



Recent Developments in Joint Production Machinery in Great Britain

The methods for securing the participation of employers and workers in the agencies concerned primarily with the production effort in Great Britain have in recent months undergone examination and change. While there has been a significant development of individual factory production committees, the regional and central production machinery has also been largely reorganised.¹

CENTRAL PRODUCTION MACHINERY

The Prime Minister, on 12 March 1942, announced that Captain Oliver Lyttelton, Minister of State, would be appointed Minister of Production, that is to say, he would be the Minister with chief responsibility, on behalf of the War Cabinet, for the business of war production as a whole, subject to the policy of the Minister of Defence and of the War Cabinet. No new Ministry incorporating the existing production or supply departments (the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, and the Admiralty) would be set up, and, subject to the performance by the Minister of Production of the duties assigned to him, the Ministers in charge of those departments would continue to be responsible to the War Cabinet and to Parliament for their administration. The Minister's responsibilities would include the duties previously discharged by the Production Executive, including the settlement of production priorities, the Production Executive's regional boards, and the allocation of industrial capacity, except shipyard capacity, which would be allocated as in the past by the Admiralty. In all matters connected with the allocation, distribution, and efficient use of labour within the field of war production, the Minister of Production and the

¹ For a description of the central and regional production machinery in the earlier period, cf. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE: *Wartime Developments in Government-Employer-Worker Collaboration* (Montreal, 1941). No reference is made in this summary to the plans for the reorganisation of the coal industry, or the national, regional, district and pit production committees and coal boards on which employers and workers are represented, although the structure of these agencies is in many respects similar to or illustrative of the general production framework described here. For an analysis of the new coal industry Scheme, see below, p. 326.

Minister of Labour and National Service would work together, the latter being generally responsible for the supply of labour and the former for determining the relative importance of the various demands for labour for war production.¹

In his first speech in the House of Commons as Minister of Production, Mr. Lyttelton outlined the general framework of his proposed changes in the production machinery.² He stated that the three ingredients of war production were raw materials, machine tools, and the labour to use the tools and work up the materials, and he considered that, in co-operation with the Minister of Labour and National Service, he had been given effective control over these ingredients. In explaining the organisation of production that he planned to carry out, he stated that he had set up a general staff of war production. This general staff, to be known as the Joint War Production Staff, would be composed of a Chief Adviser on Programmes and Planning (Sir Walter Layton), the assistant chiefs of staff of the three defence services, together with the highest technical officers of the three production Ministries. The Joint War Production Staff would be served by a Joint War Production Planning Group, composed of Navy, Army, and Air Force officers and representatives of the production Ministries. This Group would work in close touch with the combined Anglo-American organisations and with liaison officers of the Dominion Governments. Finally, there would be a Production Division under the direction of an experienced industrialist, and including a technical officer from each of the three production departments, with the task of dealing with those production problems which affected all three simultaneously.

Representative Advisory Panel

On 22 April 1942, the Minister of Production explained further the functions and operation of the Production Division, and stated that it had been renamed the Industrial Division.³ The Division, he said, would assist the supply Ministers and the Minister of Production on questions affecting production in the factories themselves, such as defects in the organisation or layout of plant, difficulties arising from labour supply or the misuse and under-employment of labour or machine tools, financial or administrative obstacles, etc. At the same time he announced that an Advisory Panel was to be set up, composed partly of leading industrialists and partly of labour experts, the latter to be appointed by the Minister of Labour and National Service. The members of the Panel would be representative of both employers and trade unions and of men possessing knowledge of scientific management. The Panel would not function as a committee, but appropriate members would be selected from it, as necessary, for the purpose of giving advice or assistance on particular problems, or of conducting any special investigations on the spot that might be required. Reports of such enquiries would be presented to the Minister of Production

¹ *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 378, No. 44, 12 Mar. 1942, cols. 1205-1206.

² *Idem*, Vol. 378, No. 48, 24 Mar. 1942, cols. 1837 *et seq.*

³ *Idem*, Vol. 379, No. 56, 22 Apr. 1942, cols. 626-627.

and the other supply Ministers direct, since the Panel was intended to assist all the supply departments.

National Production Advisory Council

As part of the central machinery of the production organisation a National Production Advisory Council under the chairmanship of the Minister of Production will "advise him on general production questions (excluding matters which are normally handled by the joint organisations of trade unions and employers in connection with wages and conditions of employment) and on such subjects concerning production as may arise from the proceedings of the regional organisation". The National Production Advisory Council will be composed of two groups of advisory members: (a) 11 members appointed by the Minister of Production from the vice-chairmen of the eleven regional boards; (b) 6 representatives, 3 each from the Federation of British Industries and the British Employers' Confederation, and 6 representatives of the Trades Union Congress, appointed by the Minister from nominations submitted by these bodies.¹

This new organ will replace the Central Joint Advisory Committee (composed of 13 members nominated by the British Employers' Confederation and the Federation of British Industries and 13 members nominated by the Trades Union Congress) which had been established in July 1941 by the Minister of Labour and National Service in his capacity as Chairman of the Production Executive. The appointment of a new National Production Advisory Council is related to the general reorganisation of production both centrally and regionally, and while its functions are defined as being closely similar to those originally proposed for the Central Joint Advisory Committee, the new agency is expected to play a more significant part, both because it will be given a closer relationship with the regional machinery and because it is expected to meet regularly.²

Central Co-ordinating Committee

A Central Co-ordinating Committee has been established under the chairmanship of the representative of the Ministry of Production who is in charge of the regional machinery and consisting of the

¹ *Report of the Committee on Regional Boards*, Cmd. 6360 (London, 1942). The composition of the Committee (which became known as the Citrine Committee) and its Report are discussed in more detail in the next section (see p. 288).

² The Committee on Regional Boards, which had been given the task of examining both the regional machinery and the operation of the Central Joint Advisory Committee, noted that the latter had held only five meetings and had rarely been consulted by the Government. According to the Report:

The failure of Government departments to seek the advice of the Committee appears to us to reflect a disbelief in the value of consultative machinery as a whole, a disbelief which we are glad to say the evidence put before us shows to be waning. We are of the opinion that a properly constituted central committee can play a most valuable and indeed indispensable part in promoting the essential community of interest of the three parties, the Government, the employers and the workpeople, in encouraging the maximum effort in the production of munitions of war.

officers in the Admiralty, Ministry of Supply, Ministry of Aircraft Production, Ministry of Labour and National Service and the Controller General of Machine Tools who are in charge of the regional machinery of their respective departments. This committee serves to co-ordinate, from the central point of view, the operation of the regional organisation described below.¹

REGIONAL REORGANISATION

The new system of regional organisation of the production machinery which came into full effect on 1 July 1942 marks a further stage in the collaboration of Government officials, employers' and workers' representatives on a regional basis and in smaller district units. The Minister of Production on 19 May 1942 announced to the House of Commons² the Government's proposals for regional reorganisation based on the recommendations made by the special committee which had been appointed to review the operation of the regional production organisation as a whole. The new plan includes arrangements for much greater devolution of responsibility to the regional authorities and to the district and local organisations which are familiar with production problems at the plant and area level. It is based on the necessity for closer co-ordination of production work in the regions and of the establishment, in dealing with production problems, of the same kind of decentralisation as the system of employment exchanges had made possible in the work of the Ministry of Labour and National Service.

The reorganisation has been brought about as a result of widespread criticism of the operation of the regional production machinery.³ These production difficulties led the then Minister of

¹ The proposal for the establishment of a Central Co-ordinating Committee was made originally by the representatives of the supply Ministries and was included in the proposals submitted to the Government in the Report of the Committee on Regional Boards. The Central Co-ordinating Committee was appointed early in June and began work immediately (*The Times*, 6 June 1942).

² *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 380, No. 67, 19 May 1942, cols. 36-40.

³ Such criticism, and proposals for reorganisation, had come from unofficial as well as official sources. A review of production policy, issued in Jan. 1942 by the Institute of Statistics, stated that the regional boards, which had up to that time mainly advisory functions, should be given executive authority to allocate regional block orders to firms within the region and to act as clearing centres for the exchange of capacities. Such reconstituted regional boards would, it argued, eliminate departmental competition in the placing of contracts, decentralise the bureaucratic machinery in order to keep producing units and placing units in close touch, distribute orders to the main contractors, and take a hand in the distribution of sub-contracts by bringing in the smaller firms. It suggested at the same time that the regional boards might be the appropriate agencies for introducing an exchange of technical and social manufacturing experiences and for dealing with the question of pooling trade secrets and patents. The better organisation of industry, however, was considered to be essential as part of the whole question of regional planning. One proposal made was that there should be regional and sectional subdivisions in the organisation of a whole industry. In that case, industrial groups, composed of works' managers, technical experts, workers in the industry concerned, and civil servants, might be appointed to act as advisory panels to the central and regional production executives. Cf. INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS: *Bulletin* (Oxford), Vol. 4, No. 2, 31 Jan. 1942, pp. 29 *et seq.*

Production, Lord Beaverbrook, in February 1942 to appoint a special committee composed of four representatives of the employers and the workers on the Central Joint Advisory Committee and six chairmen or deputy chairmen of the regional boards, under the chairmanship of Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, to examine the problem. When the present Minister of Production, Captain Oliver Lyttleton, first outlined his proposals for the general organisation of production in March 1942 in the House of Commons, he said that his regional reorganisation must await the results of the Citrine Committee's report. In the meantime the Select Committee on National Expenditure had also examined the question of regional reorganisation and had dealt with the subject in its Seventh and Eighth Reports. Many of the conclusions reached by the Select Committee, as is noted in the Citrine Report, showed a marked similarity with, and provided powerful evidence in support of, the reforms recommended by the Citrine Committee. The Government plans for reorganisation as accepted by the Minister of Production thus took into consideration the results of the examination of the existing production machinery by two important independent committees.¹

Regional Controllers and Regional Boards

The essential features of the new regional machinery are the appointment of 11 regional controllers and the announced intention of the Government to supply the regional boards with the information necessary to enable them to fulfil the defined purpose of the regional organisation, namely, "to assist the Minister of Production and the supply Ministries to make, in a co-ordinated manner, the fullest and most efficient use of the actual or potential productive resources and manufacturing capacity of the regions for the purpose of carrying out production programmes whether approved or in contemplation".

Each regional controller, who is a full-time official and reports to the Minister of Production, will act as chairman of a regional board and be charged with the task of co-ordinating the activities of the representatives in the region of the supply Ministries. Each of the 11 regional boards comprises, in addition to the regional controller (Ministry of Production), the regional representatives of the Admiralty, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Ministry

¹ The *Report of the Committee on Regional Boards*, *op. cit.*, presented to Parliament on 19 May 1942, includes a memorandum by the Minister of Production setting forth the Government's proposals. The Committee held 14 sessions and received evidence from the various departments concerned as well as from industrial organisations and individuals.

The relevant passages of the Select Committee's reports are to be found in *Seventh and Eighth Reports from the Select Committee on National Expenditure*, Session 1941-1942 (London, 26 Mar. 1942).

In announcing the Government's proposals in the House of Commons the Minister of Production said:

It is a matter of satisfaction to notice how closely the views which are expressed in the Citrine Report tally with those of the Select Committee on National Expenditure in its Eighth Report, and that the necessity for the development of the regional organisation, which I myself feel to be of paramount importance, is so clearly supported by the views of these two authoritative Committees (*Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 380, No. 67, 19 May 1942, col. 37).

of Supply, and the Board of Trade, the regional controller of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, three members representing employers, and three members representing workers. Each board has two vice-chairmen, one chosen from the employers' and one from the workers' members. In addition, there is an executive committee, consisting of some of the official members and the two vice-chairmen.¹ The boards will meet at least once a month and the executive committees, which will have weekly meetings, will report regularly to the boards.

The functions of the new regional boards include responsibility for all the questions previously delegated to the regional organisation and, in addition, two particularly important new functions. The first relates to proposals to create new production capacity, either in the form of additional plant on existing premises or of new premises and plants; in this respect the Citrine Committee urged that all major proposals ought to be tested against the knowledge of existing capacity that it was hoped the boards would possess as a result of the fuller information they ought to receive in connection with the whole question of allocation of contracts. The Committee therefore recommended that the supply Ministries should at an early stage in the development of schemes for the creation of new capacity or extension of existing capacity

¹ The history of the composition of the regional boards, their size, membership and officers, is summarised in the Citrine Report. The original regional machinery, as set up in January 1940 by the Ministry of Supply, had been composed of boards of officials, with advisory committees representative of employers and workers in the region. When the area boards, as they were then known, were reconstituted in July 1941 as the Production Executive's regional boards, their composition was enlarged to include a number of additional officials, such as the regional transport commissioner, the regional representatives of the Raw Materials Department of the Ministry of Supply and the Emergency Repair Organisation of the Ministry of Works and Buildings, the chairman of the machine tool regional committee, and three representatives of employers and workers respectively. The chairmen and vice-chairmen of the boards were selected from the employers' and workers' representatives and consequently served only on a part-time basis. Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. 4, Oct. 1941, p. 434.

The Select Committee's recommendations for altering the regional machinery were that the boards should be decreased in size, that the employers' and workers' representatives should serve as advisory panels, and that the chairman should be a full-time official. The Citrine Committee's recommendations rejected the idea of advisory panels and urged not only that employers and workers should be included on the boards, but that their vice-chairmen should serve on the executive committees. The Citrine Committee also recommended that the chairman of each board should have the title of regional director of production, should be a man of wide industrial experience and local knowledge, and should be in charge of all the staff of the regional organisation in his region on the establishment of the Minister of Production.

The plan approved by the Government, as indicated above, takes account of both views, accepting the participation of employers and workers on the boards and the necessity of full-time officials as chairmen. As at first announced, the Government plan provided that the executive committees should, "at least at the beginning, consist only of officials but that they should report regularly to their regional boards". However, deputations from the Trades Union Congress, the Federation of British Industries, and the British Employers' Confederation unanimously urged that the vice-chairmen (employer and worker) should be members of the executive committees. The Minister of Production, with the agreement of his colleagues, therefore accepted this change. Cf. *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 387, No. 82, 30 June 1942, col. 36.

ensure that their regional controllers, and through them the regional boards, were given an opportunity of advising on the local aspects of such schemes.

The second new function concerns the power of the boards to make enquiries into complaints relating to production (other than matters normally handled by the joint organisations of employers and trade unions in connection with wages and conditions of employment). Formerly the boards had no such authority and could not make authoritative investigations on the spot. The new plan therefore provides that the regional board, through the regional controller or any person appointed by and responsible to him, shall have the right to enter and inspect any undertaking in the region engaged in war production.

To enable the regional boards to carry out their existing functions more effectively, including particularly that of explaining through the representatives of trade unions and employers' organisations on the boards production difficulties which give rise to discontent, the Government has agreed that the boards should be adequately informed on all production matters coming within their competence. The functions of the boards also include the preparation of "danger lists" of firms which are overloaded or otherwise unsuitable to undertake further work, and it is understood that, in regard to the placing of contracts, none shall be given finally, where the regional boards have raised objection, until the objections have been considered centrally. In order to eliminate the delays and difficulties caused by disputes particularly concerning allocation questions, the regional controller, in consultation with his executive committee or if necessary his regional board, may determine questions affecting the local allocation of machine tools, premises, raw materials, and labour. In the allocation of labour the regional controller of production and the regional controller of the Ministry of Labour and National Service act jointly.

District Committees and District Offices

One of the most important contributions made to the production effort by the regional machinery, which will be continued in a new form under the reorganisation, was the development of capacity clearing centres.¹ The Citrine Committee noted that, although there was a lack of uniformity of practice in the various regions, the centres, where they were used, had been valuable in preventing bottlenecks in production. In most regions there is an advisory committee consisting of representatives of employers and trade unions attached to each clearing centre. The Citrine Report pointed out that by these means "the clearing centres have not only been able to deal intelligently with the production problems which have been referred to them, but indispensable links have been provided not only with local industry but also with the Ministry which is charged with the duty of dealing with the supply of labour.

¹ The system was first established in the London and South Eastern Region in October 1940 on the initiation of the regional board, and was later extended to other regions; there were, according to the Citrine Committee, 36 such centres in existence in the spring of 1942.

It is, therefore, not surprising to find that in some cases the clearing centres have developed into local offices for the discharge, under the general direction of the regional boards, of many of the functions of the boards themselves." After examining the functioning of the capacity clearing centres and of the whole problem of ensuring more effective use of the capacity in the engineering industry, particularly of some of the smaller firms, and a better distribution of others with a view to avoiding both overload and underload, the Citrine Committee came to the conclusion that a new form of district organisation must be established as part of the general regional machinery. It was convinced that one of the factors which had prevented the full development of capacity clearing centres was the establishment by the supply Ministries of capacity finding organisations of their own, and that it was essential, in order to prevent overlapping, to establish production clearing centres as part of the district organisation.¹

The proposal, therefore, made by the Citrine Committee and accepted by the Government was in fact to develop the existing system of capacity clearing centres by the establishment of district offices and district committees. The regional boards have been given the task of establishing such district offices and district committees "as and where in their judgment it may be necessary", and of delimiting the areas within which the district machinery will work. The Citrine Committee proposed that each regional board should subdivide its region into districts in each of which there should be located a district office of the Minister of Production. Associated with each district office there should be a district production committee consisting of equal numbers of representatives of workers and employers, appointed by the Minister of Production, together with the manager of the district office. The scheme should be applied at the beginning to the engineering and allied industries, and the initial committees should consist of three representatives each of employers and workers, preferably associated with the engineering and allied industries (the representatives of the employers being chosen from a large, a medium, and a small firm). The Committee proposed that if at a later stage other industries were brought into the scheme, additional members representing those industries could be added to the district production committees or separate committees might be established.

Further, each district office should act as a production clearing centre for its district. Its main duty would be to build up and maintain a body of up-to-date information about the current load upon productive capacity in the district so that the distribution of new work might be effectively planned both as regards main contracts and sub-contracts and to ensure maximum efficiency in the use of labour, plant, and floor space.

¹ The Government in announcing its plan accepted the necessity of merging existing capacity finding agencies in the regional organisation. The Minister of Production pointed out, however, that it would not be practical for the organisation of the Controller-General of Machine Tools to be wholly merged in the regional organisation, but stated that arrangements would be made for the staff of the machine tool control to be available to the regional board as a common service.

The Citrine Committee also recommended that the district offices should, in suitable cases, promote the formation of groups of firms in order to secure balanced production and to determine whether certain firms were dangerously overloaded; and that the district committees should specifically be given the following functions:

(a) To consider any questions referred to it by the regional office or the district office;

(b) To consider and if possible resolve, in collaboration with local authorities or other public bodies and firms in the district, problems affecting or likely to affect production in the district, and to report to the regional board on the action taken;

(c) To bring to the notice of the regional board any problem which the committee is unable to resolve locally or which affects other districts, with recommendations as to action;

(d) To deal with general questions affecting production which are brought to its notice by the regional board arising out of representations by employers' organisations or trade unions or by joint production committees, except matters which are normally handled by joint organisations of employers and trade unions in connection with wages and conditions of employment.

The Government, in accepting the recommendations concerning the setting up of the district machinery, indicated that the preparation of a danger list of firms which were overloaded or otherwise unsuitable to undertake further work should be the responsibility of the regional boards, and should be dealt with by the district offices only to the extent considered desirable by the boards.

When the Minister of Production explained the Government's proposals to the House of Commons, he said: "I regard the district organisation and the close contacts which can be built up in this way with local industry as an important element in the scheme".

LOCAL PRODUCTION MACHINERY

In addition to proposals for the reorganisation of the central and regional production machinery, particular attention has been given in recent months to developing local committees in individual factories in order to secure increased production.¹

Factory Production Committees

After considerable discussion in the Central Joint Advisory Committee to the Production Executive, in the Joint Consultative Committee of the Minister of Labour, and in the Ministry of Supply, and also in the trade unions and employers' associations, a first step was taken towards the formal establishment of joint factory production committees with the signature on 28 February 1942 of an agreement establishing factory production committees in royal ordnance factories.² This agreement, which was nego-

¹ For a summary of the historical background and present operation of the production committees, see *POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PLANNING: Production Committees*, Planning, No. 189 (London, 26 May 1942).

² For the full text of this agreement, see *International Labour Review*, Vol. XLV, No. 5, May 1942, p. 552.

tiated between representatives of the Ministry of Supply and of the trade unions concerned, provided for the setting up of joint production consultative and advisory committees in each royal ordnance factory. The committees are composed of 10 representatives of the workers and 10 representatives of the management, meeting under the chairmanship of the superintendent of the individual establishment. The functions of the committees are to consult and advise on matters relating to production and increased efficiency; it is specifically stated that they shall not discuss matters, such as wages, which are normally dealt with by collective agreements or the approved machinery of negotiation such as shop stewards, staff associations, or Whitley councils. Examples are given of the kind of question to be discussed by the committees, namely: maximum utilisation of existing machinery; upkeep of fixtures, jigs, tools, and gauges; improvement in methods of production; efficient use of the maximum number of productive hours; elimination of defective work and waste; efficient use of material supplies; efficient use of safety preventions and devices.

A very similar agreement was reached on 18 March 1942 between the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the National Union of Foundry Workers, and the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions regarding the establishment of consultative and advisory committees. The agreement, however, provides that "where machinery exists satisfactory to the Federation and the trade unions and where it is agreed that such machinery should be used, no further steps should be taken", and also states that the provision of a production advisory committee shall not be considered necessary in establishments employing less than 150 people, except by mutual desire. The only other alterations of substance in the agreement relate to the methods of selection of members, eligibility of representatives, frequency of meetings, and duration of the agreement. The election of workers' representatives is by ballot conducted jointly by the management and union representatives in the shops. In order to be eligible for election, workers must belong to a trade union and have at least two years' continuous service at the factory concerned (except in the case of establishments which have been in operation for less than two years).¹ Each committee is to meet once a month or when it is mutually agreed that meetings are necessary.² The agreement will terminate at the cessation of hostilities.

The debate in the House of Commons on 25 March 1942 concerning production in general placed particular emphasis on the growth of local production committees. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply described the factory production committees operating in the royal ordnance factories, stating that there would be such committees in 40 factories employing

¹ In the royal ordnance factories, one year's service is sufficient.

² According to the ordnance factory agreement, meetings are held fortnightly, and separate meetings are held weekly of the workers and the management sides respectively.

300,000 workers. In commenting upon the agreement between the Engineering Employers' Federation and the aforementioned unions, he added:

Now that those agreements have been reached, the Government are most anxious that they should be implemented with the least possible delay . . . Unless these committees have the blessings of both sides of the industry, they are not likely to be very effective. It is a great advance in our industrial history that such agreements have been reached, and we must take full advantage of it.¹

The development of local joint production committees and their articulation into the regional production organisation was also urged both by the Select Committee and by the Citrine Committee.

With regard to local joint production committees the Select Committee's Eighth Report stated:

They [the Committee] are convinced from the evidence received that, looked at solely as a matter affecting production, it is of the greatest importance to take every possible step to enable the workers employed in factories to have a true understanding both of the general war position and also of the conditions affecting the work in which they are engaged. The significance of each piece of work should be made clear, as well as the reasons for changes or delays in production if these occur. Your Committee have enquired particularly into the policy of establishing joint committees consisting of representatives of the workers and management for discussing questions of production and enabling the workers not only to be informed as to the situation but to express their own ideas and proposals. Your Committee have noted with satisfaction the plan just adopted by the Ministry of Supply for the establishment of such committees in the royal ordnance factories.² They recognise that there are possible difficulties in the full development of this idea, and that for its success it will require public spirit and understanding on both sides. They confine themselves therefore to expressing the view that it is a development of the greatest importance and a hope that it may be followed out with wisdom, sympathy, and courage.

The Citrine Committee stated that it welcomed the establishment of joint production consultative and advisory committees in the royal ordnance factories and the agreement between the Engineering Employers' Federation and the trade unions in the engineering industry for the constituting of similar committees in that industry. The success of the development, it said, would depend upon the goodwill of both sides of industry, and it felt that the employers' and workers' organisations in the different industries were the parties best qualified to work out the machinery most suitable for their industries.

Pointing out that the joint production committees in the royal ordnance factories would be able to bring production problems

¹ *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 378, No. 49, 25 Mar. 1942, col. 2025.

² The Report adds: "Since this Report was drafted, Your Committee have been glad to learn that an agreement upon the constitution of joint production consultative and advisory committees has been reached between the Engineering and Allied Employers' Federation and the engineering trade unions."

to the notice of the Ministry of Supply and to receive guidance and information from that Ministry, the Citrine Committee noted that there were no similar arrangements made for the committees set up under the federated agreement covering other engineering factories. It was therefore essential that these committees should be able, as committees, to bring production problems to the notice of the regional boards so that they might be considered and resolved locally or, in the absence of local settlement, referred to headquarters. Where a regional board considered it appropriate, the question at issue might be referred to the district committees. The Committee accordingly recommended, as mentioned above, that it should be a duty of the regional boards, or of the district committees at the request of the boards, to deal with general questions affecting production that were brought to their notice by joint production committees or by trade unions or employers' organisations. However, questions which were of purely domestic concern and capable of adjustment within the factory, and also matters normally handled by the joint organisations of employers and trade unions in connection with wages and conditions of employment, should not be subject to this procedure.

The Minister of Production, in outlining the Government proposals, agreed to the recommendations giving a recognised position to the joint production committees and emphasised that the questions referred to the regional boards by the joint production committees or by trade unions or employers' organisations should not be matters of purely domestic concern or matters normally handled by the joint organisations of employers and trade unions.

It has been suggested that it would be desirable to give these production committees a statutory basis. A discussion took place on this subject in the Joint Consultative Committee of the Minister of Labour and National Service and in the Central Joint Advisory Committee to the Production Executive, and proposals were submitted to the Minister of Production. The Minister, in closing the debate in the House of Commons on the new production machinery, indicated his objections to the proposal that the production committees should be given a statutory basis, stating that he thought there had been some confusion between the subject of local organisation, such as the regional boards and their subsidiary bodies, and the matter of production committees. He said:

The two subjects are entirely separate. The production committees, as I see it, would follow, perhaps voluntarily, on the lines of the agreement reached between the trade unions and the Employers' Federation on 18 March, but the subject which this agreement is intended to cover is different from regional devolution. These joint production advisory committees are intended to act as a clearing house, I think, principally for ideas in the works themselves, and I should be the first to hope that they will become universal and to see that a healthy competition is promoted between them to see who can produce fruitful suggestions, particularly for increasing production without increasing plant or labour. I feel in doubt whether we should attempt to make these committees statutory. . . It is clear that a great deal more depends upon the spirit which

animates the members of the committees than upon the mere fact of their existence.¹

The Minister of Labour and National Service subsequently stated in reply to a question in the House concerning the use of production committees working in factories engaged on war production work that the contracting departments were communicating to their contractors their desire that immediate action should be taken to set up such committees. He continued:

It will be appreciated that the setting up of these committees is a matter for joint voluntary arrangement between management and workers' representatives. The constitution, functions, and method of election of the committees is laid down in the agreements but the composition will necessarily be determined by mutual agreement in the light of the circumstances of each establishment.

He added that the production committees were for the purpose of dealing with matters in the particular factories, and that if questions arose which affected other factories, they must be dealt with through the proper machinery which existed between the two sides.²

Labour Views

The development of consultative committees in individual factories and workshops has been favourably received by the various wings of the trade union movement.

Trades Union Congress.

The Trades Union Congress has welcomed the negotiation of the agreements for factory production committees in royal ordnance factories and in private munitions factories, but laid stress on the limitation that, while these committees will consult and advise on matters of production, they "will not in any direction trespass on the present functions of the trade unions concerned".³ In order to secure consistent regional and local policy by the trade union movement, the Trades Union Congress has initiated a scheme of trade union district production committees. These committees, which will be set up in about 200 selected areas, are to be composed of representatives of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, supplemented by representatives of other unions interested. Their function will be to co-ordinate the operations of the individual workshop committees and to analyse suggestions or criticisms coming from these committees. The Trades Union Congress has pointed out that at the present time the trade union members of the workshop committees have to make their communications to the 47 separate unions which they represent. Under the new scheme the district trade union committee, which represents the

¹ *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Vol. 378, No. 49, 25 Mar. 1942, col. 2109.

² *Idem*, Vol. 379, No. 54, 16 Apr. 1942, col. 310.

³ *Labour*, Vol. 4, No. 8, Apr. 1942.

whole body of interested unions, will consider proposals and, if they have more than local implications, will communicate them to the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions or the Amalgamated Engineering Union.¹

Among the responsibilities of the trade union district production committees will be that of approving the nominations of trade union representatives to the workshop committees, issuing credentials, and negotiating with the employers. Their functions are exclusively confined to production problems.²

Amalgamated Engineering Union.

At a meeting of the Amalgamated Engineering Union on 15 June 1942 a 10-point production programme was adopted which, in addition to recommending that the Minister of Production should be given full powers to operate a single plan for the control of industry, and the regional boards full powers to organise and use productive resources in the region, urged that joint production committees should be established in every factory, with access to all material and data on production, and that the trade unions should have direct representation in all stages of State control, from the joint production committees in the workshops through the regional boards to the central planning authority.³

The adoption of this programme followed the completion of a special enquiry undertaken by the Union into the wartime organisation of the munitions industry in order to promote efficiency in production.⁴ Three outstanding conclusions drawn from the enquiry were the total absence in the group of trades covered by the Union of "social incentives to production"—such as any adequate recognition of the workers' contribution; the direct relationship between the wider political and military aspects of the war effort and the outlook of organised industrial workers—that the feeling that their products would be used in immediate and offensive military operations influences their work; and that total war effort rests upon the degree of confidence and co-operation established between workers and managements—that the real purpose of the machinery of joint consultation and co-operation beginning with the workshop committees and going up to the top

¹ *Ibid.*

² Sir Walter CITRINE: *The T. U. C. in Wartime*, June 1942.

³ *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 June 1942.

⁴ The report of the enquiry made during Feb.-Mar. 1942 into hold-ups in production in munition factories and shipyards, which was based on a sample comprising 740 establishments and 882,000 workers is largely confidential. A distinction was made between establishments which had and those which had not set up production committees at the time of the investigation. The results suggest that the setting up of production committees (in about one-quarter of the establishments covered) had led to better relations between the management and the workers and that the practice of joint consultation had tended to increase the interest of workers in their jobs and their sense of responsibility towards their duties. The enquiry was completed before the agreement to extend the system of production committees could be reflected in the returns but the union is now engaged in a further enquiry which is expected to show the practical effect of the setting up of joint production committees. (*The Economist*, 20 June 1942; *A.E.U. Monthly*, June 1942, pp. 145-6).

where continuous consultation and co-operation are established with Ministers and Government Departments responsible for production is to put first things first. If the success of Joint Consultative Committees rests upon the degree of confidence and co-operation, these in turn rest upon the actual practice of both parties in their day-by-day conduct of the war effort.

The Shop Steward Movement.

A recent article¹ describing the attitude of the shop stewards' committees to war production maintained that the agreements for joint consultative factory committees would be particularly welcomed by the shop stewards' committees in the engineering industry, which had campaigned continuously for such committees for more than a year. It was from the ranks of the aircraft shop stewards that the drive for increased production first began, and by degrees the shop stewards' movement came to demand regular production committees in order to secure improved production, but at this point the reception given to its proposals by the managements was mixed. Some managements agreed, and results good or indifferent, according to the quality of the committee, had been obtained. Other managements—and these had up till recently been the majority—while not refusing to discuss production questions with the shop stewards had refused to concede a separate production committee. Others again had refused to discuss questions of production with the stewards at all. Men were prone to look at new events through the distorting lenses of their past experience. Some managements could see nothing less in the demand for production committees than a revival of the attempt to encroach on "management functions" that had been resisted at the end of the last war.

Management Views

That many managements have also welcomed the setting up of production committees has been indicated in a number of articles published recently. This view is illustrated by a statement made by the managing director of a munitions factory in discussing the working of the production committee in his factory:

The setting up of Works Production Committees is good democratic planning . . . Soon we hope these Works Committees—these factory clearing centres—will be linked up to district clearing centres for production problems that are being set up under the new Ministry of Production. It is a very promising picture both for war and peace.²

¹ *The Times*, 4 May 1942.

² Bulletins from Britain, Number 102, 12 Aug. 1942.