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EDITORIAL

## INVENTION AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT.

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**I**N the efforts of the orthodox economists to justify the private ownership of socially produced wealth and capital, much stress is laid on invention and technical development. These are claimed to be the individual achievements of individual capitalists, who, consequently, are entitled to the greater part of their results, even though society suffers from the unequal distribution of wealth flowing therefrom. This argument may have had some force in the days of individual or small production; but in these days of co-operative and trustified industry, invention and technical development, like industry, have become social and are now dependent on associated, instead of individual, effort, for their advancement and success. This fact is being continually borne out by modern events. The latest of these are the addresses of the President and the Secretary of the American Foundrymen's Association, composed of employers, now holding its eighth convention at the Grand Central Palace, as given substantially in the capitalist press. We quote from the latter:

“President C.J. Wolff's address explained that the objects of the association were purely educational. It was the aim of the organization, he said, so to disseminate knowledge pertaining to the craft of the foundryman that the best results might be obtained in the production of castings at a minimum cost. Every year brings its own changes, and the only way to reap the fruits of widely scattered experiments and results was to bring together the parties responsible for them, and get them to compare notes. For this end he advocated that all the workers connected with the industry should be brought to know each other. That a wide ‘open door’ policy should prevail, which would bring together the pattern makers, the molders, the foremen, and the owners of foundries and to give each branch of the industry a chance to talk and to instruct.”

It does not require a keen mind to see that the changes referred to above are caused by social factors, which, when consciously organized, are of great benefit to foundry owners. Nor is great acumen required to perceive the importance attached to the necessity of securing the co-operation of employes, that they may also talk and INSTRUCT. According to the theory under discussion, instruction from such sources is preposterous; yet the above cold, hard facts overthrow the theory in no uncertain manner. To quote further:

“Dr. Richard Moldenke, secretary of the association, spoke much on the same lines as the president. He pointed to the fact that the foundry industry was waking up, that many severe disturbances in trade had taken place; that new blood had come in and that constant study was necessary. The steel foundry business, he said, was active, but iron seemed inclined to drag and that science was needed to build it up. In concluding Dr. Moldenke referred to the success of English and German associations, and he recommended that the dues of the American institution should be reduced, so as to extend the present membership, which now numbered 294.”

Here, too, the pressure of social factors is plainly evident, while associated effort and its extension are advocated as the only means of saving the foundry industry. What becomes of the orthodox argument in view of these facts?

Look wherever we will and the social character of modern industry is evident. Justice and evolution demand that it become social in ownership also.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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