

WELFARE WORK BY CORPORATIONS

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By
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WELFARE WORK BY CORPORATIONS

What the term "welfare work" means.

A common salutation among busy men is, "Well, how goes it?" The interest expressed by the neighbor finds its way into the industrial community and into our terminology of to-day through the verbal vehicle—"welfare work"—applied to organized thought and effort for the "well-faring," or "good going" in industry. Synonymous with welfare, technically, one reads "happiness," "prosperity," and Americans in seeking for a word or phrase that should aptly define in English what the Germans long ago called "*wohlfahrtseinrichtungen*," interchange "industrial betterment," "betterment work," or "welfare work." At a national conference a few years ago it was defined as "that sort of human interest which tends to promote industrial efficiency."

One man, mistaking the term for the charity which is almsgiving, says, "I don't believe in your welfare work; give me my wages, and I will look

after my own welfare." Just a misunderstanding of the word that is. Say to him, "We both tread this road, let's make it better"; his response is ready, "Sure, I'm with you." Welfare then takes on a different color; it's "good going" and "together."

Another manufacturer says, "Oh, this welfare work, I haven't any patience with it—just 'pink teas and frills.'" But he will show you through his factory, pointing out with pride the ventilating systems and the plans for distributing drinking water, and the sanitary workrooms, and while we exclaim, "But you are doing welfare work!" he deprecates the term and says, "Why, this is just common sense."

So it goes with the name which to many is a misnomer, but to the social student is OPPORTUNITY in letters of gold.

For the purposes of this article, we shall dignify the term by using its fullest familiar sound not as a dress, but as a vehicle; not as a furbelow, but as a field, and we shall with cheerful optimism ask of the unwritten records of the men and women of the corporations at work, "How goes it?"

German colony housing.

The origin of different activities or institutions affecting the working and social environment of men and women who earn their livelihood in factories, workshops, mines, or railroads is in Europe. Twenty

or more years ago the great steel works of Frederick Krupp & Company, at Essen, Germany, afforded conspicuous examples of many phases of welfare work.

The men of this family maintained close personal relations with their workmen and co-operated fully in the work of building the thirteen colonies which, in 1902, were incorporated in one body.

One of the fundamental principles upon which the Krupps worked was that charity—as contributions—merely increased dependence, carelessness, and incompetence, but mutual helpfulness was a divine obligation.

The employer there is landlord, and it is said that leaders among the workmen support the theory of the Krupp colony management that it is not advisable for the workmen to own their homes, that a single ownership by the firm, which is satisfied with a two-per-cent. earning on its investment, gives the landed proprietor the power to enforce rules of order and cleanliness, promote educational work, and keep out undesirable elements. At Altenhof, the newest colony, one hundred and sixty cottages, and twenty-four two-roomed apartments for widows, supply free homes for invalid and disabled workmen.

One colony consists of six-family apartment houses, another has five hundred houses arranged to accommodate one, two, or six families, and Friedrichshof is beautiful with but two hundred single-family cottages of three to five rooms. Un-

married workmen are housed in a four-story brick barracks, with a capacity of eighteen hundred, residence being compulsory unless the young man is with near relatives. There are also, for the better paid workmen, two bachelor homes, where the boarders choose the manager from their group and share costs, and in the town of Essen the Krupps own many houses, which are let to groups of unmarried workmen, all under central supervision.

The well-equipped public schools are supplemented by a private school, free to workmen's children. Stress is laid on the industrial training of girls, and the housekeeping school of the Krupps is a notable success. It costs the firm about five thousand dollars a year, which is considered a good investment, in the preparation of the girls to manage homes so well as to conduce toward making efficient and contented workmen.

There is a casino and a gymnasium, supply stores, and a hospital, eating-houses and bathhouses, small library, study-rooms, apprenticeship plans—more or less compulsory—and workmen's insurance, pensions, and savings institutions, doctors, and nurses. Toward many of these things slight fees are required from the employees, and the insurance plan is now an enlargement upon the government compulsory system, by means of which all three interested contribute, *i. e.*, the employee, the employer, and the State.

In a labor-bulletin report on this firm some years ago this statement is found: "As regards the effect

of the expense entailed upon the firm by its various social enterprises, the firm is emphatic in its statement that it has been more than repaid by the better class of working men which they have been able to obtain and retain, and the absence of friction between the management and its personnel." This is testimony valuable and to the point.

The experiment in Budapest.

The institutions of the Royal Hungarian Machine Factory of the State Railroad, Budapest, are many and varied. A workmen's colony was started in 1869, adjacent to the machine factory, consisting of both one and two-story dwelling-houses with from six to eight family apartments in each. An inn with a workmen's dining-room is centrally located, and meals may be brought in or sent by relatives. Small portable ranges are provided for the purpose of warming food as well as serving to heat the room. An orchestrion, driven by electricity, furnishes music, and a stage is ready for speech-making or amateur entertainments. A singing club or choral society is maintained by the factory free of expense—space and all necessaries being furnished. There are two gardens with skittle-alleys and a roofed hall.

A reading-room with library is maintained at the expense of the factory, a kindergarten is open for the children of the work people, and a special Apprentices' Technical School.

The factory has a well-equipped consulting room, with surgeons and a medical assistant in attendance. To avoid the spreading of skin diseases or other infections, a patented disinfection apparatus is at disposal for cleaning and disinfecting machinists' clothes. A sanitarium, capable of housing one hundred patients, was built in 1908 for the care of all tubercular or bronchial cases that might occur among their workmen.

Suction devices are employed for removing smoke and gases, dust from grinding machines, and other impurities from the air in the workshops.

During the summer months soda-water is distributed free of charge, manufactured at the plant, and in wintertime or on night shifts tea is supplied at cost price—four hellers a cup. (Five hellers equals one penny.)

The fire-brigade is maintained and trained by the factory, all the members are workmen, and special recompense is given them.

Workmen in service three years, who have reached the age of thirty-two, can claim an eight-day vacation every year, experts receiving full pay and day-laborers sixty per cent. At Christmas, festivities are always arranged for the children, and clothing and presents given them as a factory expense.

The company provides a pension fund to workmen permanently disabled who are of good conduct and have done good service, and an accident fund provides for workmen disabled by accidents.