

two-day shut-down of the blast furnaces of one of the large steel corporations during the May Day riots in 1915, cost that corporation a quarter of a million dollars to remove the ruined contents and repair the damage done. Since we cannot or have not found a process for making steel which will supersede the present continuous process, we must find some method by which the men who make steel can earn a wage proportionate to their skill and the hazard of their calling, and at the same time live normal American lives.

I am not prepared to say that the eight-hour day is the maximum which the demands of production require. I am not satisfied that the nine or the ten hour day is too long, and I know of no real reason why the shifts should be confined within a period of twenty-four hours or why men could not work three shifts of ten hours each, providing due consideration be given to the physical well-being of the men and the labor costs of manufacturing steel, but I do believe that the twelve-hour day and the seven-day week in the steel industry must and will be abolished and that the coming months, for the first time since 1914, is the opportune time for making this change.

We have heard much in recent years of the growing importance of the foreman in industry, and I am one of those who believe that the foreman is the key man in any plant and that he, more than any other individual in the plant, is responsible for harmonious industrial relations. Permit me, in conclusion, to quote the statement of a foreman in a steel plant, who in reply to an inquiry as to what he regarded as one of the greatest obstacles to a foreman's success, said:

The greatest thing that I am up against is the fact that I have no time to study and keep up with the procession. My work, with its hours of overtime, gives me very little time to think and plan for the future. When I go home at night I am so tired that I cannot keep awake when I pick up a magazine or a book. I am too tired to go down town to a lecture. If I do go down, I have to dress up, shave, walk to the car, and then I don't get home until late, and as a result, I do not get near enough sleep. The next day I am doxy on the job. I once started a course of study in a correspondence school. I couldn't keep it up as I had to work overtime so much. Since that discouragement I have always been reluctant to start any more studying, but I want to do it.

That foreman, ladies and gentleman, has stated better than I am able, why the long day in the steel industry must go.

4. By WILLIAM H. BALDWIN<sup>1</sup>

Having for a long time believed that the 12-hour day ought to be abolished, I willingly accepted an invita-

<sup>1</sup>Formerly Secretary Ohio Steel Company.

tion to participate in the discussion of the subject this evening. Mr. Drury's carefully prepared report shows a gratifying progress on the part of the manufacturers in the steel industry towards making the change to the three-shift day, and it also reveals some obstacles in the way of this.

I am glad that the subject is being taken up in this careful manner, because I believe the change has been retarded rather than helped by the ill-considered censure of some well-meaning persons, who have confused it with other matters which are by no means so clear, and which, if carried out as they suggest, might in some respects be harmful to the men as well as to the companies.

In organizing the Ohio Steel plant, which I helped build twenty-five years ago, it was necessary for us to have the 12-hour day, as our competitors did, or our company, which depended upon floating loans for all its working capital and part of the cost of the plant, would have gone to the wall. I have no sense of blame for what was then required of the men, because I worked with them and constantly exceeded the 12-hour limit in order to keep the business going, and I have a feeling of thankfulness to the loyal men in all positions in the plant who worked with us to build up a successful business. We protected them from accidents to the best of our ability, but we had neither the money nor the strength to do for them what has been done so well by so many steel companies since. The eight-hour day would have been out of the question, but as the output increased, we voluntarily put some of the men in the most difficult positions on eight hours because it increased the production to do so.

The principal objection to the 12-hour day, in my opinion, is that it takes so much of a man's life that he cannot get his share of the benefits and privileges which belong to American citizenship; and nothing but the necessity of self-preservation, under such circumstances as I have spoken of, justifies a company in continuing it. It is true that great numbers of men have been and are, as Mr. Drury has shown, willing to work 12 hours a day, and some prefer to. It is possible for them to lead upright, honest lives while doing so, and in many positions the work is not too hard physically; but the tendency is all towards shorter hours, as it should be by any fair distribution of the advantage of the increased facilities for production, and the men who are willing to work 12 hours must necessarily diminish relatively in number and in general standing as workmen.

No one would now think of requiring a man to work 12 hours a day were it not for the necessity of continuous operation during twenty-four hours; but the men are not responsible for this necessity, and they ought not to be required to give up so large a part of their lives for the benefit of employers and stockholders. On the whole, Mr. Drury's statement seems to show that a change to the three-shift system, as I have always assumed, must add more or less to the cost of the product. This increase may be reduced by careful management, but most of all by the effect which the change has, or ought to have, on the spirit of the men. This is an element of the very greatest importance in any steel plant, and nothing did more to save the plant, of which I have above spoken, from failure than such a spirit of loyalty on the part of the men.

It may have been a reciprocal appreciation of what they did for the company which made me later feel strongly that perhaps the most important thing in the steel industry at that time, certainly more important than the discussion of over-capitalization, as to which intelligent men were able to protect themselves, was the abolition of the 12-hour day; for I discovered, in connection with the government investigation of the steel industry some years ago, that the profits of the steel manufacturers of the country, over a period of five years, were ample to absorb whatever increase in cost there might be in doing away with the 12-hour day, and still pay fair returns to the stockholders.

This beautiful building in which we meet to-night is the gift of a man of great ability, who made the most noble benefactions of libraries, art galleries, and scientific institutions, which the world has ever known. All these are for the enrichment of the lives of mankind, and we honor him for them; but in thinking of them, I have been unable to avoid a feeling of sadness when I ask myself of what possible benefit any art galleries or libraries can be to men who must work twelve hours every day, as thousands of men have been obliged to do in the plants in which was made the fortune from which these libraries came.

I am aware that it is a mistake to idealize these men, just as it was a mistake in our recent policy towards Mexico to assume that, if granted the same freedom, the Mexicans would conduct themselves as American citizens do. Many of these men would not go to the libraries, or use their time to the best advantage if relieved of four hours work per day; and in my opinion many of them, while working twelve hours, were and are doing more good for themselves

and for the country than they would be in following a revolutionist like Foster towards the control by the ignorant, as they did in the recent steel strike; but these men are in reality working for all of us, and it is the duty of those who get the benefit of their labor to help towards seeing that they have a fair chance to obtain the knowledge and conceive the ideals of decent American citizens.

The establishment of prohibition throughout the country, perhaps the greatest reform the world has ever known, has not only done away with the temptation to these men to waste their time and wages in drinking, but it has also diminished the danger of violence in any differences between them and their employers, and made it easier to encourage them to make the most of their lives. Because of the vast benefit of prohibition to the steel manufacturers, far exceeding in my judgment any possible loss in doing away with the 12-hour day, they might all well afford to make the change, and devote besides some money towards providing instruction and help for the improvement of the time which the men would thus gain.

I have spoken of the spirit of the men. Tasks and compensation must necessarily differ, and that some are hard is not inconsistent with satisfaction in one's work; but I do not see how it is possible for a man, who is working for a company which makes so much money as the steel companies have made in the past, to have a really cordial feeling toward an employer who obliges him to give up twelve hours of his day while the employer enjoys both leisure and luxury from his profits. I believe that because of the force of habit, and the relative ignorance of the men, the present system may be maintained for some time yet; but there is a new spirit awake in the world. The changes to the three-shift system in several countries in Europe have been made since the war, and no doubt because of this new spirit. The ideas which prevail among the metal workers in Italy, alluring but unmistakably destructive as they are, have made little progress in this country. There is perhaps no real danger that they will spread here; but the demand of the coal miners a year ago, that their working day be limited to six hours, perhaps the most unwarranted hold-up ever attempted with the American people, shows that even here great numbers of men are capable of making a forcible demand for a four-shift day. I believe that nothing would do more to forestall such unreasonable demands of any kind, and to establish more cordial relations between the companies and