

social movements which created our new body of labor legislation. There were movements to get the child labor laws, to break down the twelve-hour day, to prevent accidents, to improve factory sanitation, to cut out night-labor for women, to supplant the hazards of the old liability rules with systems of workmen's compensation, and the like. In 1912 you had a synthesis of these things into a common program of industrial minimums which some twenty national organizations subscribed to, which Col. Roosevelt seized upon thereafter as planks for his Progressive platform, and which spread such legislation in subsequent years. This program of minimums ranged midway between the governmental rigidities of state socialism and the human welter of uncontrolled individualism. Its philosophy was congenial to the American genius. It set a sort of ground floor of standards for industrial operations in the United States below which social observers held that industry could not go without damage to the common welfare; above which you might have as much freedom for the industrial bargain as you pleased.

That development, it seems to me, is not only significant as evidencing a constructive synthesis contemporaneous with the crystallization of factors entering into scientific management, but significant as exhibiting an approach to law rather different from that referred to by Dr. Person. It seems to me entirely natural that the employers of the country should, to a degree, be restless under legal restraints of different sorts; natural that, having been gradually curbed by this piece of labor legislation and that, they should think it would be a lot better to work things out on their own. Last week in Philadelphia I talked with a lawyer who is defending the cause of a widow before the State Supreme Court. The plaintiff is one of the largest and most famous industrial corporations in Philadelphia. It is trying to avoid paying compensation awarded by the State Commission in the case of a workman, for twenty-five years in its employ, who told his mates and the doctors that he ran a steel shaving into his foot while at work. Blood poisoning set in and he died. The company contends that there was no proof that he got the puncture in their factory; that his ante-mortem statements are hearsay. The man is dead and cannot speak for himself. Such examples explain the instinctive and sound feeling on the part of the

workers of the country that they must have beside them, in their individual dealings with a great corporation, the added strength of the state. Law is not only a curb, but a constructive thing—enforcing on all the standards which progressive employers favor, but which, insofar as these add to labor costs, they may not be able to adopt by themselves without being penalized in competing with laggard or ruthless managements.

So it would seem to me that, in taking up our questions of insurance or reserves for unemployment and old age, it would be well for us to consider whether or not law, legislation, the part which the state can play, need be such an adverse thing as some of us may have felt. Let us be as open minded in reconsidering that as we are toward revamping our machines and reordering our processes of production.

Dr. Person has pointed out that it is not only the height of wages which counts, but their length. He conceives of livelihood as of two dimensions—current income multiplied by the years of the working life. He stretches our old conceptions. But I would point out that it is not only the height and length that count, socially speaking, but the breadth. We have not only to consider the individual working life over its full span, but the whole expanse of the working population. I welcome the efforts and experiments of individual managements, unions and industries in scheming out greater security for middle age and old age among the working forces concerned. But, if these solutions are to be other than fragmentary and partial, we must spread our net wide. We can turn to account and apply our experience in workmen's compensation legislation in grappling with these other phases of the problem of the basic security of wage-earning America. We must not only think them through in terms of the whole working life of the individual, but of the whole working life of the whole industrial population.

George Soule.\* For one coming late on the program it is necessary to discuss not merely the paper but the discussions.

In the first place, it is apparent that everyone agrees that a proposal of this kind can be effectuated only by joint consent of managers and workers. That agreement, I think, fairly must include

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Dr. Person himself. The proper length of the working day or week cannot be scientifically determined in all its aspects. Consent on the part of the worker must be sought.

The first question then becomes: Why do workers habitually ask for shorter hours? The scientist in the laboratory does not ask for shorter hours, nor does the painter, nor does anyone, necessarily, who has a constructive job in which he can exercise judgment, in which he can govern a realm which involves choices, in which he can measure his achievement against a scale of values. If we do not want the worker to keep asking for shorter hours, we must pay some attention to the sort of job he has to do.

That, of course, brings us to Mr. Smith's assumption that the cultural values in life can arise only from leisure. If that is the sort of civilization we are developing, there is very little hope even from the good use of leisure. A mechanized and routinized working life will inevitably lead to a mechanized and routinized use of leisure. We see in the present uses of leisure, by the population at large, principally, a patronage of commercialized amusement—an extension of the commercialism of the working life into the life away from work. There is a profound significance in the common phrases, "the employer's time" and "my own time." Why should "my own time" be so exclusively thought of as the time when I am not working? That is one random thought which, of course, is not a bit new but which has a bearing on this whole question.

Let me jump a considerable distance and try to seize another thought by the tail, which I think may be brought into connection with the first one. Economic students have discovered that the great increases in productivity to which we attribute the enormous growth of the national income, the greater possibility of leisure, the higher wages, and all the rest of it, have occurred primarily in certain pretty definite classifications of products. They have occurred in the production of the means of production for one thing, that is, in the making of machinery and its materials. They have occurred in the production of goods that can be made by mass production methods. And they have occurred very largely in the production of consumers' goods which have recently been classed as luxuries rather than necessities. The second classification, of course, overlaps the other two.

That leads to certain economic problems. It may be true, as Mr. Brown pointed out, that in the long run we do not have to be afraid of general overconsumption, but the long run is a very indefinite period. And if our increases of productivity are of such a nature that they apply to goods made in enormous quantities to sell at a fairly low price, and if those are, principally, not the necessities of life, but the luxuries (the things that are constantly being added to the structure of what we superficially call the standard of living) then we are faced with the necessity, if these goods are to be sold, of increasing the real income of the mass of the population as fast as we increase our production of this type of goods. Theoretically, it would be possible to increase production in general, without an increase in real wages, by letting the surplus income go into more and more profits, provided our surplus goods were of the kind which is produced in small quantities and sells for high prices to those with large incomes. But that is not the actual case with American industry. It is of interest to know, in this connection, that in spite of the very rapid increases of productivity, which have continued since 1923, there is no statistical evidence of any appreciable growth of real wages since 1923. The enormous growth of real wages which has been observed, and is usually dated from some time before the war, occurred almost entirely before 1923.

What are we going to do? Are we going to keep on improving efficiency in the narrower sense of the term, finding out how workers can make increasing quantities of things by mass production methods and paying them higher wages if necessary, so that they can absorb these radios, Fords, and so on, *ad infinitum*? If so, are the workers going to stand for it? Or, are they not going to say, "I had rather have more of my own time, and let mass production go to the devil"? That, you see, begins to link in with the first idea that the discussion aroused. Is there any possibility of increasing the quality of the work, and consequently the quality of the product? Do we not have to look forward to a time when the demand for the type of goods now being made in increasing quantities is really going to approach satiation? Is there not some possibility that the importance of industry—organized industry—in world affairs will shrink, that we will go on making the goods that have to be bought in less and less time, and that the increasing leisure