

Atlanta, Ga. Dec. 16, 1914.

Mr. A. St. George Joyce,
Third National Bank Bldg.

Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir:-

We are in receipt of your note of wednesday enclosing copy of story that you have written in response to the North American's request for a special article covering "Pitiful Working Conditions" in reference to the recent trouble at the Mills, in which you ask if there are any statements not in accord with the facts, to correct the same.

You stated to us when you first called that you had been instructed to get up a story of the "Pitiful Working Conditions" and that you were looking for "Sob Stuff." We regret to state that we think your article is an effort to furnish "Sob Stuff" without reference to facts. There is so little of fact in the story which you have prepared that to make corrections would mean to take issue with the entire statement ~~that you were prepared~~.

It is true that in the latter part of your article you have quoted two short statements given to you by us, but the manner in which you quote these statements in no sense presents the matter in a fair spirit.

If it is your purpose, and that of your papers to draw grossly exaggerated pictures, you have succeeded, but if you and your papers are looking for facts it would seem that you would obtain your information from personal observation rather than from the interested parties. You stated to our Mr. Elsas that in fact you had not seen the "tent colony."

We gave you every opportunity of going through our plant, and you admitted to us that you were unable to find the defective sanitary conditions which you were instructed to make a feature of.

Your weather reports are accurate. But other than this you have departed far from the truth.

It is untrue that a large majority of the "tent colony" are recent operatives of this company. Many of them have never been in its

employ. As to those employees who went out on strike, opportunity was given them to return to work, except those who had been violent and abusive in their conduct, or had created property damage. A great many of those who had been out on strike returned and are now at work.

The officials of this company have never declared that they will have no union "mixing" in their affairs. They have made no inquiry of its employees whether they belonged to a union or not. They have declined to arbitrate differences which they have insisted never existed. The people who quit of their own volition, endeavored to shut down the plant and attempted to prevent twelve times their number, or 1200 people who desired to work, from working. In this they were unsuccessful. If the conditions ~~were~~ ^{had not} been falsely represented to you there would have been no difficulty in creating a general strike; this situation arose in May of this year, prior to the present depression in cotton mill circles, at a time when help was in demand among cotton mills, and unless the conditions at our plant had been satisfactory ~~to~~ to the employees the strike would doubtless have succeeded, because every method known to precipitate a strike was tried, including violence, insult and intimidation.

If all sympathy is to be extended to the people who voluntarily left our employ and ~~all~~ ^{all} facts exaggerated in their behalf, what is to be said in favor of those who are anxious to work and earn their living? Are these people entitled to no consideration?

It is true that Federal mediators have been to see us. We have given them every facility for going through our plant, and have exhibited to them our records, which bore on the facts, and our contentions. We have not understood that these Mediators have reported that the conditions of our plant were in any respect as represented by your article.

It is untrue that we are backed by the National Association of Manufacturers, or the Southern Cotton Manufacturers Association, nor have we solicited their assistance, nor are we desirous of having any fight, nor have we fought. We have made an effort, and will continue to make an effort, to protect our property and give employment to those who are willing to work for us.

We have stated to you, and have offered to prove to you that at no time have as much as ten per cent of our employees been out on strike. This is not a case where all our employees have gone out due to conditions which they found unsatisfactory, and that we have attempted to fill our plant with others, but it is a case where, as stated, less than ten per cent abandoned their work for no reason other than that they demanded the reinstatement of eighty-five persons who had been discharged over a period of several months. It would not seem from this that these people were dissatisfied with conditions of employment, or the wages, or any other thing that is now brought up, but that they were willing and anxious to remain in our employ- not only those who went out on strike, but their insistence that the eighty-five who had been discharged should also go back to these conditions.

We think your statement that the physical and mental energies of emaciated persons are being fed into the machinery and spun ^{too} into big profits is/demagogical to merit reply.

Your comment on the contract is lacking in fairness, as well as in truth. Our contract has been approved by our Appellate Courts, and no one is compelled to sign it, nor is any one compelled to enter in to our employ. It is held to be not only legal, but reasonable. As we have stated to you, it is not only for our protection but for the protection of the other employees who desire to work.

You ~~repeated~~ repeat charges made by strike leaders that are utterly without truth, and the slightest investigation on your part would have demonstrated it.

We have given you figures showing what amounts have been held back, and have demonstrated to you that the bonuses which we give for continuous work is many many times the amount collected for fines or ~~on~~ account of notices.

It is untrue that the employees decided that they have stood our system as long as they could and that a strike was called. We have stated to you that an effort at a strike was made because it was contended that certain union people had been discharged, all of which

we explained to you in our written statement. We have the original letter received from the Union at the time the strike was called, the sole complaint being as hereinbefore stated.

This company complies strictly with the Child Labor Law of Georgia. In fact it does not employ children at the age the law permits, but its limit is higher than that of the law. The number of hours is that fixed by law. The wages which we pay are in excess of any other cotton mill doing similar work in the South.

It is untrue that we operate shacks. The mill village houses are superior to the houses in the immediate neighborhood not owned by the Mills. The Mill receives 25 to 35 cents a week per room. Its houses have running water and washing facilities, toilets and sewerage. This rental is about one-third of the amount that is charged for houses in the neighborhood owned by others not affording as good facilities as ours.

It is untrue that notice was sent to shack dwellers that they must vacate if they could not pay the rent, but we did insist that people who were out on strike had no right to occupy our houses without paying rent. Besides, our contract with our help provided that if they ceased to be in our employ they would vacate our property. It was essential to have these houses for other operatives who desired to enter our employ. Those who declined to comply with their contract were removed by process of law.

You state that children are "checked" at twenty-five cents per week. We have nothing to do with this, as we have explained to you. The Welfare Home is under the auspices of the Methodist Church. It is doing a highly commendable work. We contribute to its maintenance. The small charge that it makes for various services is to create self-respect among the employees and not to let them feel that they are receiving charity.

We do not deem it advisable to further go into details in reference to your article. We are merely suggesting these things to you in an endeavor to show you how utterly unfair, as well as untruthful, are the statements contained in your article.

We do not think it should be your purpose, or of the papers that you represent, to wilfully injure us, but we think that such would be the effect of your article.

We trust that before publishing this type of article that you will personally investigate the matters that have been represented to you by interested parties, and we offer to give you every facility to show you how utterly unfounded are the statements made against us.

There should be no hurry merely because a newspaper wishes to print something, but when property rights are being attacked patient investigation should be employed, and what is published should be the truth.

Very truly yours,

FULTON BAG & COTTON MILLS

By

President.