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ance compared with the effect on them of the intellectual and political atmosphere of their times.

Many interesting questions are incidentally raised which Professor Beard may subsequently attempt to solve. What was the size of the landless wage-earning class in America at the Revolution? Does he not over-estimate the extent of the manufacturing interest in 1787? And, if the anti-Federal tendencies had won the day, would not their victory have been very short-lived?

W. H. PRINGLE

Vers le Salaire Minimum. By BARTHÉLEMY RAYNAUD, Professeur à la faculté de droit de l'Université d'Aix-Marseille. (Paris: Recueil Sirey. Pp. xi+518. Price 12 fr. 50.)

MUCH water has flowed beneath the bridges of the Seine since the time when, in response to the plea, "*Il faut bien que je vive*," statesmen and philosophers could quote with equanimity, or even with approval, the retort, "*Je n'en vois pas la nécessité*." Changes in industrial conditions, in the conception of State functions and organisation, and in the political centre of gravity, have given rise to the idea that society should in some measure secure to its members a minimum standard of life. From this idea has developed the claim for a minimum wage; and with this claim, and its practical realisation, M. Raynaud's book is concerned. After considering the ethical, juristic, and economic theories which seek to justify the ideal of the minimum wage, the author describes in detail the extent to which this ideal has been realised and the methods used, concluding with a statement and criticism of current objections to the minimum wage, an analysis of the forces making for its attainment, and an exposition of the fundamental and necessary conditions for success.

It is remarkable that a claim so widespread as that for the minimum wage should rest upon such a narrow theoretical basis. The driving force of the movement certainly does not proceed from the theoretical views considered by M. Raynaud—that of Roman Catholicism as epitomised in the bull *Rerum Novarum*, of Socialism as expounded by St. Simon and Dr. Menger, and of "Social Utilitarianism" represented by Mr. Sidney Webb. The explanation of this difficulty is suggested, but not developed, later in the book. The movement for a minimum wage had its origin in a strong but incoherent feeling among workpeople that it is unjust for wages to be so low as not to allow a man to live and support his family. Then "the theorists came upon the scene,

and sought to state with precision what may be called in Sorel's phrase, the 'myth' of the minimum wage." It is much to be regretted that M. Raynaud did not give more prominence to this suggestion. As the book stands, existing schemes and legislation seem to have no relation to men's opinions. No adequate explanation is given of why and how the movement towards a minimum wage has taken its past course and achieved its present position. Yet not only the importance of the movement, but its very form, are largely due to the development of working-class opinion. For example, the abandonment in 1893 of the miners' demand for profit-sharing by means of a sliding scale, in favour of the claim for a living wage, was the effect and cause of important changes in working-class views, and has deeply affected subsequent legislation; and the progress in Great Britain and the Colonies, compared with that on the Continent, towards some form of minimum wage, is probably in part due to the opportunist character of the English labour movement under the influence of trade union ideals. The more logically complete programmes of the French and German Socialist organisations do not give great prominence to the minimum wage, which is but one of many demands.

M. Raynaud's description of the existing machinery for the realisation of the minimum wage is detailed, accurate, and lucid, with ample reference to authority. Two main views hold the field. First, that no employer should be allowed to pay less than a wage which would secure to the workman the necessities of life. This may be called the "subsistence" minimum. Second, that the wage paid in return for a given amount of work should not fall below a certain minimum level. This may be called the "fair wages" minimum, the establishment of which M. Raynaud regards as the principal function of the bargain between organised workpeople and employers. On the basis of the collective bargain rest other methods of attaining the same object. The fair wages clause in Government and municipal contracts imposes the obligation to pay the wages normally paid by "good" employers in the particular industry concerned; the law in Germany and Switzerland which allows labour contracts to be annulled on the ground that they are "harsh and unconscionable" has in view the weak bargaining power of the individual workman; and the work of trade boards and arbitration courts is largely intended to prevent payment of a lower rate of wages than are in fact paid by "good" employers, or would be paid were the workpeople organised. All these methods of regulating wages are directed towards securing a "fair" equivalence between wages and work done, in the

absence or impotence of a trade union. This aspect of the minimum wage is clearly shown in M. Raynaud's discussion of English legislation. The prime characteristic of the machinery set up by the Trade Boards Act M. Raynaud holds to be that it is "supplementary and complementary to private initiative. It possesses as little as possible the character of an obligatory and compulsory law—*elle propose plus qu'elle impose.*" In the author's opinion the working of the Act has been beneficial, for "though it may be premature to assert, save in the case of the chain-making industry, that there has been a general rise in wages, it is at least possible in face of the movement towards grouping and association which the Act has inspired, to ascribe to it an important and valuable success, a probable guarantee of final success." In his brief discussion of the Coal Mines (1912) Act, M. Raynaud again emphasises that the machinery set up rests on the basis of conciliation and consent; but by neglecting the distinction pointed out by Professor Pigou between the two types of "fair wages" minimum, one of which seeks to equalise the efficiency wages paid to different people at the same time, and the other to equalise the efficiency wages paid to the same people at different times, M. Raynaud fails to mark an important difference in the character of the Trade Boards of the 1909 Act, and the District Boards of the 1912 Act.

Though existing machinery and legislation is mainly directed towards securing the "fair wages" minimum, the conception of the "subsistence" minimum has, nevertheless, had considerable influence, notably in the case of the wages of State employees, and the decisions of the Australasian Arbitration Courts. To the latter, however, M. Raynaud pays little attention. This is a serious omission, for the work of the Australasian Courts is at present the only example of direct and far-reaching control of wages by the State, and study of their judgments would throw much light on the difficulties of such control and ways of meeting them. In New Zealand the tendency has been to reject the idea of fixing wages on a profit-sharing basis, and to base the decision of the court on the cost of living, the nature of the work, and the ability of the employer to pay the wages claimed. The policy of the Commonwealth arbitration tribunal, however, as declared by Mr. Justice Higgins, regards a minimum wage based on the cost of living as sacrosanct, and refuses to take into consideration the fact that payment of such a wage may cause the employer to close his works.

In the concluding part of his book M. Raynaud writes as a

convinced supporter of the minimum wage. He fully realises, however, the serious difficulties which are likely to be encountered, and refuses to entertain as an ideal the establishment of the subsistence minimum, on the ground that it is difficult to ascertain what this minimum should be, and that its enforcement would often drive employers out of business. M. Raynaud, therefore, pins his faith to the ideal of the "fair wages" minimum, the extensive realisation of which depends upon the growth of collective bargaining between employers and employed, the function of the law being to facilitate the making and enforcement of collective agreements, and to supplement them where necessary by the establishment of Trade Boards. To those who accept the present basis of society as desirable and likely to continue, M. Raynaud's views will recommend themselves. But to the increasing numbers who believe in no remedy for social ills but social reconstruction, M. Raynaud's conception of a minimum wage will appear an aim of but doubtful value : and it is likely, therefore, that under their influence, future action will look more and more towards the establishment of a subsistence minimum as a first step towards communism.

M. Raynaud's treatment of the objections to the minimum wage as a means of social betterment is by no means convincing. Against some of the more obvious criticisms, such as the likelihood of evasion and the hardship upon the old and infirm, M. Raynaud makes a good case. But he does not state or meet the capital objection that the establishment of a minimum wage, by changing the direction in which productive resources are applied, may lead to a diminution in the National Dividend, which may directly injure the working classes. If it be assumed, as M. Raynaud tends to assume, that the establishment of a minimum wage would merely result in a transference of wealth from employer to employed, and at the same time even increase the workman's efficiency, the objection falls to the ground. But these assumptions will by no means always be justified, and when they are not the results of the minimum wage may be worse than the evils it is designed to cure. This is no argument against the application of the minimum wage in particular cases, but it seems conclusive against regarding the minimum wage as an infallible and universal remedy for all social ills.

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