

II. SHORTER HOURS THE ONLY POSSIBLE PROTECTION

This needed protection to women can be afforded only through shortening the hours of labor. A decrease of the intensity of exertion is not feasible.

Report of the United States Industrial Commission, 1901.

It is certain that any programme for reducing this intensity of exertion must fail. The entire tendency of industry is in the direction of an increased exertion. Any restrictions on output must work to the disadvantage of American industry, and the employers are often right in their demand, usually successful, that such restrictions be abandoned. This being true, there is but one alternative if the working population is to be protected in its health and trade longevity, namely, a reduction of the hours of labor. (Page 763.)

Industrial Conference . . . of the National Civic Federation. New York, 1902.

The factory system makes this (shortening hours) more and more necessary in proportion as it is perfected in its mechanism. It becomes all the time more and more exacting. The greater the perfection of the machinery or the method, the more attention is required. . . . (Page 173.)

And whatever is necessary to make the most of the machinery is important to the successful conduct of the industry. If that makes the laborers tired, then, so far as the employer is concerned, they must be tired; if it calls for too much strenuous attention, too much nerve exhaustion, then the nerve exhaustion must come or the machinery is a failure. The remedy for this cannot be found in slackening up on the demands for economic output and effectiveness in the machinery. . . . The remedy for that must come on the other side, shortening the day, not slackening the effort. The tension may not be lessened, but the hours may be reduced. The exhaustion on the laborer must be avoided, but it cannot be avoided by reducing production . . . they (employers) find that modern business is more exacting than ever and . . . that to slacken is to fail. Consequently they find that long vacations are necessary to avoid physical exhaustion. But long vacations are impossible for laborers . . . they must have relief by lessening the duration of the pressure every day. (Page 174.)

III. THE GENERAL BENEFITS OF SHORT HOURS

History, which has illustrated the deterioration due to long hours, bears witness no less clearly to the regeneration due to the shorter working day. To the individual and to society alike, shorter hours have been a benefit wherever introduced. The married and unmarried working woman is enabled to obtain the decencies of life outside of working hours. With the improvement in home life, the tone of the entire community is raised. Wherever sufficient time has elapsed since the establishment of the shorter working day, the succeeding generation has shown extraordinary improvement in physique and morals.

A. Good Effect on the Individual Health, Home Life, etc.

Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1871.

Their hours of labor should not exceed ten hours per day, for, as we have seen, 85 + per cent of the working girls of Boston do their own housework and sewing either wholly or in part, and this homework must be done in addition to that performed for their employers. (Page 558.)

Report of the British Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1877.

Ten years ago, when I made the first effort to introduce the Factory Acts in London, I was frequently met with the statement on the part of employers that the tendency of the Act would be to encourage prostitution, because by giving the women an enforced leisure they would be exposed to additional temptation. I was loath to believe any such theory, and I am glad to say that, so far as my experience during the last ten years goes, the fears thus expressed have never been realized. There has been quite a revolution during that period in the conditions on which seamstress work is carried on in the metropolis. The employment of them in workshops and fac-

ories has increased enormously, but I can find no employer willing to commit himself to the opinion that in their respective classes there has been any deterioration in the character and the conduct of the workpeople. All the evidence indeed which I have obtained goes to establish the contrary. (Page 14.)

Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1900.

The wife's life is darkened even more by the long-hour day, especially if she also be a working woman. Even if the day be one of only ten hours, she must arise as early as five o'clock to prepare breakfast for her husband and herself, so that they may be at their work places at seven. Beginning at that early hour her day will be a very long one. (Page 69.)

The Working Hours of Female Factory Hands. From reports of the Factory Inspectors collated by the Imperial Home Office. Berlin, 1905.

The inspector for Upper Bavaria dwells upon the advantage accruing to the health of working-girls as follows:

"In the matter of health the shortening of the working hours is of unusual value, because for them free time is not resting time, as it is for a man. For the working-girl on her return from the factory there is a variety of work waiting. She has her room to keep clean and in order, her laundry work to do, clothes to repair and clean, and, besides this, she should be learning to keep house if her future household is not to be disorderly and a failure." (Page 111.)

Many inspectors urge the need of shortening the hours of labor on grounds of morality. From Offenbach it is reported: "The period before marriage is the time for learning the future profession, but during this period the factory worker is exposed to strain and fatigue, which hinder her bodily development and deprive her of educational opportunity. Desirable, therefore, would be a reduction of the working hours which should give to married women more time for their housework and family life, and to the younger unmarried women the opportunity to learn the art of home-making, because upon this the health, welfare, and prosperity of her whole family will depend." (Page 113.)

B. Good Effect on the General Welfare

Report of the British Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1859.

"I think I can show that the Factory Acts have put an end to the premature decrepitude of the former long-hour workers; that they have enlarged their social and intellectual privileges; that by making them masters of their own time they have given them a moral energy which is directing them to the eventual possession of political power; and that they have lifted them up high in the scale of rational beings, compared with that which they had attained in 1833. Moreover, I think I can further prove that all this has been accomplished without any prejudice whatever to our commercial prosperity. . . .

There is no need to raise again to public view the crooked and attenuated creatures of that bygone period. . . . The "factory leg" and the "curved spine" were a proverb and a reproach. . . .

How happily then may we turn to the contemplation of it in 1859! The proverb has died a natural death, and the reproach is all but taken away. There is scarcely now to be seen in any of the manufacturing districts a crooked leg or a distorted spine as the result of factory labor. . . .

The physical condition of the future mothers of the working classes may be challenged to meet that of any mothers of any country." (Page 47.)

Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, 1873.
ON RESULTS OF TEN-HOUR LABOR LAW IN ENGLAND.

Lord Ashley said: Upon the good moral and social influence of the change, the testimony is most favorable from the clergymen and school teachers throughout Yorkshire and Lancaster. How have the women used their time? Hundreds of them are attending evening school, — learning to read and write and to knit and sew, things that they could not have learned under the twelve-hour system.

A burial society testifies to the diminution of burial although the cholera was upon the town, and that the diminution was among children under five years of age, and he assumes as a reason that mothers can get home earlier and give that attention to children which no hired nurse can ensure.

The Catholic priests at Stockport and Bolton testify that the number of factory workers attending schools has more than doubled,

and that there was not the slightest doubt that the moral, social, and physical condition of the people had improved. (Page 491.)

Report of the New Jersey Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Industry, 1886.

The Factory Acts were believed to be the death-blow to English manufactures, and they have made labor more efficient, more intelligent, more decent, and more continuous without trenching on profits.

In 1851 and 1852 those who advocated that ten hours should be a legal day's work were denounced as demagogues, and the ten-hour plan as a humbug which could only tend to reduce the wages proportionately, while all kinds of evil results were sure to follow its application, especially to agricultural labor. But we have seen ten hours become the rule; wages have not fallen, and many of those who prophesied disaster are now as loud in their praises of its beneficence as the friends of the change. (Page 231.)

Report of the Massachusetts Chief of the District Police, 1889.

The good results of shortening the hours of labor were soon apparent, in the substantial disappearance of discontent among those affected thereby; in the maintenance of the standard of factory productions, both as to quantity and quality; and in placing Massachusetts in the lead, where, by her history and her aspirations, she rightfully belonged.

. . . If experience has shown anything in this matter, it has been the wisdom and statesmanship of the body of laws in our Public Statutes and additions thereto, which are known as industrial legislation. It is sixteen years since the ten-hour law was enacted; and it is entirely safe to say that, if it were stricken from the statutes to-day, not an influential voice would be raised within our borders in favor of the restoration of the order of things which that law changed. The increase of public interest in matters of this kind is a very significant fact. (Page 7.)

Report of the Illinois Chief Inspector of Factories, 1895.

In England the principle of the regulation of the hours of work of women and children has been established for more than a generation; and the regeneration of the working class in that country, from the

degradation in which it was sunk in 1844, is attributed to the Factory Acts, and especially to this essential feature of them. (Page 5.)

French Review of Hygiene and Sanitary Police. Vol. XVIII. 1896.

All the world knows well that there is much to do, and that, if our legislation has already bettered conditions, new ameliorations are desirable, but they will come, I think, only through the pressure of public opinion, . . . which will become exacting . . . when doctors have made clear the utility of a protection which regards not only the woman, but, secondarily, the child to be born by her; when it knows better that to protect the mother is an absolute necessity for the future of the race. (Page 193.)

Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1900.

But the good accomplished by each successive factory law was so clearly apparent, that even capitalistic Parliament could not refuse to continue the policy of labor protection. The evidence that this policy wrought a revolutionary change in the amount of crime, pauperism, and misery is superabundant; but it is too familiar to warrant repetition now. (Page 49.)

The best evidence of the overwhelming success of the short-hour law from all points of view is afforded by the complete conversion of its opponents. Thus it came to pass that in 1860, when a bill was introduced to extend the ten-hour law to other branches of the textile industry, J. A. Roebuck, who had originally opposed with bitterness this kind of legislation, made the following recantation:

"I am about to speak on this question under somewhat peculiar circumstances. Very early in my parliamentary career Lord Ashley, now the Earl of Shaftesbury, introduced a bill of this description. I, being an ardent political economist, as I am now, opposed the measure, . . . and was very much influenced in my opposition by what the gentlemen of Lancashire said. They declared that it was the last half-hour of the work performed by their operatives which made all their profits, and that if we took away that last half-hour we should ruin the manufacturers of England. I listened to that statement and trembled for the manufacturers of England [a laugh]; but Lord Ashley persevered. Parliament passed the bill which he brought in. From that time down to the present the factories of this country have been under State control, and I appeal to this House whether the manufacturers of England have suffered by this legislation."

Sir James Graham, another persistent antagonist of the short-hour laws, followed Mr. Roebuck with a similar recantation:

"I am sorry once more to be involved in a short-time discussion. I have, however, a confession to make to the House. . . . Experience has shown to my satisfaction that many of the predictions formerly made against the factory bill have not been verified by the result, as, on the whole, that great measure of relief for women and children has contributed to the well-being and comfort of the working classes, while it has not injured their masters. The enactment of the present bill ought to approach as nearly as possible the Factory Act. . . . By the vote I shall give to-night, I will endeavor to make some amends for the course I pursued in earlier life in opposing the factory bill." (Page 51.)

All travellers unite in testifying to the wonderful energy displayed in their work by the wage-earners of Australia. Such energy is a product not so much of the stimulating climate as the high standard of comfort made possible by the short working-day. Considerable evidence might be adduced in support of the following enthusiastic opinion of John Rae ("Eight Hours for Work," page 312).

The more we examine the subject the more irresistibly is the impression borne in from all sides that there is growing up in Australia, and very largely in consequence of the eight-hour day, a working class, who, for general morale, intelligence, and industrial efficiency is probably already superior to that of any other branch of our Anglo-Saxon race, and for happiness, cheerfulness, and all-around comfort of life has never had its equal in the world before. (Page 59.)

Report of the United States Industrial Commission, 1901.

Lessening of hours leaves more opportunity and more vigor for the betterment of character, the improvement of the home. . . . For these reasons the short work-day for working people brings an advantage to the entire community. (Page 773.)

Night-work of Women in Industry. PROF. ETIENNE BAUER. *Jena, 1903.*

Above all, there is perceptible in all the countries in which women are protected, a reduction in the mortality both of women and of children.

For England the convincing argument on this point has often been produced. There, since the establishment of the normal working

day the mortality figures for working-women have fallen much lower than those for men. This proportion was as follows: 1841-1850, 23.11 per cent for men, 21.58 per cent for women. From 1881-1890, 20.22 per cent for men, 18.01 per cent for women.

The diminution in the two figures taken together is to be attributed to the great advance in hygiene achieved in the interval, and the relatively greater decrease in the mortality of women is to be attributed to the protective legislation. (Page 37.)

Report of the Wisconsin Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1903-1904.

No private individual has any more moral right to exhaust the working energy and working capital of a nation without giving "value received" than he has to take the life of an employee outright. The only difference is that one is a slower criminal process than the other. It is not enough that workmen should obtain barely enough for their labor to enable them to live, but they should receive a competency. They should receive as much energy from their employers in food, clothing, homes, and furnishings amid healthful surroundings as they give to their employers in the articles they produce.

The stronger, healthier, and more intelligent a laborer is, the more wealth he represents. The laborers of a nation represent its working capital just as the hands of the farmer, his horse, or his ox represent his working capital. And the stronger and healthier either may be, the more capital it represents. The more efficient this capital becomes, the more wealth will be produced. Machinery operators represent the working capital of the manufacturer, and he owes it to the nation which protects him in his business to do everything in his power to increase this working capital and keep it in the highest possible state of efficiency. (Page 129.)

The regulation of factories either by law or by special agreement worked marvellous changes in England. In the course of half a century the "sweated" laborers of this great country whose course of life seemed almost run became energetic, self-reliant, intelligent, and efficient workers, owning their own homes, amid wholesome surroundings, and working a reasonable number of hours for a day's work.

Not only is factory legislation sound in principle, but wherever put to the test it has been found sound in practice as well. (Page 137.)

History of Factory Legislation. HUTCHINS and HARRISON.

In 1861 the president of the Economic Section of the British Association could say in his address that the results of that bill (ten-hours bill) were "something of which all parties might well be proud. There is in truth a general assent that if there has been one change which more than another has strengthened and consolidated the social fabric in this part of the island, has cleared away a mass of depravity and discontent, has placed the manufacturing enterprise of the country on a safe basis, and has conferred upon us resources against the effects of foreign competition which can scarcely be overvalued, it is precisely the changes which have been brought about by the sagacious and persevering and successful efforts to establish in manufacturing occupations a sound system of legal interference with the hours of labor. (Page 122.)

The Case for the Factory Acts. Edited by MRS. SIDNEY WEBB.

The two great industries which, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were conspicuous for the worst horrors of sweating were the textile manufactures and coal-mining. Between 1830 and 1850 the parliamentary inquiries into these trades disclosed sickening details of starvation wages, incredibly long hours, and conditions of work degrading to decency and health. The remedy applied was the substitution, for individual bargaining between employer and operative, of a compulsory minimum set forth in common rules prescribing standard conditions of employment.

. . . What was the result? Fortunately, there is no dispute. Every one who knows these great industries agrees in declaring that the horrors which used to prevail under individual bargaining have been brought to an end. The terms "cotton-operative" and "coal-miner," instead of denoting typically degraded workers, as they did in 1830, are now used to designate the very aristocracy of our labor. And when, to-day, those who are interested in the industrial progress of women need an example of a free and self-reliant class of female wage-earners, earning full subsistence, enjoying adequate leisure, and capable of effective organization, they are compelled to turn to the great body of Lancashire cotton-weavers, now for half a century "restricted" in every feature of their contract. (Page 36.)