

Report
Of a
Survey of Industrial Relations
Including recommendations regarding the labor policy in the
mills of
The Full Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers Association of
Philadelphia¹

Earl Clement Davis, Co-Author²

The Scott Company

September 22, 1919

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

751 Drexel Building, Philadelphia
September 22, 1919

To the President of the Men and Managements Textile Council and
to the President of the Full Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers'
Association.

Gentlemen:

On July 10, 1919, the Men and Managements Textile Council and
the Full Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers' Association of
Philadelphia jointly authorized The Scott Company to make an
investigation of the labor situation in the mills of the Full
Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers' Association.

In the preparation of this report, The Scott Company has
received the co-operation of the various members of the Full
Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers' Association, and is
particularly indebted to Mr. C. Stanley Hurlbut and Mr. William
Meyer for their assistance.

¹ This lengthy report—81 typeset pages—was co-authored by Earl C.
Davis. It was part of his moonlighting work. This transcription
covers only the opening section, pp. 1-11.

² Mr. L.B. Hopkins directed the investigation that led to this
report. The other investigators/authors were Miss Anna Bezanson,
and Miss Carolyn Kranz.

The investigation has been directed by Mr. L.B. Hopkins. Miss Anna Bezanson, Mr. E.C. Davis and Miss Carolyn Kranz have collected data upon which this report is based and have contributed very largely to the conclusions which have been drawn and recommendations which have been made.

The analysis of the information obtained and the decisions leading to the proposals embodied in this report are the result of the co-operative efforts of the various members of this Company.

Respectfully yours,

The Scott Company

CONTENTS OF REPORT

This report deals with the relations between the workers and managements in the mills of the Full Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers' Association. These relations are sometimes between the Association and one of the unions represented in the mills—generally, in such cases, the principle of collective bargaining is recognized both by the Association and the union concerned. Sometimes the relations are between an individual or group of individuals in one mill and the manager of that mill. These relations differ in each mill according to the personality of the management. This relationship is generally thought of as beginning when the new employe³ starts on the job. Actually, it begins when the new employe first comes in contact with a knowledge of the mill. This knowledge is sometimes gained through the first contact with the person who offers him a job, or to whom he applies for work.

The attitude of individual workers not only affects the relations between a group of workers in one mill and their management, but it also affects the relations between affiliated groups in various mills of the Association and the Association as a whole.

³ Here and throughout the document there is no second 'e' in 'employe.'

We have, therefore, in PART I of this report, placed considerable emphasis on "the relations between the individual managements and their individual employes."⁴ Under this heading we have stated the facts as we discovered them in our investigation and recommended to you such actions as we believe you should take to improve these relationships.

The relation between the Association and the affiliated groups of employes is covered in PART II of this report. An analysis of earnings by groups and by occupations will be found in PART III of the report, and in PART IV we will submit our recommendations concerning the keeping of employment records and the work of

- (a) An employment record clerk,
- (b) An employment manager,
- (c) A labor manager,
- (d) A collective agreement regarding labor relations, to be worked out jointly by representatives of the unions concerned and representatives of your Association.

A CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

The study of the labor relations in the Full Fashioned Hosiery Manufacturers' Association naturally begins with a survey of the relations between the workers in the separate mills and their managers.

PART I

In Part I of the report we have discussed the relation of each mill owner with the help in his mill. Our investigation has convinced us that the lack of a definite labor policy greatly overshadows the natural advantages that your industry offers as an inducement either for prospective employes to come into the industry or for present employes to remain.

Your present method of securing new employes tends to bring into your mills a type of individual that will do much to increase the instability of your working force, as well as to decrease the attractiveness of the work from the standpoint of the more desirable class of possible future employes.

⁴ Bold emphasis in the original.

As a part of your labor policy a study of the sources of labor supply should be made. The need for such a study is all the more acute because of the evident shortage of women workers in the industry. This is discussed in the detailed report.

The entire lack of any policy as regards the initial wage raises a question, which is admittedly difficult of solution. Nevertheless, this question should be carefully studied, and a policy should be decided upon which will remove the possibility of flagrant injustices in this regard, such as are referred to in the detailed report.

You are already burdened with the responsibility of making decisions regarding the types of machines in use and to be purchased. It seems to us important, however, that you adopt some policy immediately in this regard; so that from the standpoint of labor relations you may make your policy known to your employes. The practice in different mills is not at all consistent as regards extra compensation because of the frequent breakdown of old machines, or as regards allowances for delays caused by lack of material and poor stock. The injustice of making no allowances in the employe's envelope for time that he is constantly forced to lose through no fault of his own is evident. Even though allowances are made, there may still be injustices as long as the amount of allowance is determined upon the basis of the individual concerned by the foreman or supervisor, who will of necessity be influenced at times by personal prejudices.

If, through the lack of a labor policy, the opinion is allowed to take form that discriminations between employes on the part of the foreman are approved, or even tolerated, other influences will develop with most unfortunate results.

Perhaps one of the more evident results of a lack of policy is the absence of any plan for training. Not only are the employes left to move about from mill to mill as they see opportunity of learning work which will result in increased earnings, but they are also forced to take the initiative in moving from one process to another within the mill. This question of a policy for training both boys and girls is one that demands your immediate and careful attention. At the end of Part I of our report, you will find a discussion of training plans and methods, together with our recommendations.

In Part I we have stressed the attitude of individual employes. This attitude is influenced by their desire to advance and to secure a continuance of their industrial standards. We have also referred to the need of your assuming the obligation, that is yours, of assisting them in acquiring more ability and of providing an evident opportunity to advance and use the ability when it is acquired. We have tried to point out in detail our reasons for emphasizing these needs and the necessity on your part for gathering information that will guide you in your efforts to remedy the situation.

PART II

In Part II we have attempted to show the relations between the workers, as an industrial group, and your Association. In the full-fashioned hosiery industry many of the operatives need to possess definite skill for the proper performance of their work. These operatives have a pride in their ability and in their occupation because of the skill required, the quality of the material upon which they work, the nature of the processes involved and the attractiveness of the finished product. Previous to the war, these operatives felt that they enjoyed the distinction of belonging to the aristocracy of the textile industry, and tangible evidence of their position was found in an earning power higher than that of any other textile group.

In Part II we have reported the needs and opinions of the workers as we have found them to exist, and we have tried to make it plain to you that these needs and opinions are important; not so much because they can or cannot be substantiated, as because the attitudes and the actions of the workers will remain unchanged as long as they continue to believe in these needs and opinions. It is the belief of the full-fashioned hosiery workers that since the war began they have been constantly losing the advantage in earning power that they had in the textile industry. As long as they believe this, it is natural that they should resent the effect of such a loss upon their standard of living and upon their future working life.

In the relation between the affiliated groups of employes in your industry and your Association there is additional evidence of the need of a definite labor policy. Because of the complexity

of the relations between various groups of the employes and because of the difficulties that arise therefrom in their various relations with your Association, it is certain that any attempt to work out a labor policy will not be successful without the co-operation and support of the various unions represented in your mills. You have your own intimate knowledge of the details of the development of the various labor organizations in the mills of your Association. This development has been marked by frequent disagreements, threatened strikes and strikes. As these events have taken place, your task has been to watch each development in the light of its influence upon your own problems. It is, therefore, natural that your impressions of the significance of these events should be influenced by the position you held at the time they occurred. For this reason we have included in Part II a history of this development from an outside standpoint, together with comments as to the opinions held among the workers. Mention has been made of the fact that in many instances the workers have felt that the lack of information, which was essential to a fair decision, has resulted in an unfair attitude on the part of the Association. If for no other reason than this, it is desirable that your Association attempt to work out a labor policy with the cooperation and assistance of the labor unions, in order that they may be informed of your purpose and the methods that you will use to get the true facts, on the basis of which you will shape your future policies.

PART III

In Part III we have given you the results of our study of payroll earnings in the mills of your Association. Such facts as are of particular concern to the individual managers have not been included in this general statement, but will be handed to the individuals concerned. There are three important points that these figures bring out: First, the irregularity of earnings from week to week or month to month is of so serious a nature in certain occupations as to make it quite impossible for the worker to determine with any degree of certainty what his future earnings may be. We are confident that, after you have studied these figures, you will recognize the need of a change and will want to change this condition as far as it is within your power to do so. The natural approach to this problem will be to adopt some method of determining what part of the variation for each employe is due to conditions within the employe's control, and

what part is due to conditions that the individual mills can remedy. Second, the difference in the average earnings of employes on the same occupation in one mill as compared with the average earnings of like employes in another mill is brought out. Third, the tabulations show a great variation in the earning power of different individuals on the same occupation. This difference is so large that a study should be made to determine the cause. This knowledge might make possible the increasing of output if the cause is chiefly due to the difference of individual ability, or, if the cause is due to different grades of material, such knowledge of the facts would make possible a method of assigning work, which would eliminate the charge of favoritism on the part of the foreman.

PART IV

In Part IV we have recommended that you establish in each mill in the Association employment records, which may later assist you in improving the labor relations in your industry. The establishment of such records necessitates at least the appointment of an employment clerk to maintain them. Where the size of the mill warrants it, we have recommended that an employment manager be installed, one of whose functions will be the gathering and interpreting of the records needed. Finally, we have recommended that you attempt to develop a plan of industrial government, which shall be worked out jointly between representatives of your Association and representatives of the unions active in your mills, and we have laid emphasis on the necessity of approaching this task with entire good faith and with patience.

In spite of the difficulties that always attend any such effort, we believe that the possibilities for success are such that you cannot afford to allow this opportunity to pass.⁵

⁵ At this point the Report continues with Part I, and on to the end.