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effect of the enquiry on public opinion, and of the duties and difficulties of the Charity Commissioners, is full of interest, especially with respect to the application of many old charities to educational purposes, an application which has no doubt had the effect of diverting large funds from the poorest class to those in a better position—to the indignation of Mr. Collings. We gather in the course of this account that Mr. Mackay's own view of endowments is not one of entire condemnation; "it will be found that the limited experiments in endowment, which have been admitted into an organisation constructed on a totally different basis, have given satisfaction and proved workable in proportion to the degree in which the benefits so distributed are susceptible of a full and common enjoyment. These doles or scraps of maintenance, before they can be enjoyed, require to be personally appropriated in the most absolute manner. They lend themselves to no sort of common enjoyment. Accordingly doles have met with an overwhelming verdict of condemnation. On the other hand, parks, museums, works of art, cathedrals, and similar things are capable of giving a common enjoyment to all without involving any act of appropriation, and with equal unanimity they have always been excepted when any general condemnation of endowments has been proposed."

The last two chapters on Agencies of Relief and Hospital Reform bring us to problems which are more before the eyes of the public to-day than the question of endowments, and they constitute an excellent summary of our present position with respect to charity, the Poor Law, and medical relief in general. The economic student as well as the English citizen, for whom the book is primarily written, will find it invaluable as a text-book. It is, so far as we know, the only book covering the same ground. An index would have been welcome.

HELEN BOSANQUET

Les Associations Ouvrières de Production. Ministère du Commerce, de l'Industrie, des Postes et des Télégraphes; Office du Travail. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1897. Pp. 613.)

It is a curious fact, that, while it has been common to say that France is the home of co-operative production, we have until now never had any statistical information in regard to the position of the French co-operative productive societies. The volume which has recently been issued on this subject by the French Labour Department, and which embodies the results of a most thorough investigation, organised by M. Arthur Fontaine, the Assistant-Director of the Office du Travail, forms a welcome addition to economic literature. The aim of this inquiry is stated to have been "to measure the efforts made by workmen to abolish the wage-system, and to substitute for that system the close association of capital and labour, with the object of placing in the hands of the workmen actually employed in industrial undertakings the entire management and the whole of the profits of these

concerns ; to describe the alterations which have been made in the original ideal of Co-operation, owing to the exigencies of the practical difficulties encountered ; to give an account of the various types of workmen's associations found in existence, showing the degree of development attained by each type ; to enumerate the members of these societies, distinguishing between different categories of members ; to estimate the value of the goods produced by these societies, and to set forth the main outlines of their financial position ; to show what failures have occurred among, and what successes have been achieved by these associations, and to supply documentary evidence of a nature to enable an opinion to be formed as to the causes, whether of failure or success." The programme thus laid down has, by the exercise of an uncommon degree of tact and by most painstaking exertions, been fully carried out ; and the results of this investigation are presented in a very lucid manner.

The number of co-operative productive societies in operation in 1895 is stated to have been 172, as to 165 of which the following particulars are given :—These 165 societies had at the end of 1895 a total membership of 9,029 ; their paid-up share capital at the date of the inquiry was £468, 620, while the loans by members to societies, as shown by the 1895 balance-sheets, amounted to £55,796. The value of the business done in 1895 was £1,195,814, and the profits earned in that year amounted to £96,409. How far the 165 societies, to which these figures relate, can properly be considered to be examples of the form of industrial organisation indicated as the subject of this investigation, is a question of no little interest. It is the great merit of this Report that, without any attempt to draw a hard and fast line between what is, and what is not, co-operative production, it states the facts in such a manner that the reader can make his own distinctions.

Take, for example, the question of profit-sharing. It is stated in the Report that the Bill dealing with co-operative associations, which has for many years been under the consideration of the French Legislature, lays it down that no association shall be considered to be a co-operative productive society unless it shall allot at least 50 per cent. of its profits to its employees, whether members of the society or not, to be divided between them in proportion to the amount earned in the year as wages by each ; and that the model rules for a productive society issued by the French Co-operative Union of Productive Associations contain a clause to the same effect. But the Report shows that out of the 172 societies in operation in 1895, the number of societies, which allotted to their employees (including non-members) at least 50 per cent. of their net profits (remaining after paying not more than 5 per cent. interest on their capital), was 19 only ; while 61 societies allotted to their employees (whether members or not) a share in such profits inferior to 50 per. cent. No less than 56 societies (of which 55 had in 1895 a turnover of £606,018, and profits amounting to £41,866, while the figures for one society are wanting) accorded

to the numerous non-member workmen whom they employed no share whatever in their profits.

In addition to the valuable statistics as to the general position of co-operative productive societies in France, which are given in tabular form, the Report contains most interesting monograph accounts of certain typical associations and a concise history of the co-operative productive movement in France from 1831, when Buchez founded his co-operative joiners' association, which never commenced business, to the present time.

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