



Shall We Profit by the Experience of Others?

(The facts printed herein are taken from an article which appeared in the October 10th, 1929, issue of the American Wool and Cotton Reporter, Boston, Mass.)

Aid prompted by the best of intentions sometimes actually becomes a detriment. Over-zealous reformers have unknowingly and without a possession of vital facts wrought havoc, when naught but good was intended.

Certainly such has been the sad experience in Massachusetts.

With the apparent intention of aiding the textile operatives of the then leading cotton manufacturing state of America, the avowed friends of labor induced the passage of restrictive labor laws that have within the short space of ten years almost ruined the industries of that state.

A 48-hour law and other drastic legislation has been responsible for the greatest calamity that has ever befallen that state.

In an effort to help the working people, with no consideration of the economic laws that are unavoidable, hundreds of thousands have been legislated out of their jobs; millions of dollars of wages have been destroyed; thousands of homes vacated; millions of dollars of good textile machinery has been scrapped; hundreds of manufacturing plants abandoned; millions of spindles and hundreds of thousands of looms have been silenced; real estate has gone begging, as has water power and many other natural resources of Massachusetts. Communities have been abandoned, towns and cities comparatively depleted and financially ruined. The entire commonwealth has been seriously crippled, and it will require many years to overcome the shock.

Perhaps the saddest part of the picture is that it has rendered jobless, penniless, homeless, the very people it was intended to help.

To scan the list of casualties is appalling and depressing. Yet it stands as an example that may cause South Carolinians to stop and think.

All of the casualties cannot be listed, nor perhaps will the full realization of the enormous damage done ever be fully comprehended. The following recital of labor disasters in Massachusetts during the past 10 years is only partially complete.

LOWELL, once one of the largest of cotton manufacturing centers, has lost more than 24 mills. Over 15,000 people have left the city; 4,000 residences are vacant. Thousands are penniless and jobless. Over a hundred thousand have been financially injured almost to the point of ruin. Six million square feet of floor space in fine mills lies now unused and begging.

LAWRENCE lost eleven mills, including a number of the largest and strongest textile plants in America.

FITCHBURG, once boasting over 5,000 looms in operation, has now practically lost them all. A half dozen mills have been deserted there.

FALL RIVER, once the leading cotton manufacturing center of America, with over four million spindles, now has scarcely a million left in operation. Thousands of operatives have been forced to walk the streets. The city is prostrate. 29 mills have closed their doors, plants abandoned, machinery junked. Many of the surviving mills have partially liquidated.

NEW BEDFORD. Once there was no city in America that could hope to compete with New Bedford in the manufacture of fine cotton goods. Eight large mills there have been forced to quit.

TAUNTON, once a flourishing center, has lost 12 mills, **Millsbury 4, Brockton 3, Enfield 5, Holyoke 4, Hyde Park 4, Webster 6, Worcester 9**, and each of the following communities has suffered the loss of one or more mills.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Adams | Cordaville | Lancaster | North Brookfield | South Hadley Falls |
| Adamsdale | Dodge | Malden | North Chelmsford | South Harwick |
| Andover | Dodgeville | Manchaug | North Oxford | South Milford |
| Ashland | East Dedham | Mansfield | North Uxbridge | South Natick |
| Assonet | Fiskdale | Mattapan | Otter River | Springfield |
| Athol | Gardner | Medford | Oxford | Therndike |
| Attleboro | Globe Village | Medway | Palmer | Unionville |
| Auburn | Gloucester | Methuen | Pittsfield | Uxbridge |
| Ballard Vale | Great Barrington | Middleboro | Plymouth | Wales |
| Beverly | Hebronville | Millbury | Quinapoxet | Waltham |
| Byfield | Hingham | Monson | Quincy | Warren |
| Cambridge | Hinsdale | Needham | Readville | Watertown |
| Canton | Holden | Needham Heights | Rockland | Webster |
| Canton Junction | Holliston | Newburyport | Saugus | Westford |
| Charlton City | Holyoke | Newton | Saundersville | West Rutland |
| Chelsea | Hubbardston | Newton Lower Falls | Shattuckville | White Valley |
| Cherry Valley | Hudson | North Adams | Shirley | Whitinsville |
| Concord | Hyde Park | North Andover | Southbridge | Wilkinsonville |
| | Ipswich | Northboro | | Williamstown |

In 1922 Massachusetts had 11,922,573 spindles in place. In September 1929 they had only 8,611,812 and only 6,286,978 of these in active operation. (U. S. Govt. Report).

The actual closing of a mill, however, is not the only damage done. Nor is the damage confined alone to cotton manufacturing. Other industries find it equally impossible to successfully operate under such severe handicaps. The shoe industry for which Massachusetts was far famed is injured, as is the automobile industry, machinery plants and many other industries that formerly were established and flourishing.

Shall South Carolina profit by the experience of others?

(A reprint of the original article which appeared in the American Wool and Cotton Reporter will be gladly supplied upon request. Address the Cotton Manufacturers Association of South Carolina, Clinton, S. C.)

