



Industrial Welfare Work in Great Britain

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THE definition of welfare work differs widely in the two countries where it is most frequently carried on, Great Britain and the United States. In Great Britain the following definition has been published by the Welfare Workers' Institute, which, under the name of the Welfare Workers' Association, was founded in 1913 as a professional association of men and women engaged in welfare work in industrial and commercial undertakings.

Welfare work in business and industrial enterprises is that part of the management concerned with the organisation of working conditions on such lines as will be acceptable to, and provide for, each individual worker —

- (1) Physical comfort and well-being ;
- (2) The full opportunity for the use of his abilities by the exercise of care and discrimination in the allocation of his work and duties ;
- (3) The means for the development of all his faculties.

It aims at assisting the individual to fulfil his functions both as a citizen and producer in the interest of the community, as well as of the particular enterprise with which he is connected. It seeks to promote a better understanding between employer and employed based on just dealing and mutual co-operation.

The function of the welfare worker is to advise upon all matters concerned with the employment of labour, the working conditions, health, and general well-being of the workers ; and to act as the executive officer in carrying into effect decisions made thereon.

The American definition is best quoted from an official government source. In 1919 the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics, under the direction of Dr. Royal Meeker, issued a study of *Welfare Work for Employees in Industrial Establishments in the United States* (1), which was based on an investigation into work done in 431 establishments, the aggregate number of employees concerned approximating 1,662,000. For the purpose of this investigation the term welfare was defined as follows :

Anything for the comfort and improvement, intellectual or social, of the employees, over and above wages paid, which is not a necessity of the industry, nor required by law.

The Commissioner states : "It must be clearly kept in mind, in a consideration of this report, that the investigation was concerned with so-called welfare work, as entirely separate and distinct from other phases of employment. Wages might be low, hours long, working conditions bad, and tenure of employment insecure, but if the establishment had, before correcting these

(1) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR, BUREAU OF LABOUR STATISTICS. *Bulletin* No. 250, p. 139. Washington, Government Printing Office. 1919.

obvious evils, installed a good lunch room, wash room, or other welfare features, it was visited and scheduled for that alone".

This definition was drawn up with a definite practical end in view, namely, in order to limit the scope of the investigation undertaken by the Bureau of Labour Statistics and to bring it within practical bounds; nevertheless, it is, generally speaking, true to say that welfare work in the United States is not the elastic thing that is understood by the term in Great Britain. The English interpretation is more comprehensive, and includes much of what in the United States is variously known as "service work", "employment management", or "industrial relations". In fact, it is necessary not to be led astray by similarity in terms. Different conditions require different remedies, and the human conditions obtaining in America are different in many ways from those in England. The mere fact of the greater size and the larger number of people employed in the average factory in America alters the problem, and if we add the enormously difficult element of foreign labour and the different aspect presented by trade unionism, it is easy to see that great variety of treatment must necessarily obtain in the two countries.

The comparatively stable labour conditions in England have undoubtedly lent themselves to a wider interpretation of welfare work than those in the United States. It is not possible to do intensive work of the kind about to be described in a factory having an average of fifty workers and a labour turnover of one thousand two hundred per cent., as reported by the United States Department of Labour, or in firms of the type reported in Milwaukee, where twenty-one factories have an average of 26,662 employees actually working and a loss of 37,016 in one year. Corresponding figures are not kept in England with regard to the majority of firms, but when these are available they show a labour turnover in normal years of fourteen or fifteen per cent., falling as low as two or three per cent. in specially good factories. In the cotton industry, it is not uncommon to find grey-headed men and women in the same mill which they entered as half-timers.

DEVELOPMENTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

In a country where the personnel in factories changes so little ⁽²⁾ from year to year, a corporate life is developed, and a

⁽²⁾ Accurate figures are kept for the factory workers—a total population of between three and four thousand (excluding office staff)—of Messrs. Peek Frean & Co., and show a labour turnover of three per cent. during 1912, 1913, and 1914. During the war the figures were highly irregular, but since the war a steady fall has taken place, until at the end of 1921 the loss is less than one per cent. A higher figure is given for Messrs. Rowntree, York, in *The Human Factor in Business*, by B. S. ROWNTREE, who quotes 12.8 per cent. for men in 1920, the average number of male employees for the year being 2,966; and 13.1 per cent. for women, the average total female employees being 3,712. "In the case of women the turnover will always remain comparatively high, since all girls leave when they marry. Apart from those who left on that account the women's turnover is about 6 per cent."

tradition is formed which becomes the background of welfare work. A factory, like a school, college, or other permanent association of people for a common purpose, develops a life of its own, and when all those engaged in it realise consciously or unconsciously that they are part of an organism which can be harmed or helped by every action of theirs, then the welfare spirit is developed.

The sort of tradition meant is curiously enough often created in small concerns where conditions are bad and almost every provision of the Factory Acts is broken; but the personal friendship and interest taken by the head of the firm in each individual alongside of whom he works goes far to compensate for these defects. It must be realised that without this corporate feeling welfare work cannot be established, even though conditions are good, and canteens, rest rooms, playing fields, and all the paraphernalia of welfare are of the best. It is, perhaps, because of this fact that welfare work began originally in England in firms of the family type, e. g. Messrs. Cadbury, Rowntree, Fry, Cash, Coleman, and Reckitt. Each of these firms began in a tentative way, some twenty or more years ago, to lay great stress on the physical condition of their workers, endeavouring to improve this by gymnastics, swimming, organised games, and so forth. The paternal spirit was very evident in these early attempts at welfare work, which were begun in much the same spirit as that which inspired Robert Owen in New Lanark almost a hundred years before, when he proclaimed the fact that "no people or population can be made good, intelligent, and happy except by a rational and natural education and useful employment or occupation, giving equal exercise to body and mind under healthy conditions" (3). A certain degree of progress was possible under such a benevolent despotism as could *make* people good, intelligent, and happy.

But, as that stage is reached in each factory, the way is barred, and no further progress is possible until the workers are invited to co-operate in securing their own welfare. This seems a most obvious step, but its achievement means an instant widening of the whole conception of welfare work, and its recognition is a serious contribution towards the solution of the industrial problem. Professor Urwick, for instance, says: "Management provision for the welfare of the workers is out of court today, because we are in a different world, with different consciousness of our ownership in ourselves. Employees know that it is *their* welfare which is at stake, and that they are the owners of themselves, and not owned by their masters" (4).

It is an interesting fact that there are in existence in Great Britain today examples of welfare work in all its stages, sometimes

(3) *The Life of Robert Owen, by Himself*. Reprinted from the original edition of 1857-1858. London, Bell, 1920.

(4) London School of Economics and Political Science. Address given 22 October 1918.

factories in the same town being separated by nearly a century of thought. In the most modern type the idea of welfare being administered by the employer for the worker is becoming merged in the new development of co-operation between worker and employer for the benefit of all. Welfare work, therefore, in the wide sense in which the term is understood in Great Britain, includes not only the activities of the "welfare worker" strictly so called, but also a very great deal of the business conducted on works committees or works councils. The welfare work in a factory is, in fact, often divided between such a works committee and a welfare worker. Some remarks on the more intimate possible future relations between these two agents of welfare will be found in the course of this article, and especially at the close.

POSITION AND TRAINING OF WELFARE WORKERS

With regard to the numbers of welfare workers employed in Great Britain at the present time, completely accurate figures are not forthcoming to compare with the 431 establishments investigated in the United States in 1919, though full time workers were not employed by all of these. Sidney Webb gives the number as 600 in 1917, which was increased to 1,000 before the end of the war. In the pre-war period only twenty-five firms were known to employ full-time welfare workers, and in 1921 the number is estimated at 600.

The early "welfare employers" were their own welfare workers, but owing to the complexity of modern industry no employer or works manager has time for the intensive study of the individual human beings in the concern that is needed, and therefore this part of the work of management is usually delegated to an official who is variously called "Welfare Worker", "Employment Manager", or "Social Secretary". It is obvious from the very delicate nature of the work to be undertaken that the welfare worker needs very careful training in addition to the possession of the right kind of personality. He should be adaptable, possess plenty of sound common sense, and if this is balanced by the invaluable gift of a sense of humour, so much the better.

An excellent report has been recently issued by the Joint University Council for Social Studies⁽⁵⁾. In drawing up the report the representatives of eleven Universities and two University Colleges having social study courses were assisted by a special committee consisting of representatives of the Factory Department of the Home Office, the Ministry of Labour, employers, trade unionists, the Welfare Workers' Institute, and the Industrial Welfare Society. In addition to a scheme of training, the report gives a concise account of the employment of welfare workers, especially during the war, shows how the need for

(5) JOINT UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES : *Report on University Training for Welfare Work*. 1921.

training was emphasised by the experience gained during that period, and expresses a careful opinion as to the scope of welfare work.

The course of training for non-graduates covers full-time work for two years, and for graduates one year by special arrangement. It consists partly of attendance at lectures and tutorial classes, and partly of "actual participation under supervision in various social activities, which will give the candidate some first-hand acquaintance with working-class life, the operation of public Departments and of voluntary organisations for social work".

The subjects of instruction include economics, economic history, social and political philosophy, psychology, public administration, industrial law, business organisation, industrial structure and problems. The practical side of the curriculum includes training in administration under skilled guidance in connection with health, housing, employment, education, etc., with specialised training in a well-organised welfare department in the second year.

With regard to the age at which students should enter for the social study courses, "it should be borne in mind that it is undesirable for anyone, man or woman, to undertake welfare work, even in a subordinate capacity, who has not attained a certain degree of maturity of thought and experience. This is not to be measured by age or scholastic records, and therefore it would be unwise to insist on a too rigid standard in either as a condition of admission to the training course. As, however, we are of opinion that students should qualify for social work generally before specialising on welfare work, younger candidates will be in a position to gain experience in other forms of less responsible social work before undertaking responsible welfare posts, which are not generally open to persons under the age of twenty-five years".

DUTIES OF THE WELFARE WORKER

Among the duties of the welfare worker the most important is undoubtedly the engagement or selection of new labour. "If an employer is committed to regarding his employees in some sense as partners he must select those partners with care, for his relation with them will be morally if not legally of a more permanent nature than hitherto" (6). It is, therefore, essential that those who will respond to this idea should be chosen; moreover if an employer gives the utmost possible security of tenure, it is necessary to attract the kind of workers who will not leave in a few weeks.

This is of the greatest importance with regard to the juvenile element. Young workers need a careful interview with the object of finding out their individual bent, and of being placed

(6) Pamphlet entitled *Welfare Work in Industry and Commerce*; from a paper given by Miss E. T. Kelly (Messrs Debenham) at a Conference on Welfare Work, held at the Home Office, July 1920.

at the work best suited to their taste, age, health and future development. The factory doctor may well be consulted here, and many workers use a few simple psychological tests adapted to the requirements of the particular trade concerned. Some firms have a "vestibule" or "initiation" (7) school, in which young workers spend their first few weeks, learning the history of the raw material and of the product, the geography and rules of the factory, and generally the easiest way of performing several operations. After a short time the teacher is able to recommend which boys and girls show aptitude for various types of work, and the youngsters enter the factory far better equipped to take their places than many an employee who has been there for years. Another advantage of the scheme is that the girls get to know people in other departments, and a general feeling of "esprit de corps" is fostered. The factory becomes "our factory" in their minds, instead of "the factory" (8).

It may be well to note here in passing the impossibility of expecting workers to take an interest in routine repetition work, when they do not even know what part their operation takes in the finished product, and have possibly never seen even a single finished article. The writer had this forcibly brought home to her towards the end of the war when a munition worker asked to be allowed to see a shell before the war was over! The girl had been employed during the whole period in a factory which was turning out hundreds of shells weekly, and had never been outside her own department, which made small screws and fuse parts. This request led to organised factory visits for employees, and great was the joy of the girl worker when she saw the screws she had been turning out by the thousand assembled into the complete fuse. In this connection the following paragraph from *The Biscuit Box* (9) of December 1921 will be of interest:

Employees who have been with the House for twenty-five years are being conducted around the Works at Drummond Road. Small congenial parties are made up from time to time, and the morning is devoted to this happy arrangement. It seems a very desirable innovation this, for we heard recently from an old servant of fifty years' standing, now on the retired list, that he had never really been around the works until the other day, when he accompanied a party of friends on one of the usual afternoon tours [i. e. those for outside visitors].

What now remains to be done in this direction is for another enterprising firm to bridge the gap between the youngsters and those of twenty-five years' service. There are surely many in this category who would appreciate such a tour, though we must admit there are practical difficulties in the way.

(7) Messrs Cadbury Bros. Bourneville; Messrs Rowntree, York (girls only); Messrs Robinson, Chesterfield; Messrs Hans Renold, Manchester (certain classes of workers only).

(8) B. S. ROWNTREE: *The Human Factor in Business*. London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1921.

(9) *The Biscuit Box* is the works magazine of Messrs. Peek Frean & Co., Bermondsey, London.

The "initiation school" in which a boy or girl spends the whole of his time during his early days with the firm at the firm's expense is not to be confused with a "works' school". A number of employers have started these works' schools in anticipation of the Day Continuation School clauses of the Education Act of 1918, which are unhappily not yet generally enforced. Such works' schools are usually staffed by the local education authority, the firm providing classrooms and equipment. The boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen attend the school on one full day a week, or two half-days, taking a general course, technical instruction being given to apprentices only, or reserved for the years between sixteen and eighteen⁽¹⁰⁾. Emphasis is laid on the necessity for the continuation of the more general and literary education of the children; "the girls are beginning to realise how terribly handicapped are people who grow up unable to express their thoughts either in words or in writing, what pain, inconvenience, and injustice the uneducated sometimes suffer, simply because they cannot state their case in such a way as to elicit attention". The curriculum of such a school generally includes mathematics, physical training, English language and literature, drawing, and possibly civics or public and personal hygiene.

Unfortunately owing to the postponement of the "Appointed Day" under the 1918 Act, some of these schools have been given up, but a number of firms consider them so important that, though trade has been unprecedentedly bad, they are maintaining them in the hope of better times. For instance, at a Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Education in Industry and Commerce held in 1921, Mr. Marshall of Messrs. Thos. Firth & Sons, Sheffield, stated that "we have had over three years' experience of these classes. They are of inestimable value and form the finest branch that has been taken up in connection with our welfare scheme". There is no doubt that these schools are doing a great pioneer work in making experiments and preparing the way for a general adoption of the 1918 Education Act.

Closely allied with the subject of education in the factory is that of recreation, the provision of which is even considered by some to be the main object of welfare work.

Undoubtedly those who work happily together will desire to play together, but the impetus should come from the workers themselves, for some elaborate and expensive schemes initiated by the employers have been failures. In a number of firms rooms for indoor amusement (e. g. the canteen, when not otherwise in use), and playing fields are provided by the firm, and then handed over to the works committee or a special recreation committee of the workers to manage, all other expenses being borne by those who benefit by these amenities. In a few cases rent is paid to the firm and in at least one instance the workers

⁽¹⁰⁾ An account of the working of such a school is described in *A Day Continuation School at Work*, edited by G. W. J. WRAY and R. W. FERGUSON. London, Longmans, Green & Co. 1920.

have bought their own ground by instalments⁽¹¹⁾. A co-operative plan of this description gives more real enjoyment and is more conducive to real welfare than the gift of an extensive park or even a golf course.

Many reformers are of the opinion that schemes of recreation are quite outside the scope of any firm ; that their continuance lays undue stress on the factory as the main influence in men's lives ; and that the community should provide means of recreation for its citizens. The chief duty of the employer is, after all, to see that every worker receives such a wage as will enable him to live in reasonable comfort, which, of course, includes a certain amount of recreation.

WELFARE WORK AND WORKS COMMITTEES

Works committees on the lines of the Whitley Report develop automatically wherever the new spirit of co-operation between employer and employed, already touched upon, has grown up. They do not usually start in the form and with the name they finally take, but this again is a sign of healthy growth. Sometimes the foundation has been laid as long as twenty years ago in a jointly-run recreation or sports club ; sometimes a canteen committee is the forerunner, but in every case the element of joint control is present.

The history of the works committee movement has yet to be written, but the student will find much of interest in the records of the early struggles of infant committees in pioneer firms. At first neither employers nor workers appear to have a very definite object, but both must be actuated with a desire to experiment in obtaining a better understanding of one another and in working together for mutual aims. This will involve the recognition that there is no such fundamental difference between the aims of capital and labour as is commonly supposed, and that, in reality, in the same factory both are affected by the same causes, though perhaps not to the same degree. For instance, it is obviously to the interest of both employer and employed to have a good market for the wares produced by their joint ability ; it is equally to the interest of both to have good time-keeping, a small labour turnover, security of employment, low sickness and accident records, and, generally speaking, what is called a "good tone" in the works. The results of long continued co-operation in motive and in action between all sections of an industrial community cannot yet be calculated, but they may quite possibly be almost of a revolutionary character.

In place of suspicion we should have mutual confidence ; in place of secrecy, open plain dealing and speaking ; in place of restriction upon output on either side, mutual agreement as to the least fatiguing working day and the best means of obtaining the highest production from it. We must not be led away into

(11) The Phoenix Dynamo Co. Ltd., Bradford.

thinking such a Utopia exists at present in any concern, though several have gone considerably beyond the half-way house towards it. There is much pioneer work to be done in clearing away the antagonism and suspicion based on a century of repression and wrong-doing; and before any such scheme of co-operation is possible the employers must take the first steps. The workers' suspicion of their actions is so deeprooted, and has so much justification in fact, that it will take years to overcome it, and the pioneers of the new industrial relationship may not see the results of their labours in this generation.

A few examples of what has already been done in this direction may show the possibilities that are opening before this kind of work.

A firm in the North of England employing some two thousand men and women had a tradition of enlightened dealing with its workpeople, and a joint recreation scheme had been in operation for about twelve years. All workers were engaged through the welfare department and properly introduced into the factory fellowship. A "welfare" committee followed, which was composed of representatives of the workers elected by secret ballot in the proportion of one to every hundred, with a smaller number of nominated representatives of the management. This committee met every month, or more often if necessary, for about three years, its function being to discuss and advise on all matters concerning the working conditions, the arrangement of the hours of work and holidays, the health and comfort of the workers, and generally everything to do with factory life except trade union matters, which were settled between the shop stewards committee and the management. After three years' successful working the two committees amalgamated to form a true works committee, whose sphere of operations consists of all matters affecting the workers at work.

The committee has already re-arranged the working day, allowed smoking in the works during certain hours, provided a break in the morning for women workers, detected and punished petty pilfering, and decided on the length and date of holidays. All new departures in policy and all new staff appointments are explained before they take place by the management representatives, and discussed by the committee, who form a link between management and workers, interpreting one to the other, and by this means avoiding many causes of misunderstanding and disagreement.

It must be borne in mind, however, that these results were not achieved in a day. At first the matters brought forward for discussion by the workers' side are petty grievances, which only needed to be expressed to be set right. The management naturally becomes bored by this stage, which is common to all works committees, and complains that meetings are not worth the time spent on them unless something constructive is evolved, and that the workers lack initiative and managerial ability. With patience, however, these difficulties can be overcome. The

grievances, small as they may appear, have rankled for years, and with their removal a new spirit gradually comes into being. The constituents of the committee members, to whom they report after each meeting, see that something is actually being done, and are more ready with suggestions, which, as time goes on, take the form of a constructive policy.

No one can read the minutes of a representative works committee for a year without being struck by the great development that has taken place in the kind of things discussed. Complaints of the quality of the tea in the canteen, or the underheating of a certain department, give way to a serious discussion on methods of payment or the best way to deal with the unemployment problem, and the way is prepared for an honest, open handling of really contentious matters when they arise.

The Bourneville⁽¹²⁾ works council, working through standing committees, administers the recreation grounds, controls the catering department, and awards scholarships to universities and other educational institutions. It has also instituted a scheme for building houses for employees. It administers a sick benefit fund, controls savings and other charitable collections in the works, investigates accidents and takes preventive measures, administers ambulance work, and awards prizes for the improvement of processes, etc. The firm makes the council an annual grant of £2,000, which it administers for any of these purposes.

In other firms the works committee has interviewed applicants for the post of welfare worker and made the final decision in consultation with the managing director, allocated the work at a period of bad trade in order to avoid dismissals by general short time, and generally undertaken a great deal of the work usually considered to belong only to the management. In this connection an employer⁽¹³⁾ states that he has considered "some of the functions of management which most concern the workers, with a view to seeing how far the autocratic (or bureaucratic) secrecy and exclusiveness which usually surround business management, as far as the workers are concerned, is really unavoidable, or how far it could be replaced by democratic discussion and joint action. The conclusion is that there is no reason inherent in the nature of the questions themselves why this cannot be done to a very considerable extent". He also states that "more important than any reconstruction of management machinery, more important even than the remedying of specific grievances, is the establishing of some degree of ordinary human touch and sympathy between management and men".

The firm of Peek Frean and Co. has had a representative works committee for three years, following very closely the lines laid down in the Whitley Report. Among other pieces of work undertaken by this committee has been the drawing up of the regulations to be observed by employees entitled to holidays, the

(12) Messrs. Cadbury Bros.

(13) Mr. C. G. RENOLD. *Workshop Committees*. London, Pitman. 1921.

formulation of a compulsory contributory scheme for pensions, and the setting up of machinery to deal with alleged unfair dismissals. This latter is of special interest and the details are quoted from the Book of Rules given to all workers.

A manager, having come to the conclusion that an employee must be discharged, will inform him of his decision, adding that if he wishes to appeal against this decision the directors have set up machinery to enable him to do so, but that the appeal must be made at once. Upon the employee deciding to appeal, the manager will refer him to the welfare secretary, and will inform the employee that he will be suspended until the directors' decision is known. The welfare secretary will communicate with the vice-chairman of the works committee, who will arrange with the head of the department for an investigation to take place at once. Should the directors completely exonerate the employee, he will be paid for the period of suspension, payment being estimated in the same manner as payment for holidays.

This machinery works well in practice ; out of a total of eight appeals which were heard during the current year, in six cases the managers' decision was confirmed, and in the other two the men were reinstated.

Another point worthy of remark in connection with this committee is that in its first year the directors nominated as its secretary the person whom they thought best fitted to undertake the work, namely, the welfare worker. In the second year the post was thrown open to election by the members, and the welfare worker was again unanimously appointed, and in each succeeding year he has been re-elected by the workers.

This committee has also undertaken the complete organisation of the workers of the factory in trade unions, the following report having been presented by its Trade Union Sub-Committee :

The Sub-Committee appointed to investigate and report on the subject of trade unions has now completed its enquiry and begs to submit the following recommendations :—

(1) That all Peek Frean & Co.'s employees, except managers and outdoor staff, shall become members of trade unions, provided the Company is prepared to make this a condition of employment.

(2) That clerks, engineers, carpenters and joiners, printers, casemakers, and other employees for whom special trades unions exist shall become members of those unions.

(3) That all other employees shall become members of one of the following unions :—

(a) The National Union of General Workers ;

(b) The National Federation of Women Workers.

The members of the Sub-Committee fully realise the drastic nature of these recommendations, but their investigations have satisfied them that the procedure indicated above is necessary for the realisation of the Whitley Scheme and is in the best interests of all concerned⁽¹⁴⁾.

The Directors in considering the report wished to express "their entire concurrence with the evident desire to organise the employees in the biscuit-manufacturing industry manifested in the report generally", but could not agree to make membership in a trade union a condition of employment.

(14) Works Committee Supplement of *The Biscuit Box* for 2 Dec. 1918.

Under these circumstances the works committee took the organisation of the workers in hand themselves and arranged meetings on the firm's premises which were addressed by prominent trade unionists, after which a lengthy report⁽¹⁵⁾ was presented showing the degree of organisation in each section of the business, and the members of the committee were made responsible for canvassing their constituents as to trade union membership until 100 per cent. could be shown.

A unique feature of the works committee of this firm is the almost verbatim report of every meeting of the committee which is issued as a supplement to *The Biscuit Box*, the works magazine, which is sold at the low price of one penny and bought by practically every member of the firm.

In a number of other firms membership of a trade union is an essential condition for membership of the works committee, which is thus virtually a shop stewards committee. In the engineering trade, where complete organisation is the rule, this is the case, and also in the cotton trade, where all the workers join the appropriate trade union as a matter of course.

Messrs. Cadbury Brothers are in much the same position as Messrs. Peek Frean & Co. on this point. It is stated in *A Works Council in Being*, a booklet published by the firm in 1921, "that the 8,000 employees at Bournville are well organised as regards trade union membership and that the works council and shop committee scheme in operation has been established not only on the basis of recognition of the unions, but with the stipulation that trade union rules and customs shall not be contravened without the written consent of the union concerned". From the "Powers and Functions" section of the Constitution of the Bournville Works Council is taken this "Important Notice": "The directors and the works council are agreed that there is an advantage to both sides in negotiation with organised labour, and that, therefore, membership of a trades union is desirable". Then follows a list of twenty unions which are represented at the works.

LEGISLATION AND THE WELFARE WORKER

While pioneer firms of the type mentioned have been experimenting in the direction of a more democratic type of welfare work, public opinion as to the legal requirements that should be enforced on all factories and workshops has made great strides.

The law can only enforce a minimum, but this minimum is being continually raised as the standard attained by the best employers continually outdistances it. The British Factory Act is at present in great need of revision, and has, in fact, been in some directions superseded by Welfare Orders made under the Police, Factories, etc. Miscellaneous Act 1916, while the hours of labour in many industries have been regulated by trade boards

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, Sept. 1919.

and agreements between trade unions and employers' federations. At first the Home Office Orders and Regulations dealt with certain processes in certain "dangerous" trades, and prescribed special protective clothing and washing accommodation for those engaged in those processes, and forbade such workers to eat food in any workshop devoted to such a process. Later these Orders were extended to all those engaged in a dangerous trade; and later still, Welfare Orders were made for the whole of a great industry scattered in large or small firms all over the country. Examples of these are the Laundry Order, Fruit Preserving Order, and, most important of all, the (Draft) Textiles Order. By these a high standard of welfare is enforced as a legal requirement on every firm in the trade. Workers engaged in wet or dusty processes must be provided with protective clothing and suitable accommodation must be provided for clothing put off during working hours, and "the accommodation so provided shall be placed under the charge of a responsible person". The occupier must also provide "a suitable and adequate canteen or mess-room", "adequate and suitable washing facilities with a sufficient supply of clean towels, soap, and warm water"; also "facilities for sitting for all workers whose work is done standing, so as to enable them to take advantage of any opportunities for resting which may occur in the course of their employment".

Arrangements for first-aid, an ambulance room, and an ambulance carriage, are also to be made, and in every case a "responsible person" must be in charge. The law thus vaguely hints at the appointment of welfare workers, but since the war this has not been enforced by any Act of Parliament; and, as a matter of fact, such compulsory requirement of what in essence is voluntary would not be welcomed by "welfare employers" or welfare workers.

The Factory Department of the Home Office is steadily bringing backward firms into line with standard conditions and observing and recommending improvements with a view to the continual raising of the standard. The Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1920 states: "The steady, quiet reform being carried on by supervisors and managers of welfare in individual factories, and by the quickening activities of workers, individually and through works committees, make it certain that the improvements already recorded will steadily spread, largely on the initiative of workers themselves, throughout industry. Even the remaining striking and extreme contrasts between conditions in old conservative works as yet mainly untouched by Welfare Orders, and those in others reformed under stress of war needs, or other subsequent causes, make it certain that general standardising of welfare conditions is on its way". The Factory Department, through the visits of its inspectors and subsequent legislation based largely on their observations and experience, has for long shown itself to be one of the best and most far-seeing friends of the welfare movement, both in this and in other countries.

The minimum legal requirements of the various Acts, therefore, form the basis of the welfare worker's duties, but others develop logically and naturally from this, till we have canteens, recreational and educational schemes, medical departments, employment department, thrift societies, etc., all more or less directly under welfare supervision. Round this work as a nucleus gather all the forces which make for co-operation and goodwill in the factory community. The more these are given an outlet in the direction and guidance of the common life, the more successful will welfare work be. The provision of merely material comforts does not constitute, though it invariably accompanies, welfare work⁽¹⁶⁾.

The genius of welfare work is that it develops so differently under different conditions, and any standard that is enforced by law is limited by the fact that it must be applicable in every particular case. The basis is the same everywhere, namely, "the acceptance of industry as a social service shared by both capital and labour, in which every individual has a part to play, not of necessity equal in importance, but equally essential to the end in view. The standpoints of both capital and labour have to find some approximation, and the old fear and distrust—and their causes—have to be removed. It means a recognition on the part of the management of a principle whose aim is mutuality rather than dominance, and which requires, at the very outset, a keen appreciation of human needs and an examination of standpoints which have been considered as necessarily conflicting on the part of all concerned" (17).

THE ATTITUDE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The attitude of the great trade unions is altering as they come to understand more clearly what welfare work really is. Before the war they practically ignored the movement, though in certain instances there was co-operation between individual welfare workers and trade union organisers. The artificial conditions resulting from the war and the appointment of a number of welfare workers wholly ignorant of industrial life led to many misunderstandings and unfortunate incidents.

A conference on welfare work was called on 5 May 1917 by the Standing Joint Committee of Women's Industrial Organisations, which included the Labour Party, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Women's Trade Union League, and the Railway Women's Guild. The Committee drew up a "Reconstruction Charter of Industrial Welfare Work" which was passed in sections by the meeting⁽¹⁸⁾. These included a "demand" for the amendment of the Factory Acts to secure, among other alterations, the reduction of the working hours of all persons over 18 to 48 and of all persons under 18 to 24 hours per week.

(16) JOINT UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL STUDIES: *Report on University Training for Welfare Work*. 1921.

(17) E. T. KELLY and M. L. HASKINS: *Foundations of Industrial Welfare*. London. 1921.

(18) *The Labour Woman*, May and June, 1917. London.

With regard to welfare work as such, the following resolution was passed, which, while intended by its supporters to be a severe criticism of some war-time welfare work, really pointed the way to its further democratic development, which was already beginning.

That this Committee declares its conviction that the establishment of a system of welfare workers in the service of employers can never materially increase the well-being of the workers as a whole; and that, while it advocates the employment of women to supervise the work of women, it does not consider that such supervisors should be regarded as having any other functions than those of management.

It protests against any extension of control over the private lives of the workers, and asserts that in every factory the welfare, social and physical, of the workers is best looked after by the workers themselves.

With this object in view this conference urges that in every workshop and factory there should be a trades union committee, not only to look after wages and similar conditions, but to interest itself in all the concerns of the workers under their direction, and to make representations thereupon, when necessary, to the management.

It is interesting to compare the resolution of this Labour women's group in 1917 with the Labour attitude a year later, when a constructive programme of the conditions under which welfare work should be carried on was outlined by the Joint Committee of the Woolwich Labour Party (19).

We submit that the following conditions are essential to any scheme of welfare supervision that is to win the full confidence and support of the workers:—

(1) Welfare supervision must aim primarily at promoting the welfare of the workers, and not at increasing the workers' output.

(2) In the interest of welfare supervision and of the workers, duties which conflict with welfare supervision must not be included in the work of welfare supervisors.

(3) Welfare schemes and supervisors must be under a democratic system of control, in which the workers shall have equal participation with the employers.

(4) The established field of operations of trade unions and their officials must be clearly and loyally recognised by welfare schemes and supervisors.

(5) Welfare supervisors should be drawn, as far as possible, from among the workers.

(6) Welfare supervisors should not be appointed without preliminary training or experience, such training to include a knowledge of trade union aims and methods.

(7) The remuneration and hours of all assistants in welfare supervision work (e. g. canteen workers) must be of trade union standard.

(8) If government control of welfare supervision is maintained after the war, such control must be transferred from the Ministry of Munitions to the Ministry of Labour.

We submit further:—

(9) That there should be the maximum of efficient co-operation among local welfare schemes, especially with regard to small factories.

(10) That there should be the maximum of efficient co-operation between local welfare schemes and the municipality, especially with regard to health, housing, transit, and recreation.

(11) That as welfare supervision will probably become a permanent and extending element of the industrial system, there should be held in each

(19) *The Woolwich Pioneer*, 22 Feb. 1918.

industrial centre one or more conferences, convened by the trades council, or, where there is also a local Labour Party, both bodies jointly, for the purpose of considering the aims, scope, and methods of welfare supervision; and that such local conferences should be followed by a joint conference of the Trades Union Congress and the National Labour Party.

From 1918 to the present time the attitude of organised Labour has been gradually becoming more friendly to welfare work, particularly since the force of many of the objections mentioned in the Woolwich Memorandum were felt with equal strength by the welfare workers themselves. A small number of specially trained and educated women had entered the profession before the war, and the influence and assistance of these, together with that of the universities, and of the Health of Munition Workers Committee, which had been set up by the Ministry of Munitions in 1915 and had issued valuable reports during the whole war period, were all focussed in the direction of training.

The professional body of welfare workers themselves, constituted in 1913, reorganised their Association under the name of the Welfare Workers' Institute in 1919, and their new bye-laws provided that after 30 September 1920 the diploma or certificate of one of the approved training courses would be normally required as a qualification for membership.

With the return to peace conditions only those firms whose welfare work had stood the test of the war continued their welfare department, and these were naturally those in which the spirit of welfare had gained a firm hold. As the paternal, and possibly interfering, type gave way to a democratic organisation based on works committees, the attitude of trade unionism became more friendly, though it must be admitted that certain types of workshop committees were objected to on the grounds that they usurped the place of trade unionism in the factory. All the more successful committees have steered clear of this danger, and some have even put in the forefront of their programme the complete organisation of the workers in unions⁽²⁰⁾.

The changed attitude of trade unionism to welfare work is more an affair of the relations between individual trade union officials and welfare workers and works committees than of public pronouncement, but it is reflected in the action of joint industrial councils for various trades, in many of which welfare and health questions take a prominent place.

For instance, the Industrial Council for the Building Trade has a Safety and Welfare Committee and also an Education Committee, the former concerned with health questions, occupational diseases, and research work, and the latter with apprenticeship and education generally. At a special meeting of the Council held on 11 November 1921, to consider the question of accident prevention, the trade union representatives proposed, and the employers' representatives seconded, the following

(20) Cf. p. 563 above.

resolution, which was adopted : "That the Council recommends its constituent bodies favourably to consider the advisability of becoming affiliated to the British Industrial Safety First Association".

The Joint Industrial Council for the Pottery Trade has adopted a schedule of welfare recommendations which are being pressed upon all employers in the trade. "The operatives have been invited to suggest ways and means of overcoming the difficulty of finding accommodation at the smaller works for the necessary messroom, and also to suggest the minimum number of basins to be provided in the various works under the washing facilities clause" ⁽²¹⁾.

A further very interesting possibility of joint control of welfare by employers and employed throughout an industry is outlined in the Mining Industry Act of 1920, which provides that a levy of one penny per ton shall be made on all coalowners to establish a welfare fund. The Act clearly lays down that the money accumulated shall be used for "such purposes connected with the social well-being, recreation, and conditions of living of workers in or about coal mines and with mining education and research as the Board of Trade, after consultation with any government Department, may approve". For the administration of the fund a committee of five persons has been appointed, one of which represents the Miners' Federation (trade union) and another the Mining Association (employers). The work of the committee will be carried out by local district committees which will consist of trade union and employers' representatives respectively. The first of these was set up at Nottingham on 8 November 1921, and future developments will be awaited with interest.

The attitude of individual trade union leaders towards welfare work can be gathered from a speech made by Miss Margaret Bondfield, Secretary of the Women Workers' Section of the National Union of General Workers, at the Annual Conference of the Welfare Workers' Institute held at Balliol College, Oxford, on 8 January 1922. *Welfare Work* reports her remarks on 'Industry as a Social Service' as follows : "They must see that self as the only motive power was changed, and that the idea of service was substituted, and in connection with this change welfare workers might do much. They were as knights errant on a perilous and lonely quest. Men needed in business the same attitude towards life which filled the doctor, the poet, and the artist. The ethic of the workshop had still to be developed. Industry must hold a new meaning for men. They must serve God and each other in it rather than themselves" ⁽²²⁾.

⁽²¹⁾ HOME OFFICE, FACTORY DEPARTMENT : *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1920.*

⁽²²⁾ *Welfare Work* (organ of the Welfare Workers' Institute, London), Feb. 1922.

THE FUTURE OF WELFARE WORK

Welfare work will undoubtedly be a force to be reckoned with in the industry of the future, more especially because it is sufficiently elastic to be adapted to any form of enterprise and any type of industrial control.

The simplest form of organisation is to be found in small firms of the "family" type, where the employer runs the business and is his own manager. In such a case the welfare worker fulfils all the duties towards the workers for which the employer cannot find time, e.g. engagement of labour, rendering of first-aid, running of canteen, dealing with insurance cards, wages queries, holidays, and a certain amount of purely routine administrative work. At the opposite extreme in organisation is the large firm employing thousands of workers, where of necessity functional management is more or less consciously developed, and where the welfare worker takes his place along with the other specialists as the head of a large department frequently known as the Employment Department. In those firms where a representative works committee has been developed, there is a strong tendency for the welfare worker to be its secretary and for the committee in a very large measure to control the policy of the Welfare Department.

It will thus be seen that the size of the firm, while it modifies the nature of the work carried on, does not prevent its development; and neither apparently is there any branch of industry or commerce which cannot profitably adopt welfare methods of staff organisation. While the movement originated in those firms employing a preponderance of women and juvenile workers, it has quickly spread to almost every industry. Similarly, the nature of the work carried on causes a variation in the problems to be faced. As examples of the trades in which welfare work is found may be quoted (in addition to the more usual type of routine factory work) cotton, woollen and silk mills, transport undertakings, potteries, mines, docks and ship-building concerns⁽²³⁾. The case of large retail and wholesale drapery establishments, several of which have recently adopted welfare schemes, presents a unique example of this elasticity, since the type of worker employed is totally different from that in any of the above trades, and the work is carried on under conditions equally unlike those of the average factory.

The future of the welfare worker is less certain. Someone is needed at the present time to study the human needs of the

(23) The *Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops* for 1920 states of welfare workers: "Their presence is newly reported in various industries, e.g. in glass works, cutlery and electro-plate works, oil and seed mills, woollen, worsted, hosiery, silk, cocoa-nut matting and other textile factories, and it is noticed that firms who introduced them for women and girls in metal works during the war are reluctant to part with them and retain them for canteen and first-aid work for men and boys."

workers, and to act as a link between them and the employers, for they have drifted very far apart. Someone is also required to perform the hundred and one details of management that even the best organised works committee lacks time or ability to perform for itself. The indications of the immediate future point to the welfare worker becoming the appointed servant of the works committee, carrying out its decisions, responsible to it, and possibly paid by it. A natural development from the work of some pioneer firms would be the allocation of a certain share of the profits created by the joint enterprise of management and workers to the works committee, to be used for this and other purposes.

Welfare work in industry has not yet advanced beyond the experimental stage, though the past six years have been rich in results. We may confidently anticipate a no less fruitful period in the immediate future.



