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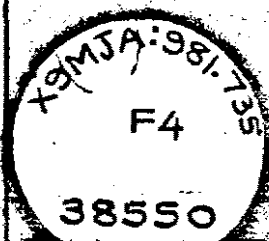
BULLETIN OF THE UNITED STATES
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

{No. 349

MISCELLANEOUS SERIES

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THE
WEST COAST LUMBER INDUSTRY

By CLOICE R. HOWD



DECEMBER, 1923

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PREFACE.

In an endeavor to adjust the problems of industrial relations, the West Coast lumber industry has undertaken a most important experiment in industrial democracy—the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. This organization grew out of a strike which was, in many ways, unique in American industrial history. This is a study of the conditions out of which it arose and of the problems it is attempting to solve.

The West Coast, the region with which this study is primarily concerned, is the name given in lumbering circles to that section of the Pacific coast where the Douglas fir is the characteristic timber tree. While the fir belt extends north into British Columbia, ordinarily the name West Coast is restricted to that portion of the belt which lies within the United States. The district comprises approximately that part of the States of Washington and Oregon lying west of the crest of the Cascade Mountains, excepting the upper Rogue River Valley in Southern Oregon, where, especially in Jackson County, the conditions more closely resemble those of the eastern part of the State. It is seldom possible to consider this district without some reference to other regions. In particular, reference must frequently be made to the conditions in the eastern part of the two States and in Idaho,¹ less often to conditions and developments in California, the Lake States, or the South.

It is a superficial and an essentially false analysis of the causes of the labor disturbances before and during 1917 to attribute them to union or radical propaganda or to the wickedness or ignorance of individual employers or employers' associations. The roots lie much deeper, in the very texture of the industry itself. The chief causes of unrest and conflict have been with regard to hours of work and, especially in the logging camps, to the living conditions. In nearly every instance each side could make out an extremely good case for itself. The employees claimed that the nature of the work in the woods and mills was such that eight hours was as long as any man should work. Many of the employers admitted this but insisted that competition with the South, where the working day was 10 or 12 hours, was so intense that a regional eight-hour day would wreck the industry on the West Coast. The employees demanded living conditions in the logging camps more nearly approaching those of the men who lived in towns. The employers agreed to the justice of the demands in principle, but argued that it would mean financial ruin to spend anything more on camps which, at best, were only temporary, and, also, that the men would not keep a camp decent no matter how well it had been prepared for them.

In order to get behind these seemingly irreconcilable differences, it has been necessary to examine the industry itself, particularly the financial conditions and the kind of work the men do. The method of presentation has been determined by this consideration. As a

¹ This section east of the Cascades is usually called the "Inland Empire."

background for the study, Chapter I shows how the shifting of lumber production in the United States has made possible the development of a great lumber industry on the West Coast. The record of this development is presented in Chapter II. An analysis of the internal financial organization of the industry is made in Chapter III, in an endeavor to discover the ability of the employers to grant the reasonable demands of the workers. In Chapter IV the technology of the industry is examined in order to see what demands it makes upon the employees. The next chapter, V, discusses the hours, rates of wages, and working and living conditions, and diagnoses the actual situation against which the men have been protesting. Chapter VI is a study of the various types of employee psychology, as those types have developed in the environment furnished by the lumber industry in this region. Chapters VII to XII give a history of the various organized or articulate protests of the employees and the reactions of the employers. In the final chapter an estimate of the significance and worth of the various efforts discussed in the six preceding chapters is attempted.

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APPENDIX—BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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