

INDUSTRIAL REMUNERATION CONFERENCE

THE REPORT

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS AND PAPERS

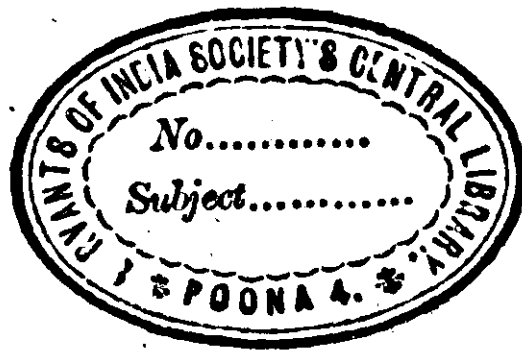
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UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF THE

RIGHT HON. SIR CHARLES W. DILKE, BART., M.P.

ON THE 28TH, 29TH, AND 30TH JANUARY 1885



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*** Each Author and Speaker has had the opportunity of correcting his remarks before publication, and is solely responsible for the statements of fact and expressions, of opinion contained in his contributions to the volume*

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PREFACE.

IN the spring of 1884 a gentleman of Edinburgh determined to devote a considerable sum of money to the purpose of 'keeping before the public mind this vital question, viz.—What are the best means, consistent with justice and equity, for bringing about a more equal division of the daily products of industry between Capital and Labour, so that it may become possible for all to enjoy a fair share of material comfort and intellectual culture, possible for all to lead a dignified life, and less difficult for all to lead a good life?'

In response to his request, Sir Thomas Brassey, Mr. John Burnett, Mr. Thomas Burt, the Earl of Dalhousie, Professor Foxwell, Mr. Robert Giffen, and Mr. Frederic Harrison consented to act as the Trustees of a sum of 1,000*l.*, which should be devoted to prosecuting an inquiry into the question, *Is the present system or manner whereby the products of industry are distributed between the various persons and classes of the community satisfactory? Or, if not, are there any means by which that system could be improved?* They determined to invite the Statistical Society to assist in the undertaking, and a Joint Committee was formed, consisting of the Trustees and the following nominees of the Statistical Society: Sir Rawson W. Rawson, Professor Leone Levi, Mr. F. G. P. Neison, Major Ritchie,¹ Mr. Stephen Bourne, Mr. David

¹ Major Ritchie, M.P., was, owing to other engagements, unable to serve on the committee.

Dale, and the Rev. W. Cunningham. The Joint Committee subsequently co-opted five additional members: Mr. A. H. D. Acland, Mr. W. Crawford, Mr. W. H. Hey, Mr. B. Jones, and Mr. R. D. Roberts.

The Committee determined that they could best carry out the purpose of the trust by organising a Conference, at which the interests of Capital and Labour respectively should be adequately represented by practical men. They determined to invite papers bearing on the question, and to give opportunity for the thorough discussion of the statements made in those papers. They announced their willingness to receive offers of papers and information as to trade societies or other bodies that would wish to be represented by delegates at the Conference, and suggested the following points as specially worthy of consideration:—

1. The existing system by which the products of industry are distributed.

2. Do any artificial and remediable causes influence prejudicially

- (a) The stability of industrial employment;
- (b) The steadiness of rates of wages;
- (c) The well-being of the working classes?

3. How far, in what manner, and by what means would the more general distribution of capital, or the State direction of capital, contribute, or not contribute, to

- (a) An increase in the products of industry;
- (b) The well-being of the classes dependent upon the use of capital? (Co-operative production, profit-sharing, &c.)

4. How far, in what manner, and by what means, would (1) a more general ownership of land (peasant proprietorship), of an interest in land (tenant right), or (2) the State ownership of land, conduce, or not conduce, to

- (a) The increased production of wealth;
- (b) The welfare of the classes affected by the change?

5. Does existing legislation, or the incidence of existing legislation, affect prejudicially

- (a) The production of industrial wealth ;
- (b) The well-being of the classes engaged in the production ;
- (c) The natural or the most beneficial distribution of the accumulating products of national industry (including Succession Duties, Friendly Societies, Insurance, &c.) ?

Can any of these be promoted by changes in existing legislation or taxation ?

This announcement was made in the London and provincial papers on September 8, 1884. On the same day an article appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* from the pen of Mr. F. Harrison, which gives a clear statement of the purposes of the founder of the trust, and the hopes entertained by those engaged in carrying it out.

A NEW INDUSTRIAL INQUIRY.

BY MR. FREDERIC HARRISON.

As I have known something of the projected Conference on Industrial Questions from the first, I may be permitted to say a few words as to its scope and nature. A gentleman of Edinburgh, who prefers to remain anonymous, some time ago consulted several persons known to take an interest in industrial problems, as to how he could best devote a certain portion of his fortune, so as 'to make some provision for keeping before the public mind this vital question, namely—*What are the best means, consistent with equity and justice, for bringing about a more equal division of the accumulated wealth of this country, and a more equal division of the daily products of industry between Capital and Labour, so that it may become possible for all to enjoy a fair share of material comfort and intellectual culture, possible for all to lead a dignified life, and less difficult for all to lead a good life ?*' He received in reply various suggestions, and, after long deliberation, decided to name trustees to whom he should make over an ample fund, authorising them to arrange, in any ways they

thought best, for the holding of a public Conference on some definite industrial question, limiting the discussion to a moderately small number of representative men, nominated by well-known bodies having an industrial interest from many different sides. The original Trustees are Sir Thomas Brassey, Mr. J. Burnett (of the Engineers' Society), Mr. T. Burt, M.P., Lord Dalhousie, Mr. Robert Giffen (President of the Statistical Society), Professor H. S. Foxwell (of Cambridge), and Mr. Frederic Harrison. The seven Trustees held a series of meetings, wherein they considered the best means of giving effect with complete impartiality to the purposes of the trust. This was simply to keep before the public mind the enormous disparity of comfort resulting from our modern industrial life; which is, as the original letter puts it, at once a great evil in itself and a great danger to the commonwealth.

There are never wanting, of course, inquiries and discussions as to alleged defects in our industrial system; but they are not always fruitful in result, and they usually start from preconceived doctrines and represent one side or one interest. The Trustees have sought to originate an inquiry which should not start from any doctrine, and which should be open to all interests. They have sought to reduce to a minimum that inevitable part of every inquiry into these wide questions which is desultory, unscientific, anarchical, or doctrinaire. They would wish to have the debate limited to those who have something to tell us that will stand sifting; and at the same time they do not exclude from a fair hearing any serious opinion or school. It seemed to them that these conditions would be best attained if they proposed to one of the established associations to undertake the inquiry with a special Committee and fund. Ultimately the Statistical Society undertook the task, and named a Sub-Committee for the purpose. As the published list will show, the Committee now includes the names of men known as trained officials and administrators, statisticians, and economists; leaders of the workmen's movements and societies; men representing great estates, and men representing popular constituencies; as well as several of the economists of the younger school, both at Oxford and Cambridge, who have applied themselves ardently to the study of social problems. The idea in forming the Committee was to insure the presence of men trained to business and scientific statistics, who should be ready to look at those questions from the point of view of labour as well as capital, and who would not come to the inquiry with any hide-bound doctrines whatever.

After much deliberation, the scheme of inquiry adopted by the Committee is this. They would begin by holding a Conference, consisting of 150 members, not casually selected from a body of subscribers, much less open indiscriminately to all comers, but consisting entirely of delegates selected by a great many public associations representing labour as well as capital, or occupied in the investigation of industrial questions. Thus trades unions and chambers of commerce, co-operative and economic societies, together with all similar associations dealing with industry, either in the interests of the workmen or employer, or in the interests of society generally, would be invited to name representatives to the Conference. And, alongside of this and the public discussion of such questions, the Committee would invite papers for publication, and endeavour to collect trustworthy returns on selected points. After the Conference is concluded, the scheme contemplates the publication of the discussions, together with such papers, returns, and other information as may appear worthy of a permanent form. In this way, it is hoped, something may be done to form materials for a practical hand-book on industrial problems, the result of the work of many minds, dealing with the subject under very different conditions. The type to which such a volume or volumes would belong is the very remarkable and authoritative Report on Trade Societies, issued by the Social Science Association in 1860. That volume was the real source of almost all the knowledge before the public down to the Reports of the Royal Commission, in 1867-8-9, which, indeed, in no way superseded its usefulness. It is remarkable how many of the men who worked on that Committee of 1860, and prepared the volume that resulted from its discussions, have since been eminent in the service of the State, or in the cause of science. When men like the late Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Forster, Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and the late Charles Buxton, Frederick Maurice, and Professor Jevons combined their experience in one joint investigation, the result was at once impartial and trustworthy.

Whether the inquiry about to be undertaken will bear fruit in similar usefulness will depend on the answers given to the invitations by the public bodies and eminent authorities to whom they are addressed. The subject is, of course, in one sense, a more difficult one to grasp, because it is not confined to the association of a particular class, but relates to the field of labour in general. For the details of the scheme now submitted to the public the original Trustees are not, as a body, responsible, and by devolving their trust for execution on

the Statistical Society and its sub-committee, they have ceased directly to control the organisation. But it is their earnest hope that some little thing may be done to keep before the eyes of the public the need of unremitting efforts to mitigate the acknowledged dangers which beset our industrial life. Men like Mr. Burt and Sir Thomas Brassey, Mr. Burnett and Mr. Giffen, view that industrial life from very different points of view, and they often differ widely as to what the dangers are, and how they could be lessened. But they have felt, like all their colleagues in the trust, and of the Special Committee of organisation, that they ought not to decline the task thrown on them by a man of generous public spirit, who is as completely free from any personal object in founding this trust as they are themselves in accepting it. And I believe they all agree with him when he says, 'Wealth, luxury, and extravagance among the few, accompanied by poverty, misery, and want among the many, is at once a great evil in itself and a great danger to the commonwealth.'—*Pall Mall Gazette*, September 8, 1884.

When the Committee came to consider the practical arrangements of a three days' Conference in greater detail, it became obvious that the questions must be put somewhat differently if they were to evoke good discussion, and the business of each day was planned as follows:—

FIRST DAY.

Has the increase of the products of industry within the last hundred years tended most to the benefit of capitalists and employers, or to that of the working classes, whether artisans, labourers, or others? and in what relative proportions in any given period?

SECOND DAY.

Do any remediable causes influence prejudicially

- (a) The continuity of industrial employment;
- (b) The rates of wages;
- (c) The well-being of the working-classes?

THIRD DAY.

Would the more general distribution of capital or land, or the State management of capital or land, promote or impair the production of wealth and the welfare of the community?

In addition to the papers offered, some of which the Committee were unable to accept, papers were invited from representative men, who were known to be well qualified to put forward the views of some important classes of the community, or who were authoritatively recommended as competent to express the views of some association.¹

The Committee then proceeded to invite additional delegates to the Conference from bodies connected with different interests. They desired that the Conference should be composed so far as possible as follows:—

	Number of Delegates.
1. Delegates of Chambers of Commerce (10) and Associations of Capitalists engaged in Industry (10) or Agriculture (10)	30
2. Delegates of Trades Unions	50
3. Delegates of Friendly Societies	10
4. Delegates of Distributive (5) and Productive (10) Co-operative Societies	15
5. Delegates of Economic, Literary, and Social Societies	20
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The Conference met on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of January, 1885, in the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, under the presidency of Sir Charles W. Dilke. There was a fair attendance of the general public, especially on the afternoon of the third day. The present volume contains the papers prepared for the Conference, along with a verbatim report of the discussions.

¹ This was the case with Mr. Hyndman and Mr. W. Morris, who were invited by the Committee, on the recommendation of the Social Democratic Federation, to write or furnish papers from the Socialist standpoint, but who did not do so and did not attend the Conference. Subsequently three delegates from the Federation were admitted and took part in the discussions.

The papers and reports have been in all cases submitted to the authors and speakers for revision, but the Committee has determined that the volume should be a faithful report of the proceedings of the Conference, and have only provided for the omitting of one or two personal and political allusions which had no real connection with the purpose of the trust. Each reader or speaker is solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements made as to matters of fact. In some cases, the assertions made appeared to members of the Committee to be demonstrably wrong, but they have determined not to carry the argument on such matters farther than was done in the Conference itself. Mr. D. Cunningham, Mr. Hutchinson, and others of the authors have made brief additions to their papers, and the Committee have also inserted two contributions as appendices. One of these is a paper representing the views of the *Shop Hours League*. Two members of this body attended the Conference at very great personal inconvenience, but owing to the fortune of the ballot they were unable to bring the views of the very large class they represent before the Conference. A short letter has also been reprinted which was addressed to the *Times* by Professor Nicholson, whose duties in Edinburgh rendered it impossible for him to be present and reply to the criticisms on his paper.

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†M. Adolphe Smith, 13 Sutherland Place, Pimlico, S.W.

Workman's Association for Defence of British Industry:

Mr. H. J. Pettifer, 171 Commercial Road, S.E.

Delegates whose names were marked † attended alternately with other representatives of the same society.

RULES.

THE following Rules were adopted for the discussions in the Conference :

I. That the several subjects selected for discussion be introduced by two (or more) papers, each of which may occupy about twenty minutes, together with ten minutes for the reply, so that ample time may be reserved in each session for free and open debate.

II. As it is not intended to pass any resolutions at the Conference, no question arising out of any paper read or subject treated shall be put to a vote.

III. That all questions concerning the order of proceedings or the relevancy of any argument shall be in the discretion of the Chairman, whose decision shall be final.

IV. That every member of the Congress desirous of speaking on the subject of discussion shall give his name in writing to the Secretary in attendance, and await the call of the Chairman.

V. That every speaker shall address the Chair only, confine himself strictly to the subject under discussion, cease when time is called, and not be permitted to speak twice on the same subject.

VI. That the time allowed to each speaker shall not exceed ten minutes, and that at the discretion of the Chairman the speeches during the last hour, or any part of the last hour, of each session may be still farther limited.

VII. That the Chairman shall call on speakers in the order in which their names are sent in ; but if more than six names are sent in during the reading of the papers, he shall ballot for the order in which speakers shall be heard, and may in doing so exclude the names of those speakers who have already addressed the Conference on *other* topics, so that they shall only be called on after fresh speakers have been heard.

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