

declares emphatically, that politicians form a class apart from the useful people of New Zealand, and the useful people are glad not to be too closely associated with them.

#### The State as Employer.

Among a number of important war pamphlets sent to New Zealand by the British Minister of Information is a very valuable brochure on the work of British Workshops for the war. The story it tells of business organisation in the face of huge and growing tasks is one to make business people proud of their class. England has not been backward in honouring her great business men, and her notable recognition of their war service makes the New Zealand Government's recent failure to take a good opportunity of doing this makes our so-called National Government look very pitiable and mean. It would take too long to even summarise every phase of organisation described in this small booklet, but we turn with great interest to what the writer, the Rt. Hon. Christopher Addison, P.C., M.P., has to say in regard to the State's relations with its great industrial army, for this experience is bound to have an effect on New Zealand's future after the war. Under the Munitions Branch, national factories and "controlled" industries have run during the war with only one-third the number of disputes experienced before the war, notwithstanding the enormous increase in the number of workers, and the stress of war production. "One day," says the author "you are confronted with a demand for aeroplane workers, another day it is augmented production of chemicals for smoke clouds, another day it is acetylene welders that are wanted for bombs or mines, another day it is workers in T.N.T. and poisonous compounds, then it is a demand for long-range guns, then for agricultural tractors, then for iron-ore workers, and so on and so on, requiring ever-changing adjustments and improvisations—time-rates, piece-rates, movements of labour and all the rest of it. We face our critics without apology, and we shall find, I believe, that in the rates of pay of women workers, in the reduction of the hours of labour and in humaner methods of employment, as well as in many other directions, the Labour Department of the Ministry of Munitions has made an enduring contribution of high value towards our industrial methods."

#### Problems of Reconstruction.

Very hopeful is the outlook of the Rt. Hon. Christopher Addison as a result of his experience of the State as an employer. He puts his finger unerringly on the weaker spot in industrial relations when he states: "Nothing in the relations between Capital and Labour gives rise more to difficulty and distrust than two customs which are dependent upon one another. The first is the cutting of the rates of pay on piece work so as to limit the rise of earnings when improved methods of manufacture, leading to a great output, are introduced. It is not the practice of the best employers, but it is adopted by many. This practice—or the fear of it—has inevitably led to the second and retaliatory practice of the restriction of output. The influence of

these two practices in our industrial life is thoroughly poisonous. We must establish a system whereby both parties have a direct interest in the introduction of improved methods. Without it our progress will inevitably be accompanied by endless disputes. The accounting side of the Ministry has abundantly proved that modern methods of production are not only well able to afford good wage rates, but are benefited by so doing." This is exactly what we have been long preaching, for America's example in the metal manufacturing industry shows clearly that high wages are not a bar to world-wide success. The war has done good service to British industry in forcing the scrapping of slow, out-of-date machinery and creating a broader outlook in the minds of capital and labour. Perhaps New Zealand manufacturers will also learn the lesson that high wages and good machinery mean capable workers and a big output, and that protection is not likely to be swallowed if it is simply used to bolster up inefficient plants.

#### Extensive Town Planning.

Though the war at the time of writing does not give promise of an early evacuation by the Germans of the rich and fertile lands of north-east France and Belgium, the people of those countries, with the magnificent spirit which they have shown throughout the struggle, have set about the plans for reconstruction in thorough earnest. One of the most attractive and appropriate schemes, which originated in America, is to make some city or district in the United States responsible for financing the reconstruction of the dwellings in some particular area devastated by the Hun. The extension of this principle can go on indefinitely, and unfortunately the need is so great, that this form of organised private generosity will not meet the whole situation. The Governments concerned have already laid out the main plans of reconstruction, and we shall see town planning come into action on a vast scale, which will provide the world with an object-lesson of the value of this science. Already the French Minister for the Interior has had an investigation made concerning the supplies of building materials likely to be available for reconstruction purposes at the conclusion of peace. Among the materials thought to be available in sufficient quantities are stone, lime, sand, tile, building hardware, and wall paper; while lime, iron piping, street paving materials, and sandstone may also be secured in France. In the groups of materials in which there may be a shortage are plaster, timber and lumber, slate, structural iron and steel, heavy hardware, tin, zinc, lead plumbing supplies, pumps, sanitary appliances, heating apparatus, paint and glass. The necessary steps are to be taken to encourage the larger production of those materials by the resumption of operations in plants that were shut down; the exploitation of mines and quarries; the re-opening and improved equipment of brick yards, tile works, and establishments engaged in the manufacture of lime and cement and other basic building materials, and the adoption of measures to increase the available supply of labour.