

general condition of labour are such as to cause great wear and tear on body or mind or both and to lead to a low standard of living.

While it is proven that, under the short hours system, men work harder while they are at work than they do under the long hours system, it is then true that short hours and hard work impose less strain on the body than the long hours and dawdling, especially if the ten hours are passed in a hot or dusty or poisoned atmosphere such as many trades are obliged to work in. Then the increased exertion during working hours has always been balanced and more than balanced by the restorative effects of a longer period of repose or recreation in good air. While the men do as good a day's work as they did before, they improve in health and vigour, and such is corroborated by managers and over-lookers of some large institutions. There is more happiness in common, and in most cases the change is cited as an example which brought the change in conditions of modern times.

We must consider that human labour is not a marketable commodity like a bale of cotton or a ton of pig iron, though it is often treated as such. Fortunately on all sides we are rapidly awakening to a recognition of this fact. Far too many masters in all departments of trade and commerce fail to give sufficient thought to this most important subject.

They seem to forget that their employees are not mere machines but sentient human beings, with hopes and fears, aspirations and all the attributes which are common to mankind.

When a man is put at a machine, he should not be regarded by his employers as a part of it, but the human nature and the aspirations of a man should still be recognized. It is rightly claimed that the shortening of hours would lead to improvements, mental and physical. Any reform by which such change or improvement is effected, relating to some millions of human beings in this country alone, is not to be lightly put on one side or trifled with. If effected and if even a partial accomplishment of the end in view can be attained, the raising of such a considerable portion of the community must be of the highest benefit to the nation as a whole. If one rich man spends \$1,000 dollars in luxuries, the purchase of these probably does not assist the trades that confer most benefits, but on the other hand, if we have 1,000 workers, each spending \$1 it is more than probable that the turnover of the latter would stimulate trade of a nature that is most lasting and certain, and by so doing the community at large would derive large benefits from it. Objections of all sorts

have been made and are still made against short hours, and one of them is if you give more time to men you will give them more time to spend their money. What are the reasons for such objections? I hope we are not willing to regard ourselves as inferior to other nations. Then where are the figures, where are the statistics, to prove that if you give more ease to a man he will ill-use it? It is known that our working classes have intelligence enough, instead of spending their money in the manner stated, to be temperate and—many are teetotallers—and so to make conditions better, as regards themselves, their wives, families and homes.

Let us look ten years back and compare the conditions then and to-day. Are the army of workers in a less fit position to exercise their right to-day than they were then? The worker is now in a better position, he earns more money and works shorter hours. He can buy the commodities of life. He can live in a better ventilated house and in better surroundings. He can have more pure air, he can cultivate his mind, he can teach his family that rightful ambition is not forbidden but is permitted by the natural course of events. He can build his own home and have more comfort and become an honoured citizen. But it may be said: 'As long as the working men have attained all these things, we do not see any reasons to bring this question for discussion here in the House for they have attained all this by natural means.' But this has been the fruit of short hours and better wages, and the large masses who are looking for, and hoping to receive the same treatment as their fellow-workers are demanding a restriction of hours. Any one who has travelled over Canada and who has taken the trouble to observe conditions, has really seen that shorter hours are inevitable sooner or later; it has to come through the constant pressure from those directly interested by their labour and those directly interested by their profits.

The same people are demanding shorter hours demanded a Department of Labour, a fair-wage schedule, abolition of the sweating system, abolition of child labour, better protection in manufacture, better sanitary conditions, technical education, investigation of labour trouble, and so many other things—the same people that are accused constantly of working against the prosperity of the country.

It is proved also that shorter hours will give more time to men to make plans for their own improvement. If they had more leisure they in this country would do the same as in other countries—the time would be well spent. We would see more people in libraries and reading rooms.

If we are justified in expecting the gift