

immense physiological and psychological implications of the technical revolution of the last forty years. The introduction of speed, both in locomotion and in the transmission of ideas, has transformed the conditions of urban life. The motor-car, the airplane, the telephone, and the radio impose a strain upon nerves and brain to which the organism is not yet adapted. After all, it has been built up over tens of thousands of years to meet conditions in which no human being could move faster than a horse and no communication between human being was possible except when they were face to face. In a hundred years an entirely new mode of life has been created, and in no department has it increased nervous tension more than in industry. The careful, self-regulated work of the handicraftsman is now performed by machines moving at ever-increasing speeds, exacting ever greater attention from the workman, imposing the most arbitrary limits on the pace of his work, while at the same time depriving him of any personal feeling of satisfaction in the product to which he makes an infinitesimal contribution.

"There can be no doubt that the result is an increased tension, about the limits and effects of which we really know very little. Though the burden of physical effort has been enormously relieved by mechanical devices of every kind, it has been replaced by an increased strain on the nervous system, which the human body is less prepared to resist, and I cannot help thinking that the strain must be particularly felt in Eastern countries which have come into contact with mechanical industry much later than the West. After all, man has been inured to physical toil for thousands of generations. He has been accustomed to exercise his muscles without undergoing any considerable mental or nervous exertion. Now the process is reversed. He is subjected to constant mental and nervous pressure without being called upon to display that muscular activity to which his frame is so well adapted by long usage as to make it necessary to his bodily health. The result is that we have a whole series of new diseases, nervous diseases. We hear of 'nervous breakdown' in all walks of life, not only among hard-driven intellectual and professional workers, but also among the least skilled workers exposed to the noise, the speed, the inexorable rhythm and discipline of the modern factory. One suspects that physical breakdown among the peasants and artisans of the pre-machine era was an infinitely rarer phenomenon.

"In order to restore something like the old balance, we have been driven to allow a larger section of our time to leisure, much of which is devoted to artificial physical exercises. England became the first sporting country, where football, cricket, tennis, rowing, golf, and other games were developed not, I suggest, because the English had a peculiar gift for ball games, but because they were first called upon to resist the impact of urban industrialism. Sport is a substitute for the physical exercise which manual labour used to provide, or which the eighteenth-century merchant or lawyer obtained by riding about his business on horseback. It provides a relaxation for the nerves, but it necessarily demands longer hours of leisure.

"In the pre-machine age men worked twelve hours and even longer quite naturally and willingly. They set their own pace; they produced in their own time; they were under no constraint, and felt little need for relaxation or leisure. With the industrial revolution came the need for shorter hours. As early as 1848 the mass of working people felt instinctively that eight hours was the proper limit of endurance of the pressure and rigid discipline of factory life. It took seventy years to achieve that goal, though hours of work gradually lessened as the strain of work increased. Now there is a demand for yet shorter hours arising after a period of still greater mechanical development and acceleration.

"Why is this? I do not believe it is on account of laziness. On the contrary, man is on the whole a terribly and often irrationally industrious animal. He really likes work as long as it is within his compass. As a rule, he would rather earn more money than do less work. If therefore there is now a growing feeling in favour of shorter hours, I believe it corresponds in the main to a dimly felt need for greater relaxation engendered by the increasing speed and strain of modern industry and modern life generally. It is balanced economically by greater productivity. The faster machine processes move the more is produced in less time, with less human effort but with more human tension, to which the body is as yet incompletely adapted.

"That, in my view, is the ultimate explanation of the demand for shorter hours and also for paid holidays, the latter another astonishing development of recent years. Last year we adopted a Convention on paid holidays by a surprisingly large majority. I hope this year we may make a beginning of the international application of the forty-hour week under equally good auspices. At the same time, as has been pointed out by a whole series of speakers, it is not always possible to apply an identical system of hours regulation to all industries or even to all countries. Any one who has studied the measures taken in France, in New Zealand, and in the United States of America, the three countries of which we have experience, will have observed that great care was taken to ensure a considerable measure of elasticity. There are considerable differences as between industry and industry, and elasticity is a necessity if the essential conditions of each industry are to be respected. I therefore feel that the method which has been adopted in the Conference and which is being pursued this year is the right method. At the same time, I agree with speakers like Mr. Koizumi and Mr. Chu, who indicated that in their countries a forty-hour week is at present impossible, but who suggested that a forty-eight hour week was within the present compass.

"However that may be, a strong case has been made out in this Conference for giving special consideration to countries whose industrial development is not so great as that of the great industrial countries of the West. Members of the Conference are aware that special provision for this purpose is made in Article 22 of the Constitution, which provides that 'the Conference shall have due regard to those countries in which climatic conditions, the imperfect development of industrial organization or other special circumstances make the industrial conditions substantially different.' I am therefore very glad that in the Governing Body the question of giving special consideration in the Conference