

**MOSELY INDUSTRIAL  
COMMISSION TO THE UNITED  
STATES OF AMERICA, OCT.-DEC.  
1902. REPOTS OF THE DELEGATES**

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**VARIOUS**

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# MOSELY INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

TO THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

OCT.—DEC., 1902.

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## Reports of the Delegates.

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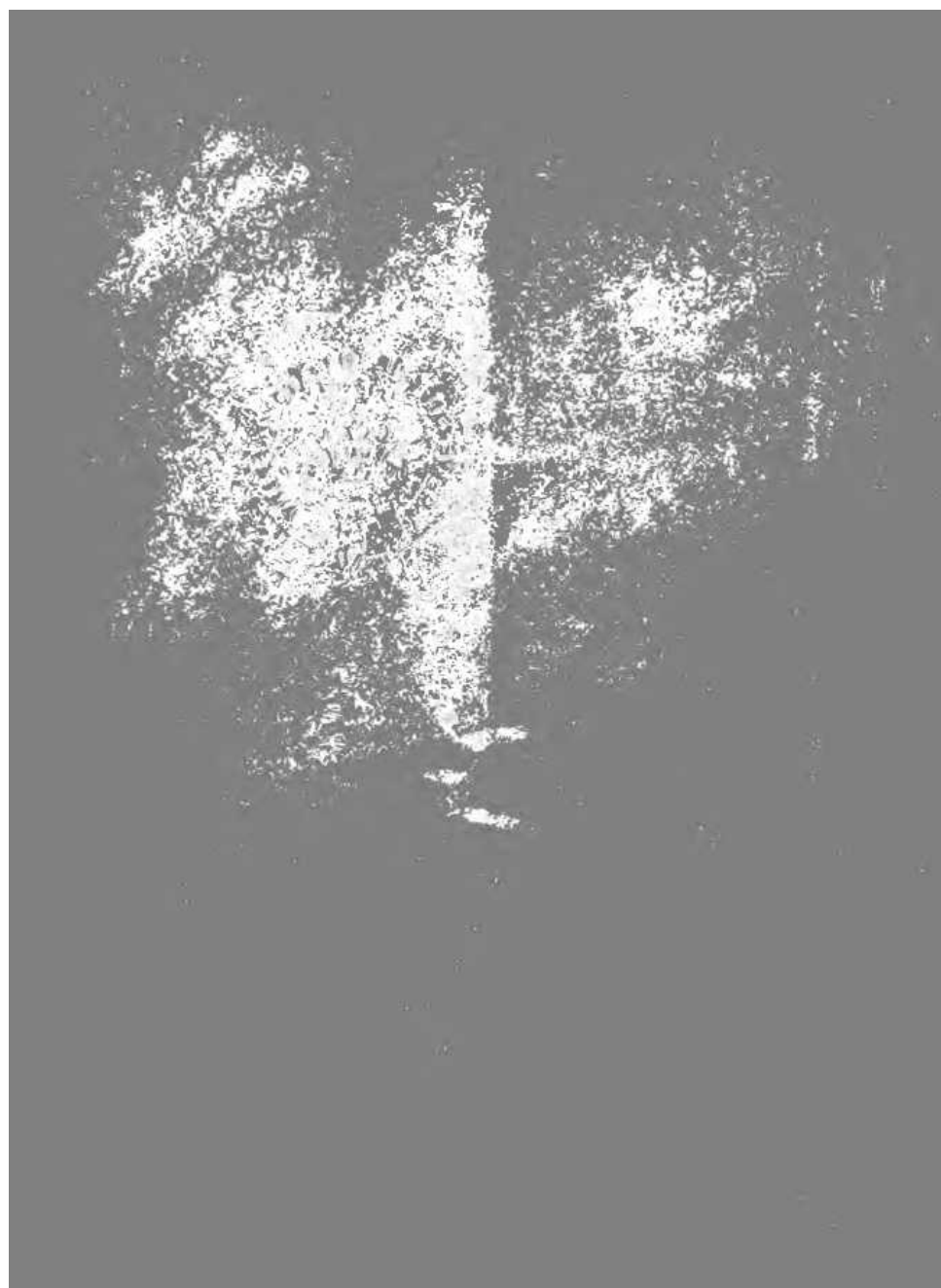
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# Mosely Industrial Commission

To the United States of America, Oct.-Dec., 1902.

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## HELP FROM THE BOARD OF TRADE.

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IN my travels round the world, and more particularly in the United States, it became abundantly evident to me that as a manufacturing country America is forging ahead at a pace hardly realised by either British employer or workman. I therefore came to the conclusion that it would be necessary for the workers themselves to have some insight into these developments, and I decided to invite the Secretaries of the Trades Unions representing the principal industries of the United Kingdom to accompany me on a tour of investigation of the Industrial situation across the Atlantic.

Through the courtesy of Sir Alfred Bateman, K.O.M.G., who expressed himself much interested in the idea, I obtained an interview with Mr. Gerald Balfour, the President of the Board of Trade. That gentleman not only assured me of his entire sympathy, but desired that his department should render me every assistance possible. To Mr. H. Llewellyn Smith (of the Board of Trade) I especially owe a deep debt of gratitude for his efforts in gaining me information and letters of introduction calculated to be of use to myself and the delegates. Mr. Burnett also rendered most valuable assistance in selecting the Unions to be invited, and with general advice—he being personally conversant with trades unions generally in this country; whilst Mr. Henry Fountain supplied me with a large amount of valuable information showing the advances made in late years by the industries of the United States, which has been utilised in the appendix printed at the end of the complete report of the Commission.

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## PREFACE.

As I was the originator of the Industrial Commission to the United States, British workmen and the public generally will desire to hear my personal views. Before giving these, however, it is both my duty and pleasure publicly to express my thanks to the American nation at large for their courtesy, hospitality, and readiness to throw open their factories to the inspection of my party, and to offer every possible facility to us to pursue our investigations. To the National Civic Federation of New York I especially wish to extend my thanks for help given in all directions, and for piloting my delegates throughout the United States; whilst the American Federation of Labour received their brother workers most cordially, and were ever ready to assist them as far as possible. Both masters and men in the States were lavish in the hospitality showered on us, even to an extent that perhaps may have interfered somewhat with our investigations. It was, however, always clearly understood that any one of the party who preferred to go on with his work, instead of sight-seeing, was welcome to do so. Few, however, availed themselves of the opportunity, though some were exceedingly studious and evidently bent more on work than pleasure. Every delegate was given full opportunity of going to any



centre he wished, to investigate his special industry without hindrance as to time or expense and no dates were arbitrarily fixed by me for the return of any of the party to England. I desired that they should investigate fully and take their own time.

The delegates left England towards the end of October (1902), half of them going to Canada first. The others, after making a short stay in New York, proceeded with me by special Pullman car to join the rest of the party, in order that all might have an opportunity of visiting the wonders of Niagara.

The task of assimilating so large a problem, with representatives of so many diverse trades accompanying the Commission, and in so short a space of time, was naturally difficult; especially when it covered so vast an amount of ground as indicated by the list of questions which were handed to the delegates and which they were asked to answer; my own summing up, therefore, must necessarily be somewhat crude. The delegates themselves have been asked to write their reports in their own way; and though it has been found necessary, from considerations of space, to omit or curtail the descriptions of scenery, notes of travel, etc., which some of them gave, their opinions on points concerning their own industries have in every case been preserved untouched, and each of the reports in its final form, as printed, has been passed and approved by its writer. No pressure having been brought to bear upon them in the formation of their opinions, the papers should be doubly welcome to their own special societies, being their own impressions, unrestrained by any outside influence whatever. Reports were received from all but Mr. Macdonald. The few remarks I myself now offer are made simply in the capacity of an ordinary business man, who has spent some little time in the study of economic questions from a practical standpoint. My personal conclusion is that the true-born American is a better educated, better housed, better fed, better clothed, and more energetic man than his British brother, and infinitely more sober; as a natural consequence, he is more capable of using his brains as well as his hands. Many of the men, however, holding leading positions are either English or Scotch, and the American himself is justly proud of his British descent.

One of the principal reasons why the American workman is better than the Britisher is that he has received a sounder and better education, whereby he has been more thoroughly fitted for the struggles of after life; and I believe all my delegates were themselves immensely impressed with the generally high standard of education in the United States—a standard it would be well for our own nation to copy as far as practicable.

In my previous trips to America I had been forcibly struck by the up-to-date methods of production there, both from a business standpoint and as regards the equipment of their workshops. The manufacturers there do not hesitate to put in the very latest machinery at whatever cost, and from time to time to sacrifice large sums by scrapping the old whenever improvements are brought out. One man in charge of a large department said to me: "One of the reasons of our success is the readiness of all our men to drop existing modes of production as soon as it is demonstrated that there is something better." Labour-saving machinery is widely used everywhere and is encouraged by the unions and welcomed by the men, because experience has shown them that in reality machinery is their best friend. It saves the workman enormous manual exertion, raises his wages, tends towards a higher standard of life, and, further, rather creates work than reduces the number of hands employed. If there is one lesson that in my opinion has been amply demonstrated to the delegates on this Commission, it is this fact as to machinery—not, of course, that I think they themselves have ever opposed it (as that day is happily fast passing away amongst intelligent men), but they must have been pleased to see such positive proof of what they have been for long past trying to impress on the rank and file in their respective unions.

My own observations lead me to believe that the average American manufacturer runs his machinery at a much higher speed than is the usual practice in England—in other words, for “all it is worth,” and the men ably second the employers' efforts in this direction. Do the workmen as a body do the same here? I think the answer must be in the negative. Why, then, is it that the systems are so different? In England it has been the rule for generations past that as soon as a man earns beyond a certain amount of wages, the price for his work is cut down; and he, finding that working harder or running his machine quicker (naturally a greater strain) brings in the long run no larger reward, slackens his efforts accordingly. If this be the case, can we blame the workman? Let the employer look at the matter fairly, and put himself in the man's place, and say whether he might not be inclined to act in the same way. In the United States a different system prevails, and the manufacturers rather welcome large earnings by the men so long as they themselves can make a profit, arguing that each man occupies so much space in the factory, which represents so much capital employed, and therefore that the greater the production of these men the greater must be the manufacturer's profit, a proposition more abundantly evident when it is remembered that the standing charges in any factory (always a heavy item) are practically the same whether the production per unit be large or small. I am convinced that British manufacturers, if they are to obtain the best efforts from their workmen, must come to an understanding with the Unions as to a fair piece price, from which there shall be no “cutting” when the men earn large wages. Such a system, I feel sure, is necessary if workmen are to be encouraged to use their best efforts and to look at the question broadly; such is only human nature. Machinery must be run at its highest speed, whilst the workers must feel that they are reaping the fruits of their labour, and that the fruits are secure not only for the present, but in the future. In many trades, a joint committee of employers and employes meet periodically to settle rates for piecework by mutual consent, and if such an arrangement were adopted all round, I am sure it would be found beneficial; and this is what is practically done in all American industries.

Of course the true solution of the whole problem is profit-sharing in some shape or form, and it is towards this goal that I feel both masters and men alike should turn their eyes. It is a difficult problem, but one that I am convinced can be solved in time. Capital and Labour are partners, and they must work as such. One could talk indefinitely on this subject, but space does not permit. However, as I have said, herein lies true industrial peace and prosperity. The Carnegie Steel Works are already commencing to put this into practice, whilst it is not unknown in this country, and I believe shows excellent results.

The United States is advancing by leaps and bounds. She is beginning to feel the beneficial effects of the education of her masses, and an enormous territory teeming with natural resources as yet but meagrely developed. In the latter respect she has been more than blessed, and her natural advantages are bound to make her not only the leading manufacturing country of the world (a position she may already be said to have attained), but must place her in the same position relatively that England herself occupied some fifty years ago. It is more than necessary that both Capital and Labour should bear this point well in mind. At the present time the home market of the United States is so fully occupied with its own developments that the export trade has as yet been comparatively little thought of; but as time goes on and the numerous factories that are being erected all over the country come into full bearing, America is bound to become the keenest of competitors in the markets of the world. That already she has her eye on the export trade is plain to every one except the wilfully blind; but at present she is only getting ready. The acquisition of so large a proportion of the Atlantic carrying trade is in itself an object lesson. When America wishes

to export goods she intends to dictate freights, which she could not do if she had no mercantile marine of her own. The profits of the shipping business are to her quite a secondary consideration at present, compared with the ability to rule freights when it suits her to do so. It must be remembered that the American manufacturer and financier looks well ahead, and is prepared to make large present sacrifices for the sake of future gain.

A cutting from an American paper has been sent to me, in regard to the system of payment of workmen by results. I give it for what it is worth, and do not vouch for its accuracy; but it is a powerful illustration of the difference a little extra production will make both the profit of the manufacturer and the wages of the men. It is from an article in a recent number of the *Contemporary*, by Major C. C. Townsend. At a certain great steel works not far from New York, he says, the men are paid by results, and if these results are above the normal, the pay rises abnormally. "The usual number of pourings obtainable from a furnace in each run is eleven, but by the closest attention to every detail, by incessant and scientific stoking and work of every kind, it is occasionally possible to obtain twelve pourings. The wages earned by the men at the furnace when eleven pourings are obtained are 40 dollars, but if twelve pourings are obtained they are 80 dollars." Such a system is the key-note of American success. I am not sure how far my delegates have realised that it is in the extra speed at which machinery is run, the high specialisation of work whereby each man becomes an expert in his particular branch, which in itself means efficiency and an increased output, the economy of hands in attending machines, and the excellent organisation of the factories whereby the smallest item of time and labour are saved, that make all the difference between large profits and none, and a high rate of wages for the men as against the comparatively low standard known in this country.

How is it that the American manufacturer can afford to pay wages 50 per cent, 100 per cent, and even more in some instances, above ours, and yet be able to compete successfully in the markets of the world? The answer is to be found in small economies such as mentioned above, which escape the ordinary eye. The instance given, of normal wages being doubled for one extra pouring in a certain steel works beyond the usual eleven, is an illustration. The men earned twice the amount, and the manufacturer also makes a profit. In reality the twelfth pouring costs him nothing except the bare price of the raw materials; and the same is true in all industries and under all conditions.

That the American workman earns higher wages is beyond question. As a consequence, the average married man owns the house he lives in, which not only gives him a stake in the country, but saves payment of rent, enabling him either to increase his savings or to purchase further comforts.

Food is as cheap (if not cheaper) in the United States as in England, whilst general necessaries may, I think, be put on the same level. Rent, clothes made to order, and a variety of things, including all luxuries, are considerably dearer. Luxuries, however, do not enter very much into the every day consumption of the average working man in this country, and if in the United States he can get them at all (even though he have to pay a high price for them) that is surely an advantage by comparison.

The American workman drinks but little, and his house is usually well furnished and fitted with luxuries in the way of bathrooms, laundries, hot water and heating systems, and other items mostly unknown to the British workman.

One of the points the delegates were invited to investigate was whether or not the workman in the United States "wears out" faster than the Englishman. Personally, I think not. It is generally admitted that the American workman, in consequence of labour saving machines and the excellence of the factory organisation, does not need to put forth any greater effort in his