

EXH 1

E. H. ROBERTS, sworn, testified:

EXAMINATION BY MR. DALY.

- Q Where do you live?
- A West End, 23 Grady Place, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Q How long have you lived here?
- A Only about since 1915, the fall.
- Q What is your occupation?
- A With the Fulton Bag Mills, capacity of superintendent.
- Q How long have you served them in that capacity?
- A Since September 8th last.
- Q You were not here then on May 20th last year?
- A Yes Sir.
- Q You were made superintendent last fall?
- A Yes Sir.
- Q What other places did you hold in the mill prior to that time?
- A I was assistant superintendent two years or more.
- Q What position did you hold in October, 1913?
- A I was assistant superintendent.
- Q What position did you hold May 20th, 1914?
- A Still assistant superintendent.
- Q Have you had any especial training?
- A I am a graduate of the Georgia School of Technology.
- Q What is the length of the course there?

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A The length of the course, including the special branches which I took is five years.

Q How long altogether have you served in these mills?

A Since July, 1910, July 18th, about five years.

Q What other mills did you work in prior to going to the Fulton Bag?

A The Eagle and Phoenix Mills, Columbus, Georgia, the Rushton Mills of Griffin, the Elizabeth Mills near Atlanta, which is now the Martell Mill situated at Egan, I believe it is.

Q What position did you hold in those mills?

A In the Eagle & Phoenix I worked as common laborer, just anything that came to hand to do, working for experience.

Q In those mills as common laborer you were in close contact with the workers?

A Yes Sir, some of them.

Q Do you know the conditions of the workers in this mill?

A Yes Sir.

Q Will you compare the working conditions of this mill with those of those mills in which you worked as a common laborer, in everything, surroundings, etc.?

A There is no comparison between this mill and the

Elizabeth Mill and it is much better from a sanitary standpoint than the Rushton Mill in Griffin or from a sanitary standpoint in both places it is much better, considerably cleaner throughout.

Q Are you familiar with the villages of the different mills in which you have worked?

A I lived in the village in Griffin.

Q What were the conditions of those villages then? Was there any sanitation?

A Yes Sir, very nice clean villages, surface closets, though, but generally very cleanly kept and very neat, rather.

Q How about the village of the Fulton Bag Mills?

A The village of the Fulton Bag Mills is on an average very good.

Q At the time of the strike of May 20th, 1914, did you know anything about the sanitary conditions of that village?

A Yes Sir, I was here at that time.

Q What would be your opinion as to the sanitation?

A Well, it has not changed considerably. There is only one change I could mention at all and that is, instead of having closets out back of the house they are now put up and made in them. That is the only change that has been made.

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Q Are they connected up to the sewer?

A I don't know about that. I don't know anything about the sewer connections.

Q Is the trough system used out there still?

A I should not think so since the individual change. That is one thing I have had very little to do with and really was never in one of the closets in my life, though I have seen them in passing.

Q You were here at the time of the strike in 1914?

A Yes Sir.

Q Were you in touch with the men who went out on strike at that time?

A Yes Sir.

Q Why did they go out?

A That is a question I don't guess anybody could answer and give you the same answer, because everybody has a different answer to that question.

Q They had leaders, didn't they?

A Yes Sir.

Q Do you know who they were?

A I know some of them.

Q Did you converse with some of them at that time about their troubles?

A On various things I have.

Q What reasons did they assign?

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A There was no fixed reason. Back when the organization was first started the only thing I could gather at all when they would solicit members for the Council was that they had in mind perfecting the organization and striking. Now then, as to the grievances you can never get any specific idea as to what they were.

Q I am speaking now about the October grievances; is that what you have in mind?

A Yes Sir, the Council was started I understand a little previous to that time. And that was the agitation, "We are going to get up a labor union here and strike."

Q Did you keep in touch with that Council the best you could as superintendent?

A I was not superintendent at that time.

Q In your capacity?

A As assistant superintendent of course I worked with them and watched it, but it was kept very close. It was a secret affair.

Q How did you keep in touch with it?

A By inquiries. Some of the people they would approach would come to me and ask me some things about it and tell me some things about it.

Q Did you have any particular persons selected to keep in touch with that union?

A Not I.

BHR 6

Q Did the mill have them?

A I don't know Sir.

Q Then in your own operations you had no persons who reported to you regularly?

A Not as to their business. Of course, being interested as I was, I asked questions of some of our people I knew I could get information from.

Q Would they go into the Union and then tell you what went on and then stop reporting to you?

A No Sir, some of them had been in and were kicked out, or got out voluntarily through disgust, and those I found I could get information from.

Q Who had charge of the employing from October 15th to May 14th?

A Mr. Florence, the pay master. He has had charge of that since I have been here.

Q What did you do with this information that you had received from people that were reporting to you as to the way this union was being organized?

A Well, I just kept it in my mind.

Q Did you report it up there to anybody in authority?

A Where it vitally concerned us I did.

Q Who did you report to?

A At that time I took those things up with my superintendent.

Q Mr. Johnstone?

A No Sir, Mr. Lowndes was superintendent at that time. I was under him and therefore everything I knew pertaining to the mill I talked with him about it and of course to Mr. Johnstone also.

Q Did he or they give you instructions to still keep in touch with the organization?

A My instructions are to keep in touch with everything that pertains to the mill..

Q Everything that pertains to the mill? You were on the job looking out for it as your business?

A Why sure.

Q As a matter of fact do you know whether any of the members of that union were discharged from October 14 May 20th between those two parades?

A Yes Sir, I could not state who, though; but I know some were discharged. I could not tell you who were in that parade.

Q When you had made your investigations would you report up to Mr. Johnstone or Mr. Lowndes the names of the persons that were attending the union or belonged to the union?

A Usually, yes Sir.

Q You gave the names to them?

A I gave the names, it was something like this:

Q If their agitation and their conduct was sufficient to warrant our getting on to them about it or disapproving of their methods or their conduct, I did, not only that but the people themselves.

Q What was the reason for giving the names of the union members to Mr. Johnstone and Mr. Lowndes, the superintendents?

A Well, you might ask me what was the reason for giving the name of a good employee or a bad employee, and my answer would be the same thing: I tried to acquaint them with conditions as they existed, whether good or bad.

Q In your other answer just preceding this you stated something to the effect that when you saw people talking together in the mills as to the union -- is that what you meant in your answer, that you reported them too?

A Where they made themselves busy and left their work and trotted around with the other help, why, naturally I reported it. Not only that but I reprimanded them for it.

Q Did you ever call in the men, the particular persons who were the most aggressive in getting up this organization at that time? Weren't there certain ones that were more active than others?

A Oh yes, always.

Q Did you know them very well from your other investigation?

A Not better than anybody else. From my investigation naturally, when a person so conducts himself as to become obnoxious in the room, I know them better than anybody else.

Q Now you had these people clearly in mind that were active throughout the mill, didn't you?

A Yes Sir.

Q What became of these people eventually?

A If through our talk and advise they would stay on the work or come back to the work and behave, then they stayed in the mill; if they did not they went out.

Q They were discharged?

A Yes Sir.

Q Were many of that kind discharged?

A Quite a number.

Q Then the reason for their discharge was they would leave their work and go around through the mill talking to others about the union?

A Yes Sir.

Q Trying to get them to join the union, is that correct?

A Well we did not know, necessarily when they were away from their work they were talking along that line; but if they left their work and neglected it we got on them right straight.

Q When you found a man who was agitating the union, going around through the mill, what did you do with him?

A If we found a man leaving his work and getting off and gadding and talking, whether he was or was not agitating the union or anything else, we fired him, the same way we do now. If anybody neglects the work now and leaves it and are not persuaded through our efforts to come back and attend to it of course we let them out.

Q Before you discharge a man of that kind would you tell him he ought to keep on his work, that you objected to his going around through the mill?

A Yes Sir, unless he was so open in his defiance to us that it was unnecessary to take up the matter with him. In other words, if he just showed by his actions he did not care for us or anybody else, he was going to do it anyway, we did not stop to talk the matter over with him.

Q Were you ever a member of the union, Mr. Rogers?

A No Sir.

Q Do you approve of unions?

A I approve of unions in a certain sense.

Q What is that sense?

A Where they are organized for the purpose of upbuilding the people that join them, their social life and their welfare generally, I approve of them heartily. We attempted such an organization here some time ago.

Q Will you tell about that attempt?

A Yes Sir.

Q What was it?

A As to the first organization I could not be just definite as to the time that it was launched, but some time during the year 1914. A number of men were interested in getting up this organization. We called it the Fulton Athletic Association, or something on that order, I don't remember just what the name was.

Q That was done with the approval of Mr. Elsas and the managers of the mill?

A I don't know whether Mr. Elsas knew anything about it or not.

Q What became of that organization?

A It boomed for awhile. We had a banquet for a time or two, I believe, and about that time this trouble came on and it knocked it up and we let it go.

Q Were all kinds of employees in the mill permitted

to join?

A Every boy over sixteen years of age.

Q A man's organization?

A Yes Sir, and we had in mind adding to that a women's organization also as soon as we perfected this.

Q Were you here on May 20th, 1914 when the strike occurred?

A Yes Sir.

Q Was there much disorder that day?

A A terrible lot, yes Sir.

Q Was anybody injured?

A Not that I know of, seriously.

Q No particular violence occurred, did there?

A Of course there was a lot of noise and confusion.

Q But outside the noise and confusion what actually happened in the way of violence?

A I don't know that any violence occurred.

Q Where were you?

A I was in Mill No. 1, the weaving room, at the time.

Q Did anybody strike from that room?

A Yes Sir, a big portion of them.

Q Were they permitted to go out with the usual pass or not?

A Yes Sir, in this way we took their names at the gate as they went out.

Q You opened the doors?

A Yes Sir, and took their names at the gate instead of giving the usual passes, since there was such a number.

Q Was there any effort to close the doors on them and hold them in your room?

A No Sir. In fact as quick as we saw the ones that had finally determined to go out we urged them to go ahead out as speedily as possible.

Q What difference in the enforcement of the rules was there prior to the strike of 1913, than there was after the strike of 1913 up until the strike of May 20th, 1914? Was there any difference in the enforcement of the rules of the mill prior to October, 1913, the first strike?

A No difference in the way they were enforced; they had to be enforced more often on account of the increased disorder.

Q What was the cause of that disorder?

A Just as I told you, some came from the agitation and the shock and the general unrest among the people.

Q The general unrest after the strike of 1913?

A Yes Sir.

Q Now you said at the beginning of your testimony when I asked you about the cause of the strike, you made this statement that there was no one that knew the exact

cause of the strike but that you understood that their plan was to organize and then strike; is that correct?

A That is correct.

Q Let me ask you again how you got that understanding?

A From people whom they had tried to persuade to join the union that would not join, and from some that went in and quit through disgust.

Q Were complaints made to you between these two dates as to conditions in the mill by the workmen or those who worked in it, in any way? Would they come to you and complain about conditions in the mill?

A What sort of conditions?

A Working conditions, wages, the mill village, etc.

A Why, there was always more or less complaint all the time, but I don't know that there was any more complaint at that time than now, or even previous to that time.

Q There always were complaints?

A You see if they have got any complaint at all they come to me, or some one that will come to me about it.

Q Would many of them come to you and say that the wages were not high enough?

A No Sir; that is a complaint I rarely heard because there is not one that went out that would admit

at the time he was going out that we were paying the best wages of any mill in this country.

Q Did anyone contend to you as to the right to join and belong to this union?

A NO one.

Q Did they discuss that with you?

A No Sir.

Q No one ever did that?

A No Sir, as I told you before, they tried to keep that thing a profound secret.

Q Did you have anything to do with the employment of help after the strike of May 20th, 1914?

A Mr. Florence, as I told you is the only one who has charge of the employing, or has had since I have been here.

Q Do you know of any connection that this mill had with any other mills in the way of supplying help during the period of the strike, beginning, say, with May 20th?

A Supplying help?

Q Yes.

A Well, when the mill would have had to shut down a certain portion of their machinery and have a surplus of help, I remember in one instance they notified us.

Q What mill was that?

A At Lindale, the Massachusetts Mill in Georgia.

Q Were you ever at the Lindale Mill?

A Yes Sir, I went there on two occasions.

Q Did you secure any help there?

A Yes Sir.

Q What inducements did you hold out to bring them over here?

A None except our wages, what we offered here.

Q Did you pay their expenses?

A I paid their ex-enses here, yes Sir.

Q Did you make any particular offers as to what they would get, - more money than what they were getting for work of that character?

A No Sir.

Q How many did you bring from that mill?

A I should say something like fifteen, or possibly more, I do not recall just exactly the number.

Q Who did you tell when you went to that mill?

Who was in authority there?

A Mr. Hedkleham or Mr. Marshall the superintendent.

Q Did you tell them the strike prevailed over here?

A They knew it already.

Q Did they express themselves as being desirous of breaking this strike?

A I don't know that they made any such statement.

They made the statement that we could get all the weavers that would satisfy us if they would come down here.

Q You had authority to go in and get them?

A No Sir, I did not have authority to go in and get them. I did not make any arrangements with any weavers at all. Their overseer of weaving, after I got permission to get the surplus of weavers, - he of course had in mind the hands he was going to lay out because of having shut down this machinery, so he called certain of them up.

Q When was it you went over to these mills? How long after the strike?

A Some time, I could not tell you the date.

Q How did the strike affect your room as to the numbers? Any of the rooms with which you were acquainted?

A My rooms are the whole mill. You understand I am not confined to one room.

Q How did that strike affect the operation of the mill?

A It curtailed the output of course.

Q On the first day, it has been stated here, that there were 85 or 86 who went out.

A It was either 78 or 89; I don't recall which.

Q It was from 75 to 90. Did they continue to drop

out on any particular day in any particular number?

A Not any particular number. Some just stayed out.

Q Did some stay out the second day after the strike, do you remember?

A I could not say the second day; I will say they stayed out though. I don't know just what day. I have no record of it.

Q Have you any record of those who stayed out all told during the period of the strike?

A No Sir.

Q Do you think as many as 150 left the mill all told?

A I should not think much over that, if that. I should think that would be a pretty conservative estimate. That is a matter I could not state definitely.

Q There were others who dropped out from time to time?

A Yes Sir.

Q I suppose there were others that came back, were there?

A Yes Sir.

Q How many are there in the mill now that were out at that time?

A I could not say how many. There are several.

Q Are there not a dozen of them back?

A Yes Sir, more than a dozen.

Q Did any of them come to you to be put back?

A Yes Sir.

Q What would they say about the union?

A That was a matter that Mr. Johnstone passed on.

I would tell them to see him; I had not a word to say as to whether they would be taken back or not. At the same time, in certain cases if I had a particular liking for a hand and though he was good help and would come in and stay on the work I would recommend that hand to him.

Q Would you have taken them back, would it have been to your view to take them back if they still belonged to that particular union?

A I did not care whether they belonged to the union or not if they would come in and do the work and stay on the work. It would not affect me. That was all I required of them.

Q Would you pay any attention as to whether or not they were joining the union immediately after they came back?

A I paid attention to all those things. I paid attention to everything.

Q Do you pay attention to that now?

A Yes Sir, I pay attention even so far as possible

to all their surroundings and everything I can learn about a hand, no matter who he is, no matter how insignificant he may be; if I can learn something about him I do it.

Q Is there any system of espionage, or spy system, by which you could keep in touch with the workmen of the mill?

A No Sir, not that I have; I don't know whether anybody else has or not. The only thing I do, I get information from certain old, trusty help, any special information, but I go to them and ask them about these men: what is he doing? Is he a good man? Has he stayed on his work? Is he earning? Is he getting production? and all such questions as that about as many people as I can, and I try to retain that in my memory as much as possible.

Q When you worked in these other mills did you sign a contract?

A No Sir.

Q Did you ever see a contract signed between employees and workmannin any mill in Georgia?

A I do not know of such a case. you understand I except this mill.

Q Yes, I understand that. Have any complaints been made to you about the contract since the strike

of May 20th, that it is necessary to sign in the Fulton Bag Mill?

A Why, this contract has always been knocked to a certain extent and for a certain reason. There is always, or has in the past, - of course help is plentiful, at least it is with us now, but in the past we had to gouge around and get it. In other words we had to put forth every effort to keep our machinery running toward getting our help in; and we have rival mills in the city and in the suburbs. I think it is due as much to that and the officials of these mills as any other cause, why this contract is not popular, because every means of persuasion that was fair and legitimate, of course, they used to get our help and of course when we want help we paint the bright side of our organization here; but I think the most particular trouble here in that line has come from these rival mills for instance, in beginning ball games at these other mills and in their rooting they would call attention to the contract, and they would say, "You cannot play base ball over there unless you sign the contract." That would get to the manager of the teams, and in that way the contract here has gained some notoriety.

Q What are your particular views about that contract?

A I have signed that contract and worked under it. I did not mind signing it in the least.

Q What advantage is that contract to you?

A I don't know that it is any special advantage to me. I never have been affected by it one way or the other.

Q Does it hold these men here when they want to quit work?

A Yes Sir, we compel them to complete the contract. The contract is one which requires them to give us notice.

Q Don't a great many of them quit without working out their notice?

A It is a very seldom thing, unless they offer some valid excuse. You take a person who is sick or has sickness in the family or lives quite a distance out somewhere, they come to us and say they would like to get off without finishing their contract, they are in trouble.

Q Would you let them go in that case?

A Yes Sir.

Q Have you had many cases of that kind?

A Not particularly.

Q In other words, if you think they have a valid excuse for wanting to be off you would permit them to go; is that your idea of working out the contract?

A Yes Sir, regardless of whether it stopped machinery for us or not.

Q In the event a person was sick and needed money before the end of the week was there any way by which it could be had?

A Yes Sir.

Q How is that done?

A They get it by operating on the same terms.

Q How do you find out as to the condition of these people whenever you may exercise that discretion?

A If their home is here, or if we can make an investigation here without too much trouble, we have a doctor for that purpose.

Q Is Dr. Hawkins your man for that purpose?

A Yes Sir; if He reports back they are not sick, or if we think they are trying to frisk us, there is nothing doing.

As to the cause of the strike of May 20th, 1915, the strike, so called, was due, according to my recollection, to four or five things: first, that the mill village was unsanitary; second, they demanded the abolition of that contract which provides for the holding of wages under certain conditions that you are familiar with, and also provides for certain fines and deductions; third, they demanded shorter hours; and next, there was something

said about child labor.

Q How far do you think the question of child labor entered into the cause of that strike?

A Let me add to the foregoing that the last cause was the recognition of their union. This latter they claimed to have caused their difficulty last summer when I was here.

Q Are those the only causes you have heard?

A Yes, those were what were published in the newspapers, those were the demands they were making.

Q How far do you think the question of child labor entered into the cause of this strike of May 20th, 1914?

A It did not enter. That was not an issue that came up until after the strike was pulled off.

Q How far do you think the question of sixty hours a week entered into it?

A That question I never heard of until after the strike occurred.

Q How far did the contract enter into it?

A That question was not brought up in a formal way at all, or informally, for that matter.

Q You had heard complaints as to the contract?

A As I told you, I had heard these from time to time.

Q To what extent did the sanitary conditions, living conditions in that mill village, enter into it?

A Not at all.

Q To what extent did the wages they were being paid enter into it?

A Not at all.

Q Had any of these demands been made of you prior to May 20th, 1914?

A No Sir.

Q Then, what was the cause of the strike?

A I don't know Sir. I could not answer that question.

Q To what extent did the recognition of the union enter into it?

A None of those demands were made, Sir, prior to the strike, to my knowledge.

Q If they were made they were made without your knowledge?

A Yes Sir. Of course some things went on that I did not know about that the officers did.

Q To what extent was the discharge of men belonging to the union a subject which entered into it beyond that?

A I should think it would enter into it to a certain extent.

Q Quite a number of them had been discharged?

A Yes Sir.

Q Did you have as many as 100 men belonging to the

Union who had been discharged that winter?

A I should not think so.

Q Did you have as many as 50?

A That would be hard for me to answer; very difficult indeed. I never thought about it until you asked the question.

Q Do you think 50 would be out of the way?

A Probably not more than 50, I should say.

Q In the event a person desires employment in your mill, Mr. Rogers, what must he do in order to get employment?

A They go to the pay master's office, and if there is a vacancy in the mill he lets them sign a contract, gives them a qualification ticket and sends them into the mill to that particular department.

Q Is there any inquiry made as to the standing and character of the employee before he goes to the mill?

A Yes Sir.

Q What investigation is made?

A They ask quite a number of questions down there.

Q Who does that?

A Where they are men who work notices on the former months.

Q Who does that?

A Mr. Florence or one of us assists. I believe

Mr. Florence does that entirely now. I have sent them up, a few, very few.

Q The investigation you make of the employees is a small percentage of the examination of them by asking questions as to where they have been, etc.?

A Yes Sir.

Q In the event any disputes arose in your mill how are they adjusted?

A Of what kind?

Q Any kind of dispute.

A It depends altogether as to who it arises with.

Q A dispute as to the quality of cloth, or fines, or deductions that a person might claim was unjust, suppose there was a case in your mill where a man claimed that he had been fined unjustly for defective cloth; how would that be adjusted?

A The cloth is all shown to him in the presence of an overseer, and if there is a dispute about it, unless the overseer convinces the man he should be fined at the time, the cloth will be set aside for myself to pass on, or Mr. Johnstone. In other words, any employee, we have in each room second hands, that is, assistant foremen, and if they can adjust any complaint of course we do not have anything to do with the fining of them, the overseer does that; but if they cannot adjust any

complaint with the operative at all, we do it. If they cannot they go to the overseer and fix it with him. If they cannot get a compromise the next step is to come to me. If we all cannot get a compromise the next step is for them to go to the general manager. If that fails they go to Mr. Oscar Elsas.

Q They go up through the various heads to the office?

A Yes Sir.

Q Do you know of many cases that have been reached without calling on Mr. Elsas?

A There have been a number. Previous to Mr. Johnstone coming here he handled the complaints himself.

Q When operatives are discharged are their reasons given for their discharge?

A To them?

A Yes.

A In some cases, and in some cases they are very apparant and it is not necessary.

Q Can there be a case where a person would be discharged without their knowing the reason?

A Not if they ask. If they want to know we have not got any bones about telling them.

Q Did any of them ever ask you during the winter of 1914 whether they had been discharged for belonging to the union?

A Why, I don't know, ^{whether} that question has been put to me or not, Sir.

Q If it had been would you have told them why?

A Yes Sir, I would have told them if I had known it. There were plenty of discharges going on and especially at that time and now.

Q When I say "belonging to the union" I mean when they were dodging and neglecting their business.

A Yes Sir, but as assistant foreman I did not find at that time one of the leaders. There were a number of discharges I know nothing about.

Q What is the moral condition of the help in your mills, in your opinion?

A Much over the standard.

Q You take the morale of the women, for instance.

A Well, Sir, as far as I know they are as good as any mill people I ever saw.

Q Compare them with other classes of society; do the morals of their women run fairly well in comparison with them?

A With any manufacturing establishment I have ever seen. Of course their conduct is not what might be expected in different stations of life. They are different to them.

Q How about the physical conditions, their health