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" I wish I could appeal to this nation. I wish I could appeal to the interests of this nation. We are threatened with strikes, lock-outs, disputes, and disturbances. How childish it all is ; how foolish it all is. What has happened ? Why is there no mutual confidence ? Surely these things can be arbitrated."

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD,
At Brighton.

8th March, 1924.

FOREWORD

No one has a better title to write on industrial questions than Mr. George Barnes. His great and varied experience as a working man, a trade union leader, a member of the Labour Party, and a Cabinet Minister, his complete sincerity and his exceptionally sound judgment will ensure a respectful consideration for what he has to say on a subject second to none in importance for the welfare of the country.

The evil with which he deals is urgent. During the past five years he estimates the direct loss due to strikes and lock-outs at 200,000,000 working days, which cost some £400,000,000—pure unadulterated waste. The indirect loss is probably much more considerable, for strikes and lock-outs are but the symptoms of a deep seated industrial disease. Other symptoms are the million and more of unemployed, the shortage of houses with all its accompanying miseries, the feared inability to cope with foreign competition without State assistance, the danger that large tracts of arable land will fall out of cultivation or be put down to grass. For all these things are in some degree the consequence of undue cost of production resulting from discord between employers and employed.

The worst part of the whole business is that, as Mr. Barnes shows, we have remedies at hand which are not utilized. Some of the Dominion experiments

have given promising results. Whitley Councils, profit-sharing, co-partnership and co-operation, where properly tried, have brought a measure of industrial peace; and the fact that in such industries as steel smelting there has been no "stoppage of work due to industrial dispute for more than a generation," shows what can be done in some cases by suitable machinery for the adjustment of differences.

The truth is that apart from breed-bates—whose influence is often exaggerated—it ought not to be insuperably difficult to convince employers and employed that their interests are common and not diverse. What is wanted is greater candour and confidence on both sides. The old idea that labour is a commodity which is to be bought and sold under the usual laws of supply and demand must be abandoned in deed as well as in word. The new conception of partnership, or as Mr. Barnes puts it, of "human equality," must take its place.

Full disclosure of profits and prospects must be made as a matter of course. Publicity is the great antidote to suspicion. If necessary the legislative or administrative assistance of the State must be invoked, for the present state of things is a disgrace to our civilization, and must not be allowed to continue. As our author truly says, "A bold move on the part of the Government would find favour with a growing number of people in all ranks of life, including many even in the ranks of labour."

FOREWORD

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Everyone interested in the Condition of Industry Question should read and ponder this book. They will find in it the fruit of great knowledge and ripe judgment, and those are the foundations on which a policy of true and lasting progress must be built.

CECIL.

PREFACE

A REVIEW of British industrial relations is timely. A greater degree of goodwill and co-operation between employers and employed is indeed urgent if we are to succeed in world competition, for, while our industrialists are wrangling about trifles, their competitors are chasing them out of markets by superior intelligence and organization. Community interests suffer, but nobody has seemed to care.

What is the way out ? That is a question to which I recently addressed myself in some lectures delivered at Barnett House, Oxford, and which I have expanded in the chapters here following. They give, I think, the practical response to the implied appeal at Brighton.

GEORGE N. BARNES

August, 1924.

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