

The first purpose is carried out in the two opening chapters. These and the final chapter on illegal collective activities, and two others, one on the formulation of trade principles and practices and the other on the dissemination of basic business facts, present a timely, instructive and comprehensive, yet concise discussion of the legal aspects of collective activity through trade associations.

The important features of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the Clayton Act, the Webb Act, the Federal Trade Commission Act, the Anti-Dumping Act of September 8, 1916, and the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921, are given and their interpretation by court decisions discussed in such non-legal phraseology as to make the very valuable chapter on "Collective Activities Prohibited by Law" entirely clear to the lay reader. The chapter discusses among other things the legal aspects of division of territory, allotment of customers, curtailment of production or supply, restrictions on price, service and quality competition, price-fixing agreements, false statements affecting prices, open price associations, common selling agencies, co-operative buying, agreements to refrain from bidding, boycotts, blacklists and white lists.

The careful and mentally honest reader cannot avoid the conclusion that the "twilight zone" of trade association activities, in which the distinction between legality and illegality is obscure, is not very broad after all; but rather that it is narrow and that the actual dividing line is easy to locate by any trade association which will judge an activity by the test: "Does it restrain competition? Is it fair?" With respect to the usual form of open price information—that is, distribution of price information without comment—the author states that "such action is probably lawful," but he intimates quite properly that such an activity may be carried with ease beyond mere interchange of facts and become unlawful, and advises that "in the present state of the law the interchange of price data by trade association members is dangerous."

The chapter on "The Purpose of Laws Regulating Competition" brings out the dangers of unregulated competition to both industry and the public, and shows that the anti-trust and related legislation has been invaluable to this country. On the other hand, the wastes of competition are likewise shown. The sound conclusion is reached that trade associations, lawfully operated, are valuable instruments for the decrease of the wastes of competition and the preservation of its benefits as a regulating force in American industry.

A major portion of the text deals with such typical activities of trade associations as promotion of proper cost accounting methods, standardization, improved methods of distribution, research, representation of employers in labor matters, co-operative advertising, operation of traffic, credit and collection bureaus, commercial arbitration and co-operation with the government. These activities are presented and discussed in order to "reveal to the public the value of trade associations in our national life" and to suggest "the basis on which a constructive program of trade association activities can be formulated by any industry." A more concise treatment, embracing possibly a single chapter, would probably be as enlightening and more interesting to the average reader; while the information given is neither comprehensive enough nor in sufficient detail to be of special interest or assistance to experienced officers or members of trade associations. This phase of the discussion suffers by comparison with the high standard of that devoted to the legal aspects of association activities. It does not reveal the same familiarity with the development of trade association activities and services as with their legal aspects.

The footnote references to court decisions, indictments, consent decrees and trade association reports are unusually numerous and complete. The value of the book for reference purposes is further materially increased by appendices consisting of copies of all important Federal legislation which bears upon trade association activities.

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*The Four-Hour Day in Coal.* By Hugh Archibald.

H. W. Wilson & Co., New York, 1922, pp. xv, 148.

In these days of a precarious coal supply everybody is aware that something is not right in the coal mining industry. It is a vague idea, but there is a widespread feeling that the high prices, the shortages and the irregularities in the business are unnecessary. This little book by its very title directs attention to one of the fundamental abuses. The author is a practical mining engineer of twenty years experience in the mining of bituminous and anthracite coal. He writes from first hand and intimate knowledge. In the short compass of 145 pages he sketches sympathetically and boldly the working conditions of the miner, pointing up the picture with homely incident and colorful illustration. Through it all runs a keen appreciation of what really competent operation would mean for the miner, the operator and the consumer.

He shows us a vast, sprawling, chaotic industry, tremendously wasteful in every part. Six hundred thousand men have their precarious living by it, and the whole industrial system that uses coal is based on it. He finds a producing capacity of approximately 1,000,000,000 tons a year with a market of scarcely more than half this quantity. And these figures do not take into account the increase of 25 to 50 per cent producing capacity which might be had by better organization of the work. In the soft coal operations the overdevelopment in a boom year amounts to 60 per cent, in years of normal business to 80 per cent, and in years of depression to 125 per cent. He demolishes a number of popular conceptions, such as that the "miners won't work" and that strikes are caused by human "cussedness." He shows why the miner is able to get into the mines only two to four days a week; and why in these days when he does get into the mine he can average only three to four hours paying work a day.

His conclusion seems to be embraced in the quotation from the majority report of the Bituminous Coal Commission (1920) which he makes the closing paragraph of his book: "Full time employment in the coal mines cannot therefore be expected until the industry is put on such a basis that only those mines remain in operation whose output is required to supply the annual needs of the country."

The brochure throughout is in effect a severe arraignment of the unregulated competitive processes when applied to the development and operation of such an industry as coal mining. Beginning with the fundamental inefficiency of overproduction, the taint of disorganization and unbelievable inefficiency reaches to every phase and angle of the business. The accumulated effect of these irregularities reach their climax in the demoralized working conditions, the environment and the lives of the men who dig the coal. The incentive at every point is to inefficiency. It is not higher wages and shorter days that he urges, but, if necessary, less wages per unit of output, longer days, more days in the year and more regularity throughout the year. He shows how the system of distribution as well as production is wasteful because of the limited proportion of non-contract coal which becomes the football of speculation, marking up and down the prices of all out of proportion to the real conditions which the prices are supposed to reflect. He shows the utter lack of planning and efficient operation, the reckless lack of intelligent supervision, the insidious effects of absentee ownership and control, the demoralization of speculation. The ordinary man in the street is stunned by this picture so circumstantially presented of utter ineptitude in an industry so vital to the people and to all industrial prosperity. It prepares us to expect much from the Commission now sitting in Washington in recommendations looking to revision of the industry and elimination of the criminal wastes of coal transportation, of capital and of man power.

This little book should be widely read by men of affairs, but it might also be read in the schools in order that the coming generation may be informed of the abuses to be abolished and the wastes to be eliminated.

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