Comrade Preobrazhensky gives a report on the question of economic construction. He reports on the practical steps outlined by the commission for implementing the decree on universal labour-duty for restoration of our ruined economy. Above all, the commission faced questions of how to overcome the ruin, how to take stock of the workforce and where to recruit it, and what organs will head up our economic apparatus.

Labour-power: 1) its basis is the proletariat directly connected with the factories and plants; 2) the proletariat that has been driven from the city by famine and is now dispersed in the countryside – it must be mobilised; and 3) the unskilled worker-peasants, who must also be drawn into building economic life by way of mobilisation. The remainder consists of the petty bourgeoisie, deserters, and citizens who have been jailed, all of whom must be mobilised and compelled to work.

Finally, there is the yet-to-be-demobilised Red Army, which has still to complete its military task.

It is imperative to resort precisely to mobilisation, to compulsory recruitment of citizens into economically creative labour, and to take into account the current

truly exceptional moment – a tide resulting from plundering the organism of the entire people following the imperialist War.²

In order to implement this mobilisation, it is necessary, first of all, to think about supplying those who are mobilised with everything they require. Formation of a food-fund is far from solving the question of feeding all the mobilised citizens.

The commission concluded that it is not expedient to mobilise unskilled peasants, since that would result in such a colossal army, with such an enormous administrative apparatus, that Soviet Russia, with its presently ruined transportation, would not be able to supply it.

For that reason, the commission concluded that drawing peasants into labour should be done not through mobilisation, but by assigning one or another economic task.

The next issue is to raise labour-productivity. Here, there are two possibilities: on the one hand, the militarisation of labour and transferring the workers to barrack-conditions, on the other hand, the implementation of labour-discipline.

Here, there are two tendencies: 1) to adapt our entire economic apparatus and subordinate it to the military-economic apparatus, that is, the entire economic apparatus becomes infused with militarism; 2) or else the economic apparatus, with Sovnarkhoz³ and the trade-union at its head, subordinates the military-economic apparatus to itself. The commission takes the latter tendency as its starting point. We must adopt a military form of labour in implementing one or another economic task, that is, work out strict norms, functions and means of coordinating all possible economic institutions. We must place Sovnarkhoz at the head of our economic apparatus together with Sovprofsoyuz,⁴ and this means promoting conditions in which the statification of trade-unions continues and develops further, rather than having them return to their previous status. The militarisation of labour must be implemented in the sense of reconstructing our apparatus on a military footing, that is, so that every plan that is worked out is accomplished with the same persistence and speed as a military order.

Moreover, it is imperative to implement labour-discipline and personal responsibility through military-production courts, before which all workers and all economic and administrative institutions, from top to bottom, are equally accountable.

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² [The text says ‘волна как результат расхищения организма всего населения после империалистической войны’.]
³ [The Council of National Economy.]
⁴ [The Council of Trade-Unions.]