff than Mr. Eardley, whose activities on behalf of undergraduates and whose unfailing courtesy toward enquirers will never be forgotten.

# THE NEWS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1923.

## Anniversaries

(By Professor Coleman Phillipson.)

On one occasion, at the trial of Descluze (1868), Gambetta gave vent to a passionate impeachment of Napoleon III. and the Empire, and referred in taunting terms to the absence of public solemnities for commemorating the establishment of that regime. "Here for 17 years," he observed, "you have been absolute masters of France. Well, you have never dared to say, 'We will celebrate—we will include among the solemn festivals of France—the second of December as a national anniversary? And yet all the Governments that have succeeded one another in the land have honored the day of their birth. There are but two anniversaries—the eighteenth of Brumaire and the second of December—which have never been put among the solemnities of origin; because you know that, if you dared to include these, the public conscience would disavow them!' Gambetta's taunt proved prophetic; for years later Napoleon surrendered to the Germans, and the Empire which dared not celebrate its birth, was overthrown. The people of France had refused to rejoice over the Napoleonic coups d'etat. Though popular judgment cannot always discern, in due perspective and proportion, the various stages of national evolution, it very rarely sanctions the celebration of shameful or unworthy deeds.