PREFACE

THE Chairman and Secretary of the Industrial Unrest Committee are responsible for the precise form in which this Report appears. The matter of the Report, however, is the work of the Committee on Industrial Unrest, and has been submitted in the usual course of procedure to the Unionist Social Reform Committee as a whole. Mr. Stanley Baldwin and Mr. Leslie Scott have acted as Chairmen of Sub-Committees on special subjects. The full Committee consisted of: Professor W. J. Ashley, Mr. Waldorf Astor, M.P., Mr. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., Mr. Montague Barlow, M.P., Mr. Charles Bathurst, M.P., Mr. Shirley Benn, M.P., Lord Henry Bentinck, M.P., Mr. J. W. Hills, M.P. (Chairman), Mr. Harold Hodge, Mr. P. Lloyd Greame, Mr. G. Locker-Lampson, M.P., Mr. L. T. Maunder, Mr. Leslie Scott, K.C., M.P., Sir Mark Sykes, Bart., M.P., Lord Alexander Thynne, M.P., Mr. Christopher Turnor, and Mr. Maurice Woods as Secretary.

The Committee is, in addition, particularly indebted to Professor Ashley, without whose continued assistance, both in discussion and in writing, the Report would never have reached its present form and shape, and we have therefore obtained his permission to add his name as joint-author.

There has been an unpardonable delay in the publication of the Report of a Committee which has now been sitting for nearly two years. The only excuse is that we have been watching with close attention the

development of industrial and political affairs during that period, that with increasing knowledge we have modified our views, and that we believe it better to be right in the long run than wrong in the short one.

J. W. HILLS,
Chairman.
MAURICE WOODS,
Secretary.

INTRODUCTION

By the RIGHT HON. F. E. SMITH

The problem of industrial unrest occupies more and more in every succeeding decade the attention of the people of this country. The troubles of 1911, 1912, and 1913, are now seen to have been no isolated outbreak, but a particularly violent explosion of forces, which may at any moment discharge themselves again. This fact is brought home to us every month by sectional strikes which show a tendency to spread, or by the threats of general strikes to be embarked upon in the summer or autumn. The community as a whole has to make up its mind on the problem, a thing best done in quiet times, and to determine the spirit in which it will approach the difficulty, and decide on the remedies by which the evil may be exorcised or cured. The case is not a simple one, and no single panacea is sufficient to meet every industrial trouble. The Report of the Unionist Social Reform Committee can be commended precisely on this ground. It recognizes the variety of conditions and the multiplicity of details and endeavours to fit its scheme to meet the cases instead of forcing the cases into a bed of Procrustes in order to meet a pre-ordained theory. In this course of procedure it is following the precedents of previous reports on Poor Law, Education, and Housing. The duty of Conservatism has been and always is to produce practical solutions which can be carried into effect to-morrow, and not ideal conceptions which have no relation to political or industrial reality. The report therefore is eminently practical, as the names of its authors and backers would alone prove. Mr. Hills,

Professor Ashley, Mr. Astor, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, Mr. Leslie Scott, and their associates do not speak without their book, and are not authorities who can be disregarded in the world of industrial economy. Indeed, if I had any criticism to make of this report it would be that it is almost too sane, and too nearly allied to ideas which are immediately practicable to attract the support of the stern enthusiast of any school or party. There is a reason for this. The Sub-Committee was appointed as a result of the grave industrial crisis of 1911 and 1912, when the Railway Strike and the Coal Strike appeared to threaten the basis of our civic existence. The feeling of self-preservation innate in any community was then aroused by an imminent danger. Many of us thought that some drastic system of compulsory arbitration at least in the necessary services was the only method of salvation, and had the Sub-Committee issued its report in 1912 it would possibly have made some such recommendation. Time, however, has brought both reflection and experience to all parties in the industrial struggle. Syndicalism has proved as complete a failure in the hands of Mr. Larkin and his friends as it was in the hands of Mr. Owen eighty years ago, and Trade Unionism has refused to recognize it. Compulsory arbitration as a cure for industrial difficulties has been admitted by the Committee to be no real and practical way of dealing with industrial disputes under existing conditions and in the present state of public opinion. If the Labour world is therefore no longer under the influence of irrational passion, the Conservative Party is no longer labouring under the stress of exaggerated panic. The saner Trade Unionism and the wiser Conservatism are not very far apart, and this report, matured by nearly two years of experience and reflection, ought to bridge the gulf between the two schools of thought. Why, indeed, should there be any opposition? The Conservative Party is the parent of Trade Unionism, just as it is the author of the Factory Acts. At every stage in the history of the nineteenth century it is to

Toryism that Trade Unionism has looked for help and support against the oppressions of the Manchester school of Liberalism, which cared nothing for the interests of the State, and regarded men as brute beasts whose labour could be bought and sold at the cheapest price irrespective of all other considerations. The view of modern as of ancient Toryism is that the interests of the State and of the community must at all costs be safeguarded, but that the interests of the worker must not be sacrificed in the process, for the worker is an integral portion of the State.

I apprehend that this is the spirit of the Committee's Report. It gives a fuller recognition of the rights of the community to exercise, through the pressure of public opinion, its power of bringing employer and employee to a rational frame of mind. At the same time it recognizes that an agreed wage of an adequate character ought also to be made the avowed and explicit object of modern statesmanship. We are, in fact, to have consent and not force and revolution in adjusting the interests of the employers and the employed to suit the convenience of the community as a whole. This surely is the doctrine of a wise conservatism, and while the lesson of 1911, 1912, and 1913 is still in our minds and before the panics of the future, which may await us, can supervene to disturb judgment, it will be better to take a calm decision and support the recommendations of the Committee.

It is no part of my duty, as the writer of an introduction, to discuss those recommendations in detail. They appear to me, as I have suggested already, to have been beaten out like fine gold under a hammer until they fit all the existing conditions of our industrial life, as armour fits the living body. They represent, therefore, less a proposal than a Bill, and Bills are, or ought to be, subject to modification. But it is precisely in this particular respect that these proposals are most conservative. Conservatism bases itself on the facts of existence, and on the history of the past; it seizes on present opportunities and improves on them; it studies the conditions of the people as a fact

and not as a theory, and possesses in consequence both practicality and idealism. If this Report possesses, as I think it does, both these qualities, it will not be unworthy of the attention both of the Conservative Party and of the British nation.

F. E. SMITH.