

HPM 1

H. P. MEIKLEHAM, sworn, testified:

EXAMINATION BY MR. DALY.

Q Mr. Meikleham, what is your official position?

A Agent of the Massachusetts Mill in Georgia, at Lindale.

Q Are there other Massachusetts Mills?

A Yes Sir.

Q Where are they?

A Lowell, Massachusetts.

Q How long have you been such agent?

A Fifteen years.

Q What are your duties as agent?

A General manager of the mill and local representative of the Treasurer.

Q How many people are employed in your mill?

A About, on the average, 1500.

Q Have you in mind the number of men, women and children employed separately?

A Before the last law went into effect, January 1st, 1915, all children under the age of fifteen years have been eliminated from the mill. Today we have about 850 males and about 650 females.

Q How large a town is Lindale?

A About 3200.

Q How much land is your mill located upon?

A About 1000 acres.

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- Q Is that within the limits of the town?
- A All.
- Q Have you a mill.village for your help?
- A Yes Sir.
- Q What jurisdiction has the town over your village?
- A None. There is no incorporated town.
- Q Are there any authorities that have jurisdiction over your village except mill authorities?
- A The county authorities.
- Q Has your village and the mill been incorporated, the whole thing as a municipality?
- A No Sir, the mills are incorporated itself.
- Q The mill village is not incorporated?
- A No Sir.
- Q Have you any other interests outside the Massachusetts Mills at Lindale?
- A There are two outside interests, the general store, the meat market, and ice cream parlor, etc.
- Q Is the general store owned by the mill?
- A Only as a building.
- Q How is that store operated?
- A It is leased on a term of ten years.
- Q By an individual?
- A By an individual.

Q The mill does not operate it? A No Sir.

Q Are you familiar with the working conditions, the relations that exist between the mill and your labor?

A Yes Sir.

Q Have you ever had any labor troubles in the mill?

A Never, --

Q Since you were there?

A -- with one exception. About ten years ago a few of the loom fixers then in the mills stated they would quit if they did not have more pay.

Q How was that adjusted?

A By discharging the dissatisfied loom fixers.

Q What procedure is followed in your mill when any dispute arises with some one or more employees? What remedy does he have in order that any dispute may be adjudicated?

A He takes his dispute up to the overseer of his department. If he is not satisfied with the adjustment he can appeal to the superintendent or myself, who reserve the hours from twelve to twelve forty-five for all such questions, when the help have free access to us.

Q And you are the final judge?

A I am the final judge in labor.

Q You stated that the time allotted for the adjustment of troubles is between the hours of twelve and twelve forty five.

Is that the time that the laborer is supposed to have for himself?

A Yes Sir.

Q Is that lunch hour?

A Yes Sir.

Q Is that or not understood in the mill as the time they can appear?

A Yes.

Q Can they appear at any time if they so desire?

A At any time; my office is open to all the employees and I am in the mill constantly and will talk to anybody.

Q Then, as I understand that, at noon time is the time that is fixed, but notwithstanding this anyone can appear at any time that they think proper?

A Yes Sir.

Q Is your labor organized in the mill?

A No Sir.

Q Are the houses built of one certain size, or are they of different sizes?

A They are single houses. They are single houses of five or six rooms and double houses of from six to twelve rooms.

Q Have you any rules and regulations as to how many families may live in one house?

A No Sir.

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Q Do more than one family live in one house?

A I don't think so, except relations.

Q In these double houses how many people, on an average, would inhabit them?

A I should say it would run hardly one person to the room.

Q Are these houses furnished free to the operatives, or do they pay rent for them?

A They pay rent.

Q Are they charged by the room or by the month, or by the week, or how?

A By the room per week.

Q What would be the average?

A The average is 25¢ per room per week.

Q Do you know what the cost of building such houses is?

A I have just asked for a bid for five houses of eight rooms each, and it has been \$150 per room. We have built some cheaper and some that have cost more.

Q What sanitary arrangements are there in them, if any?

A A number of the houses have baths and closets, mostly for overseers, second hands, clerks, railway officials, ministers, etc.

Q Do they rent at the same prices as the others which you spoke of above?

A No, they pay more.

Q What are the sanitary arrangements of the houses you speak about that rent for 25¢ per room.

A After a great deal of study and investigation we have adopted what they call the Durham English System. They are large wood houses behind each house and in there is a toilet with a tub underneath that is emptied twice a week and disinfected from two to four times a week. The contents of these tubs are buried.

Q Is there a sewer system in Lindale?

A Yes Sir, but not general.

Q By whom are these details looked after?

A By the mill.

Q Where do these operatives obtain their water supply?

A They use a pump to the reservoir and is thrown by gravity over the houses.

Q Is there a system of filtration connected with the reservoir or not?

A No Sir, the springs are protected and the water is analyzed from two to four times a year by the Boston, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Q Have you had any epidemics in your village for any length of time past?

A About six years ago we had an epidemic of typhoid.

About fourteen years ago we had an epidemic of small pox but this was prevalent allthrough the Southern country.

Q Have you seen any cases of pellagra in your mill village?

A Yes Sir.

Q How many cases have you seen in it?

A I suppose five or six.

Q To what do you attribute the typhoid epidemic at that time?

A That it came from an employee that had moved in from a neighboring mill town.

Q How is the food supply furnished?

A To a large extent under the jurisdiction of the mill by the stores; milk, vegetables and country produce by peddlers.

Q Is there any systematic inspection in that town or that county of country produce?

A No Sir.

Q In what period were these cases observed?

A In the last five or six years.

Q Were the cases of pellagra among employees that had been employed for a long period of time, or some reasonable period of time, or from the floating population that may have gone through your plant?

A I do not know, but I should say it would be about

half and half.

Q You have a doctor there?

A Yes Sir, three physicians.

Q Are they employed at the mill?

A One is employed by the mill to supervise the help of the village and attend to all injuries, accidents, and look after the health of any people that were sent to him.

Q Are their services free?

A Their services are free to all where it is necessary.

Q Are there any deductions from their wages?

A No Sir.

Q Have you hospital facilities in the mill?

A We have a room for accidents and first-aid kit and instruments, and one house that we have furnished and reserve for epidemics.

Q Has the mill a school?

A Yes Sir.

Q Is it on the mill property?

A Yes Sir.

Q Does it cooperate with the county system, or is it separate?

A Yes Sir, it cooperates with the county system.

Q Do you pay the teachers, or is it conjunction with the county?

A We pay the teachers three months and the county five months.

Q What is the regular school term of that county?

A Five months.

Q This cooperative plan gives eight months?

A Yes Sir.

Q To what grade are children taken through this school?

A To the seventh grade.

Q Are the children required to attend?

A No Sir, only as far as we can get them to attend.

Q Who attends to that?

A I do.

Q Is it a part of the duty of the teacher to visit the homes of the operatives?

A Yes Sir, every teacher has to do it, and is required to make a number of visits.

Q Have you any night school system?

A Not regularly. Sometimes, when the attendance justifies it, we have it.

Q What kind of teachers are employed and what qualifications have they? Do they come under the jurisdiction of the State of Georgia as to qualifications?

A Yes Sir, and the superintendent, I suppose, is the best qualified woman in the State, probably one of the brightest.

Q Do your employees appreciate this school and cooperate in securing the attendance of the children or not?

A Not as they should, but it is growing every year and from a school of one room we have had an average attendance of over 300 and an enrollment of about 600.

Q Give the same conditions as to the night school?

A We start a night school every year of about 25 to 30 scholars; after a few weeks we drop it. We don't seem to be able to accomplish any results.

Q As a matter of fact there is a roving and constantly changing population among the operatives in the mill; is that correct?

A Yes Sir.

Q Do you know what a fair percent age would be in your mill?

A I would say about one third are permanent residents. About one third stay about ten years, and about one third are coming and going.

Q Have you in mind the number of people that passed through your mill last year?

A No, I have not, but I should say we pay off about an average of 30 hands every week. Some of these are not leaving, however.

Q Have you any reasons to assign for this moving population? Why is it that there is such a large percentage in the South in your judgment?

A The main reason is that they stay in one place

until they have obtained all the credit they can at the stores and then move to establish fresh credit somewhere else; and the other reason is that there is a certain number that is always trying another mill to see if they do not like it better.

Q How do you employ your people? What system have you for obtaining help and how are they employed?

A Any who apply to the office and show they want a job are given a pass to the overseer in that department who employs them, or not, as he sees fit. Help writing in asking for jobs are employed by the superintendent, or not, as he sees fit.

Q Have you any contract in writing for either employment or house rent?

A No Sir.

Q Are you able to operate without such a contract in writing?

A Yes Sir.

Q Don't you think it would be a better system to have a written contract every time between you and the employees, or are you satisfied with the way in which you are now operating?

A I have operated under both systems, and I prefer the one I am now operating under.

Q Have you any terms that you agree upon about the

employment?

A None whatever, but we pay by the week and expect an employee to give us a week's notice if they want their time when due. If not they have to wait a week longer until the payrolls are made up.

Q Have you any system of rule or regulation by which an operatives wages are forfeited in the event he does not give you a notice to quit?

A No Sir.

Q As I understand you, you pay them at the next pay day, is that correct?

A Yes Sir, we are one week behind.

Q Why is that?

A Because it is impossible for us to make our payrolls up in less than four days.

Q Please give the reasons for the delay in paying off under such conditions.

A Because it is impossible for the overseers to get their time up before Monday night, for it takes Tuesday and Wednesday in the office to write the names on the official payroll, check all items, balances, one day to go to Home and get the money and put it up in the envelopes.

Q And the examination of cloth to see whether the cloth has been properly made, is that correct?

A No, it takes them a day before they can check

up that cloth and the yardage on it.

Q Why do you go to Home?

A Because we bank in Home, about five miles away.

Q Have you any system of fines and deductions in your mill?

A We have no system of fines. We have a price for second-quality work.

Q In other words, you pay so much for first-quality?

A And so much for second-quality.

Q And you have no deductions in the usual sense, have you?

A No Sir.

Q If a hand works out his notice does he get his money at once?

A Yes Sir.

Q Is your company interested in welfare work, social betterment, etc. in your community, and if so to what extent; have you operated in the line?

A We own the school buildings and furnish everything free, both to white and colored. we maintain a kindergarten, we own and maintain three churches, we have a trained nurse to instruct in sanitary and other ways, we maintain a cooking school, and we maintain such things as moving picture shows, bands, military company, base ball teams, etc.

Q What is the capital stock of your company?

A \$2,000,000.

Q What is the value of the mill property?

A About \$2,500,000.

Q Have you any figures as to the amount expended in industrial betterment work?

A About \$35,000.

Q How much annually does it take?

A From \$5,000 to \$7,000.

Q Do you pay premiums and bonuses of any character?

A Very seldom. Sometimes, if we have roving that is going very bad we pay a spinner a slight amount to pick out a bad roving and stop it from going into the work.

Q Are you members of the Georgia Cotton Manufacturers Association?

A Yes Sir.

Q Have you the average wage in your mind?

A About \$7.50 a week. To be accurate, \$7.49.

Q Men and women?

A That includes in the whole thing, yes Sir.

Q Do you know the average wage for men?

A It is practically the same for men and women. There is very little difference.

Q Do you know where the Fulton Bag Mills are located?

A Yes Sir, in the city of Atlanta.

Q Are you acquainted with Mr. Elias, President of the mills?

A Yes Sir.

Q Do you know anything about the conditions around his mill?

A Nothing.

Q Are you aware of the fact that a strike occurred there in October, 1913, and again in May, 1914?

A No more than what I read in the newspapers.

Q Then you never had any communication from Mr. Elias with reference to the strike?

A No Sir.

Q Or from any of his associates?

A No Sir.

Q Or employees?

A No Sir.

Q Or Mr. Elias or any of his superintendents or overseers asking assistance from your mill to fill in the vacant places in his?

A No. I will say that he asked if I had any weavers I was not using.

Q Did you secure any, or did you furnish him any during that time, if an agent visited your place and got help?

A Yes Sir.

Q Do you know how many?

A I should say 15 or 20.

Q Was the agent there more than once?

A Twice I think.

Q Did union men, who had been strikers, afterwards go to work in your mill?

A I think there was one man and one woman, husband and wife.

Q Were they given employment?

A Yes Sir.

Q Had you any way of knowing through the Elsas Mills the names of persons that were on strike from his mill?

A No Sir.

Q Did he ever furnish you a list of them?

A No Sir.

Q Were any present in your mill?

A Not that I know of.

Q Were you ever engaged in any way in assisting in other than what you have stated?

A No Sir.

Q Were any operatives discharged from your mill at any time during the period of this strike owing to the fact that it was discovered they were members of the Textile Union which was on strike at the Elsas Mills?

A No.

Q Were any people laid off for any cause during that period?

A Yes Sir, a great many.

Q Why?

A Lack of orders, depression in the business. We had as high as 1000 looms stopped.

Q Then, if any man would claim, a member of that Union who had worked in your mill, that he was discharged because he was a Union man, his statement would be untrue, is that correct?

A No, it would not be correct, because there was a man and his wife discharged because they said they were members of the Union and made a lot of talk around amongst my help.

Q Were they trying to organize in your mill, do you think?

A They were saying it was going to be done.

Q Do you know who they were?

A I do not, but it seems to me it was something like Stone or Stowe.

Q Did they belong to these strikers from the Fulton Mills?

A Yes Sir, they came up from there I understand, I don't know.

Q Then, if I understand your testimony, there has

been any concerted effort between you and the Elias mills to destroy Local No. 886?

A None whatever.

Q Have there been many people that have come to your mill at different times who have worked in the Elias mills?

A Very few.

Q Has the mill any expressed attitude towards Union labor?

A None whatever. There is absolutely no connection between Mr. Elias in any way, shape or manner. I very seldom see any hands from his mill, because they pay so much more money than we do it is not attractive to them; and the only connection at all was that Mr. Elias wrote me that he was running his mill except about 400 looms, and if I had any spare weavers he would be very glad to use them. I told him I did not know about that, that we were running short and we had alot of spare help. If he would send his superintendent or somebody up there he could do whatever he wished among them. He sent a Mr. Rogers up, whom I turned over to my superintendent and he turned him over to my overseer of weaving and assisted him in getting about 15 or 20 weavers which he took with him. It was on the understanding that these weavers should not stay with him over 20 days and that they would have their jobs back with me.

Q I understood you to state that you had no

communication with Mr. Elsas.

A I understood the question to be "with Mr. Elsas in regard to the strike".

Q What is your present judgment and opinion regarding the physical help and the mental status of the general run of mill employees in the South in comparison with the same class of operatives you have known in the North?

A I consider them far superior. I think they are the greatest operatives I have ever had any experience with.

Q Your opinion is that physically they compare favorably with any class of mill operatives you have come in contact with?

A Yes Sir, and far better than the North.

Q Then it is not true that they are diseased to an extent any more than any other class?

A They are not diseased at all, - poor, a tendency to consumption and anaemia, due to lack of nourishment, - that is the way they come in to us from the lives they have led before they come.

Q Where do these operatives originally come from into your mills?

A The bulk of mine come from the coves in the hills in Northwest Georgia and Tennessee.

Q And they have received education in those communities?

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A None at all; practically none.

Q Does their physical appearance and their physical condition when they arrive at the mill improve as a rule?

A They are very emaciated; very emaciated and stopped over.

Q What effect has the mill life upon these people after having worked in the mill for some reasonable period of time?

A They look like entirely different people.

Q Do they improve in health, or deteriorate?

A They improve very rapidly morally, mentally, physically and every other way.

Q Are they saving, frugal people?

A Hardly any of them.

Q Do they ever lay up any money and have bank accounts?

A Very few. I started a savings department about twelve years ago. I got as high as \$20,000 in deposits, mainly by the overseers and more intelligent class. The savings department today has gone down to about \$6,000 deposits with not over one dozen depositors, and I am going to cut it out this year owing to the lack of interest.

Q Do any of them ever buy their own homes?

A Very few. Quite a number work in the mill long enough to pay a mortgage on the home, then go back to their home, place a mortgage again and then come back to the mill and pay it off again.

Q To what extent do whole families work?

A To a very large extent when they first come to the mill. As they are trained, become capable of earning more money, the workers in the mill very materially decrease until, in lots of cases, there is only one and sometimes not more than two in a family of five or six. The younger members of a family drop out.

Q Have the tenants any ground around the houses for gardens?

A All they want for gardens and grazing.

Q Is that taken advantage of?

A To quite a large extent.

Q Do they raise livestock?

A Yes Sir.

Q What opportunities does the mill give them to purchase livestock, if any?

A We will help them in any way within reason.

Q Buy cows for them?

A Yes Sir.

Q Do you take that out of their wages?

A Yes Sir, but in most cases they come in and pay us. That is handled by the superintendent and agent, lending their own personal money. The mill is not allowed to do that at all. I want to say I have \$500 to \$1,000 loaned

to these operatives regularly, and I have almost yet to see the man who has ever beaten me out of a cent. These loans are made without interest.

Q What contact do you have with the people in the mill?

A I know them everyone by name. My relations are close with them.

Q What effect has this close personal relationship that you have with your help upon the operation and conditions in your mill and the success that you have had in your business, if any?

A It makes us all one big family and, without bragging, I consider it one of the most successful mills I have ever known and it has caused the help to come in and back me up to the fullest extent as a matter of pride and loyalty to make better work and more work.

Q Is the spirit among these operatives to cooperate with you and assist in building up your enterprize?

A It is the strongest esprit de corps that I have ever known. There are two things necessary; one is to be fair, and the other is to be straight and loyal with them and you can accomplish results that cannot be accomplished in any other way.

Q They are people that are easily led?

A They are people that are very, very suspicious.

You have got to get their loyalty and when you have got it they will make a success, I don't care who they are. To these conditions I attribute the fact that outside influences find it impossible to go in there and accomplish any results. They confide their troubles to me nearly every time.

Q What are the moral conditions?

A In the event of a loose character, male or female, finding their way into the community, the same is immediately reported to me by any one or by quite a number of the employees with the demand that such persons be instantly notified to get out of town. I consider them the most moral people that I have come in contact with. I'll bet you a thing cannot happen in Lindale in 24 hours that I won't know the truth of it. I know every person that is gambling and I know every person that is fooling with liquor. I might not be able to get the proof to convict them, but the fellow that is selling booze will come and tell me he is selling booze, and if I don't bother him he will tell me everything.

Q Does that condition prevail in any other mill to your knowledge?

A Quite a number of them.

Q Does that condition prevail in the Elsas mills that you know of?

A I don't know. That condition prevails to a greater extent in the mill community that is owned and controlled by us in the cuntry districts. I would not say I know a mill in the country today, but you take the mills in South Carolina and Trion, Georgia, and mills like that.

Q What sanitary condition have you in the mill?

A We have a number of toilets each, for males and females properly separated, with washroom attachment and these toilets are all enameled brick and steel, and even the seats, and they are washed every night with hose from top to bottom and thoroughly disinfected. The disinfecting is carried to such an extent that the whole village is sprayed with chloro-naphtholium twice a week, a big cart comes down with hose connections and sprays the whole town. During the two years I have done it you cannot find a fly in that town.

Q Has there ever been any attempt to organize your people from within the mill?

A Never. There was one attempt made to organize it without the mill about a year ago when an organizer by the name of Miles from Fall River organized a Union at the Anchor Hack Mill at Rome, and was holding meetings in Rome and was trying to get my help to come to him.

Q Did any of your help join that union?

A Two.

Q What because of them? Are they still with you?

A They are two of the best friends I have.

Q Are they still in the mill?

A Yes Sir.

Q Did you know they joined at the time?

A They told me they had joined.

Q Do you deny the right of the individual to organize?

A No Sir.

Q Do you accordingly claim the corresponding right to decide whether any foreign organization shall enter into the conditions of your mills?

A I reserve the right to employ or discharge anybody in my mills for reasons that I consider good and sufficient.
