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**LANCASHIRE AND THE
FAR EAST**

LANCASHIRE AND THE
FAR EAST

by

FREDA UTLEY, M.A.(LOND.)

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PREFACE

MY study of the cotton industry was begun whilst holding a Ratan Tata Research Studentship at the London School of Economics, and this book was written in 1930 on my return from a nine months' visit to Japan, where I was a special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial*. Although it is only to be published now (1931), I have brought very little of my tabular matter beyond 1929 or the beginning of 1930. The world economic crisis, the effects of which were fully felt in 1930, still continues, and it is as yet too soon to say whether the further catastrophic fall in British cotton exports in 1930 and 1931 is permanent or not. It is therefore most satisfactory to follow developments down to the end of 1929 only, for purposes of comparison with the pre-war position.

In any case, what has occurred in 1930 is only an intensification of all the phenomena described in this book: British exports have declined further, Britain's percentage share of the Far Eastern markets has grown even smaller and that of Japan larger, the poverty of the Indian peasantry has grown yet more acute and their *per capita* consumption of cotton cloth has consequently declined further.

The British Economic Mission to the Far East has just returned, but the report of its Cotton Section throws little new light on Japanese competition or Japanese conditions of labour. In fact, the Report refers at the outset to the ban put by the Japan Cotton Spinners' Association on their visiting any of its members' mills and of the difficulties experienced in getting precise information during the few mill visits actually made.

The Report is interesting for the details it gives of British and Japanese marketing methods in China, but, since my book is primarily concerned with labour conditions and labour costs, the appearance of the Report has not necessitated any amendments or additions to it.

During my stay in Japan I saw all kinds of factories, read the newspapers with reference to anything concerning the industry,

studied the Government reports and spoke with employers, managers and technical staff, workers, social workers and Trade Union organisers. My investigations were more thorough than it is ever possible for those of official delegations to be, and I think that the account here given of Japanese labour conditions in the cotton factories is a more accurate and complete one than has yet been published.

Those with a specialised interest in the cotton industry will, I trust, find new material and a more comprehensive analysis of the root causes of the decline in the exports of British cotton yarn and goods than has yet appeared in book form. In particular it is hoped that the detailed calculations of Japanese and British labour costs made in Chapter VIII will throw light on the actual competitive position as between Japan and Lancashire, and will contribute towards the settlement of the long controversy about labour costs in the two countries. Although the data for these calculations were obtained in Japan in 1929, it will be shown that the comparative position of the two countries cannot have changed appreciably since then.

But this book is intended not only for those with a specialised interest in the cotton industry or for those directly engaged in it, but also for those concerned with the general position of British economic imperialism and for those interested in labour conditions all over the world.

Little or nothing has hitherto been published in England concerning that section of the Japanese cotton industry which is outside the Japan Spinners' Association and details of which are also given in this book.

In the earlier chapters dealing with British exports and the internal position of the British industry, just sufficient information is given to show the extent of British losses and the causes, other than the external ones, of those losses, and to give the general reader some idea of the conditions of labour of the Lancashire operatives. Primarily, however, this book is a study of labour conditions in Japan; of the British, Japanese and Indian competitive position; and of general Indian conditions and British Imperial policy in India in so far as they affect the Lancashire cotton industry.

PREFACE

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I have to thank many friends in England and Japan who, while they may not agree with my point of view, have been generous in giving me information, and I am particularly indebted to Mr. C. M. Lloyd, who has read my MS. and assisted me during the whole course of my investigations with many valuable suggestions and criticisms. I make grateful acknowledgement to the Lancashire Cotton Corporation for data supplied concerning English yarn production.

FREDA UTLEY

LONDON, *May* 1931

19196

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