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Labour Treaties

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training given by a moderate period of apprenticeship accompanied by attendance at a trade school at the same time. A formal stage of apprenticeship is required of all important branches of the metal trades, but the unions, while exercising some control in the matter, do not appear to needlessly interfere by imposing burdensome restrictions.

Nowhere is the testimony to the benefit derived from special training more emphatic than in the dairying trade.

The domestic character of this industry is rapidly making way for the large-scale production in factories, and it is said that the dairy schools have practically made the creamery industry what it is. The secretary of a large company in Minnesota said: "We could not operate a creamery if we could not get a man who had been trained in a dairy school." Men so trained receive from 20 to 50 per cent. more wages than those untrained.

All the evidence goes to show that in the matter of special trade training the Americans are confident of the advantages to be gained from moderately short practical courses. These are being provided in all the large industrial centres, and they are attended in rapidly increasing numbers.

Without considerably exceeding limits of space it is impossible to say anything of one's experiences bearing on the industrial conditions of the American workers. I cannot, however, omit to mention the firmness of the conviction, repeatedly expressed, held by many manufacturers and large business men, that the time has come when a reduction of the tariff is urgently wanted to enable them to develop foreign trade. Mr. Edward Atkinson, of Boston, prophesied to me that in two years' time each of the great political parties would be vieing with each other in their endeavour to give the greatest tariff relief.

C. J. HAMILTON

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## LABOUR TREATIES<sup>1</sup>

THE International Association for labour-legislation founded at Bâle in 1901, held a Congress the following year at Cologne; it considered two grave industrial problems: (1) night work for women, (2) the restriction of, or regulations necessary for, dangerous trades. The Congress pronounced for the

<sup>1</sup> The meeting at Bâle. Notes and documents by A. Millerand (extract from the *Revue Politique et Parlementaire* for October, 1903.)

absolute prohibition of the first of these; with regard to the second, they decided on the general prohibition of white phosphorus, and on the suppression, so far as feasible, of the use of white lead paint. A Commission was thereupon formed to discuss the question of ways and means; it is this Commission which met at Bâle on the 9th of September of last year. The work of the Commission, composed of forty members, was directed by the president of the Association, M. Henry Scherrer, national councillor, state councillor for St. Gall, assisted by the general secretary, Dr. Stephen Bauer, professor at the University of Bâle.

The question of dangerous trades resolved itself into a discussion on the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, and of lead, more particularly white lead, colours. In France the use of white lead is strictly forbidden in all State departments. Many municipalities have followed this example, and a law is now before the Senate to enforce the prohibition of the use of white lead paintings in the interior of buildings. Other countries are not so far advanced, but their Governments are, however, treading in the same path. On this point the Commission were not of opinion that an international agreement was necessary, the question of international competition being never raised in the painting trade. The Bureau and the national sections were advised in each country to press on measures for the prohibition of white lead in public and private painting factories; the sections were invited to make a report to the Bureau before 1st March, 1904, on the steps which they had taken for its suppression; they were moreover urged to represent to their respective Governments the cases of saturninism in various works with a view to obtaining (1) the inquiries necessary to the clearing up of the whole subject, and (2) if substitutes cannot be found, that at least the health of the workmen be safeguarded by the strict enforcement of all existing laws or by new protective regulations for all dangerous trades.

The whole lead question is to be reserved for the next Commission to agree upon the introduction of such ameliorations as have been found possible.

The outcome of the discussion on the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches was very different. Its dangers are no longer disputed, everyone being of accord that its complete prohibition is the only effective guarantee against necrosis. Means of replacing it are known, matches made without it, and perfectly inflammable, were shown to the Commission. In

countries such as France, Spain, Greece, &c., where the manufacture of matches is a State monopoly—sometimes leased out to a private corporation—administrative measures (such as have been passed in France) are all that is necessary for its complete abolition; but wherever the factories are in private hands, special laws ought to prohibit its use; in spite of the necessities of exportation urged against such a measure, Germany has passed a law to this effect, to be operative in 1907. The Commission was unanimously of opinion that an international agreement would be the best means to gain its end; not only this, but the interest of opening the road to international industrial legislation by a first treaty is so great, and the advantages of a precedent are so immense, that it felt that any start in this direction, however small, was of the utmost importance. A neutral country being essentially fitted for an international conference, the Commission requested the Bureau to apply to the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation asking it to take the initiative in such a conference.

The discussions on the question of night work for women constituted the most animated and attractive of the debates. Professor Brants, of Louvain, laid before the Committee the objections made by the wool manufacturers of Verviers against the interdiction of night work for women, and M. Mahaim, professor at the University of Liège, answered him. To those interested in the question two documents appended to the volume of the Belgian section on this subject, published by the International Office, containing as they do the results of M. Mahaim's two inquiries from employers and workmen at Verviers, will give the most valuable information and show effectively the contrast between ready-made phrases and naked realities. The question before the Committee was not the interdiction of night employment, on this point all were agreed, but what exceptions entailed by the present state of labour were to be allowed. The first point was to lay down this fundamental rule; the interdiction of night work for women is to consist in a complete rest of twelve consecutive hours from the evening to the morning, for all women working in factories, workshops, and outside their family. Foreseeing cases where this introduction of a twelve hours' rest would create serious difficulties for the moment, the Commission passed a resolution to the effect that the rest hours might at first be ten only, before reaching the full time agreed on. It was felt that this exception would enable all trades varying with the seasons (such as dressmaking and

millinery) to accommodate themselves to the new conditions. This would imply that the Ten-Hours-Day would have to be introduced all over the continent.

The Commission further agreed that dispensations (not exceptions) might be granted in certain cases, agreed on beforehand, of imminent danger to a factory; for example, in cases of fire or explosion, night work would be permitted either to prevent such an accident, or to remedy the damages caused by it. It was also voted that where women worked with perishable products, such as in the fish or fruit industries, night work would be allowable whenever it was absolutely necessary in order to save the produce from complete destruction.

These resolutions were to form part of a memoir to be laid before each Government by the first of March 1904, explaining the whole question of night work for women. As in the case of white phosphorus the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation was to be asked to initiate an international conference on this subject with a view to an international prohibition of night work for women. Finally, the Commission pointed out the absolute necessity of an inquiry into the question of home industries, more than ever urgently needed, as these very regulations would have the effect of extending their sphere.

Such, in brief, was the work of the meeting at Bâle, which, it is hoped, may lead to an international convention.

E. F.

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### THE ECONOMIC LEGISLATION FOR 1903

DEALING first with the economic legislation of an Imperial character, we find in the Finance Act (3 Edward VII., c. 8) a reflection of the unsettled fiscal convictions of the times. The duties imposed on various cereals in 1902 are remitted, but those on tea, tobacco, beer, and spirits are retained. The Income Tax is reduced from 1s. 3*d.* to 11*d.* By the Revenue Act (3 Edward VII., c. 46), molasses imported for use solely as food for stock is exempted from duty under the Finance Act, 1901: and in calculating the Inhabited House Duty on houses let in separate tenements, component tenements of a less annual value than £20 are not assessed, while the rate of duty is reduced to 3*d.* and 6*d.* for those of an annual value between £20 and £40, and between £40 and £60 respectively. These reductions, how-