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LABOR IN FACTORIES.

The development of the factory system of Canada, under the National Policy, forces the Legislature to enquire into the conditions under which factory labor is carried on. Then will come factory Acts, such as exist in other and older countries. Last session of the Legislature, the Ottawa Government introduced a factory bill; but either on account of its imperfection or the want of time to pass it, the bill was dropped. It would seem as if the Government wanted further information on which to base a factory Act; for, during the recess, additional inquiries were made into the working of factory laws in the United States. Mr. A. H. Blakeby was sent as commissioner to Massachusetts, for this purpose, and his report is now before us.

In Massachusetts, the question of factory labor is mixed up with the education of children. No child under ten years of age may be employed in a factory there, under a penalty which is to go to the public schools. No child under fourteen years of age can be so employed, except during school vacation, unless in the preceding year it has for twelve weeks attended some school, public or private. In these provisions, the education rather than the health or physical welfare of the child seems to have been uppermost in the mind of the legislators. Other provisions are conceived in the same spirit. To some extent both objects are attained. But that greater care is bestowed on the education than the physical well-being of the child is clear from the provision which permits a child over fourteen years of age to be employed in a factory during school vacation. The theory of school vacation is that children and teachers require intervals of repose; but the factory Act makes it possible to deprive children of any portion of the holidays, which, as attendants at school, they are supposed to earn. The object of the law is to secure to every child employed in a factory a certain amount of education in every year. Two methods of providing this education have been tried: one of which prescribes school attendance a stated number of weeks in the year; the other combines work with tuition, and divides the time equally between study and work. The half-time plan does not seem to work well; for children jaded by either occupation are in no condition to take up the other with advantage. Mr. Blakeby is probably right in considering that, of the different plans, twenty weeks' consecutive

education, in each year, is the best for factory children. And part time each day would be very inconvenient to employers; indeed the use of such labor would often be impossible. Perhaps the eagerness shown to provide education for factory children rather than to see to their physical wants has been stimulated by the fact that the proportion of children employed in the factories of the State who have some education, is less than it was a generation ago.

Mr. Blakeby views the question from the physical as well as the mental stand-point. "It is true," he says, "that in Massachusetts, no children are found (in factories) below the age of ten years, but to many children placing them in the factory, at the age of ten, means a diseased frame and a premature death. Their little bodies are not fitted to stand the close confinement of a mill room for ten or eleven hours per day, and so far as the Dominion is concerned, there are very few cases where it is necessary to have the children at work at so young an age." But labor necessities exist for employer as well as employed, since employers in one place have to compete with employers in another place. Where competition exists between two countries in producing a given manufacture, the employment of the cheapest kinds of labor in one of them in a measure compels the employment of the same kind in the other. This is the economic view; but it may be modified by the necessities of humanitarian legislation. The physical development of children should not be interfered with by premature, or too severe or too continuous labor. Mr. Blakeby thinks that children under twelve years of age should not be employed in factories; and not then unless they possess a certain educational qualification. However, he seems to admit that children should be allowed to live, when to live they must work, even if they are deficient in education. Not to make this admission would show a great mental defect.

The connection between the hours of labor and the product of labor seems to be receiving a new treatment in Massachusetts. According to Mr. Blakeby, ten hours' work is worth as much as eleven. In a ten hours' day, it is said, the machinery and consequently the attendants, can be forced, though they cannot in an eleven hours' day. If this be true, the advantage is doubtful. Ten hours of hurry would be more injurious to the worker than eleven hours of work carried on at a normal pace. Economists have always doubted that as much work can be done in ten as in eleven hours. Mr. Blakeby was told that there is just so much work in a man and no more can be got out of him; but if it be got out at a racking pace, shorter hours will not make up for the abnormal strain. If it be true that Massachusetts gets as much factory labor done in ten hours a day as other States get in eleven hours, it does not follow that the lot of the Massachusetts worker is the more enviable or that his life will be longer. If a man by being forced to run goes as far in four hours as he could walk in three, it is difficult to see what he has gained by the change of pace, for he would have little enjoyment of the hour saved, and might soon be permanently injured. Some mills work ten hours along

side of others that work eleven; and it is said that the discipline is better in the shorter hours mills; but if all mills worked only ten hours, would this difference continue to exist? The balance of advantages may be in favor of the shorter hours, but this is by no means so certain as might at first view appear. The extra hour, we are asked to believe, is spent in satisfying a desire for mental improvement; and if so, it is well, but the fact requires to be established by extensive observation.

Women, it is observed, often work longer hours, in factories, than men. But though this be true, we cannot make a proper comparison if we fail to note the different character of the employments. The labor in foundries, planing mills, carriage works and other heavy employments, is far more exhausting than the light labor connected with the making of light textile fabrics; and it may well be that a woman could stand the light labor longer than a man could stand the heavy.

English factory legislation is more complete than American, but the objection is made that it is too complicated and too difficult to master. It has carried socialistic principle to a greater extent than American legislation has. Probably there are evils to be guarded against in the old world which do not yet beset us here. Our first factory legislation must be more or less tentative, and if defects be found in it they can be remedied, from time to time, and when new evils arise these can be met by new remedies.

THE NEW AMERICAN TARIFF.

People are anxiously trying to gauge the effects of the new tariff on the revenue, manufactures, commerce, as well as the whole body of producers and consumers of the United States. The fact that all internal revenue taxes, except those on distilled spirits, beer, ale and the products of tobacco, and that these remissions will involve a greater sacrifice of revenue than the reduction of customs' duties, shows that, as a body, the manufacturers across the lines are not hit very hard. Some of them may feel the force of the blow. The internal revenue reductions are estimated at forty-one millions a year; an amount much greater than most persons have ventured to estimate the customs reduction at. Some estimates, however, carry up the figure to fifty millions of dollars; but we believe this to be largely an over-estimate. While the taxes on bank capital and deposits are abolished, the ten per cent. tax on book notes or other obligations than those of the United States and the national banks is retained. The tax on capital and deposits would probably have been abolished, a year sooner, if the bankers had not opposed the proposed reduction of interest, on Government securities, to three per cent.

The raising of the duties on foreign iron ores seems to have been done in favor of some clique. The rise is not in the interest of the iron workers as a body. Many owners of American iron mines are opposed to it; their ores being useless unless mixed with Canadian ores. Mr. Abraham S. Hewitt, a mine owner, is reported as saying that the Bessemer steel industries, which