

of Western Europe is a major barrier to knitting the free world into a smoothly working economic whole. As one observer put it, "when the American economy catches a cold, the European economy gets pneumonia." This is largely because Europe is so much weaker in productive strength.

No Shortage of Knowledge

Yet the knowledge which would enable the countries of Western Europe, and particularly Britain, to increase their industrial productivity has been mobilized and is readily available to them. It is with this process for Britain that Mr. Hutton's book is concerned. In the book he summarizes the findings and conclusions, virtually all of them unanimous, of 66 teams, composed of British industrial managers, technicians, shop workers and labor leaders. Over a period of three years these teams completed a comprehensive series of inspection and study trips in the United States under the sponsorship of the Anglo-American Council on Productivity. The product of that effort, he remarks, is "a set of documents the like of which, on such a scale and of such practical value, has never been seen in the history of international and cultural borrowing."

Psychology the Key

From study of these documents, Mr. Hutton concludes that better capital equipment is the key technical ingredient of higher industrial productivity in Britain, and constitutes "the most urgent . . . need of British industry." But he finds that *even without new capital equipment a "15% rise in productivity can still be achieved by reorganization of work," and that such an increase would "solve Britain's chief social and economic problems."*

Then why is not such an increase in productivity, demonstrated by the Anglo-American

productivity teams to be so clearly within technical grasp, promptly forthcoming? Mr. Hutton, quoting one of the team reports, remarks that, "the greatest obstacles to increased productivity are psychological rather than technical." We have to deal first and foremost with men, not machines." And *THE ECONOMIST*, pursuing the line of inquiry suggested, reaches the conclusion that, by and large, the people of Britain do not want to prosper by being more efficient. *THE ECONOMIST* says:

"The real secret of American productivity is that American society is imbued through and through with the desirability, the rightness, the morality of production. . . . But in Britain, if any moral feeling at all survives about economic matters, it is usually a vague suspicion that economic success is reprehensible and unworthy. From this difference in attitudes everything else follows."

"How," asks *THE ECONOMIST*, "shall we set about restoring some belief in the rightness of effort, the morality of success?" For this question it has no ready answer. Neither have we. We are confident that the British people will neither be cajoled nor coerced into trying to match our productivity. Basically the problem seems to be to demonstrate clearly to them the truth of the proposition, set down by Graham Hutton, that "there is no goal, aim or end before a Good Society which the raising of that society's material productivity cannot render easier of achievement." Doing that in an old and settled country like Britain is obviously an extremely formidable undertaking. But until it is done, the crucial job of getting Britain and the rest of Western Europe firmly on its economic feet will remain to torment all of us.

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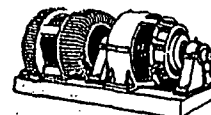
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