

[AUTHORIZED ANNOUNCEMENT]

PLUCK WINS

The Hughes Manufacturing Company Victorious.

Splendid Record Achieved Through Courage, Independence and Tenacity—The Biggest Plant in the United States, Built After Conquering the Unions—The City's Debt of Gratitude.

THE splendid industrial results that are achievable in manufacturing in Los Angeles when the industry is not saddled with unionism are well exemplified by the large new plant which has just been completed by the Hughes Manufacturing Company of this city.

For sixteen months in 1902-1903 this company was attacked by the unions with all the bitterness that they were capable of. The subjection of the Hughes Company was an essential part of the campaign to place the whole city under the union yoke for years to come, and the city owes a large debt of gratitude to the owners for their steadfastness in holding out at the critical time when they did.

The new plant is located on Alameda street, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets. Doors, sash and decorative posts and wood carving are the chief products.

There are nineteen acres of ground in the plat, and on it are located five large buildings—four of them of brick and the other of wood. The latter structure is the office, while the others are devoted to the manufactory.

Thomas Hughes, the president (most everybody knows him as "Tom" Hughes) proved very willing to take a Times man through the new place and explain its intricacies to him.

"Come on," said he. "I want to show you the president's office first. One of the nice things about it is that I am never in it."

It is located on the second floor, and is not nearly so pretentious as some of the others on the ground floor.

But this president is one who does not stick to the office end of things merely, as could easily be seen when he took the visitor across the bridge into the big factory.

Starting on the third floor, he pointed out every machine and explained its operation in a way that showed that he was thoroughly familiar with the way it should work. He ought to know, for he has been in this business in Los Angeles for the past twenty-one years.

The top floor of the main building is devoted to the making of sash exclusively. The capacity of the plant in this class of work is 1800 pairs of sash a day, but at the present time only 600 are being turned out, as the company is experiencing a shortage of lumber.

The machinery here is all of the latest pattern, and the perfect work it turns out is a cause of wonder to the uninitiated. One which was especially noticeable was a saw sharpener. This is used to file the big band saws that are used downstairs in sawing into strips the rough lumber. These saws have to be sharpened twice a day, and this machine does it with more speed and as much accuracy as a skilled mechanic working by hand.

On the floor below almost the entire space is given up to doors, though in one corner a skilled carver is at work and in another newel posts of handsome design are made.

There are doors of all kinds here—everything from a highly ornamental one that is to be a part of a new church to a big batch of heavy sliding doors that are to adorn the baggage houses of some new Salt Lake Railway stations out on the desert.

These doors are all made piece by piece, of course, each section being turned out in thousands by a man and a machine who do nothing else but that.

There are fifteen parts in the ordinary house door. They are assembled by an expert workman and hammered together with a wooden mallet.

Then comes the crowning operation that makes the misshapen mass a door that looks the part.

The whole is put into a rigid form, and a powerful clamp shuts down upon it with steady yet invincible force. The clamp makes the boards creak and the hot glue run out of the crevices, but a minute or so in the relentless grasp is enough, and the thing that comes out of the machine is a solid piece.

It is not finished yet, though. It still has to go through a finisher—a greedy machine that gobbles three doors a minute, handing them out at the other side as smooth as glass.

At one side of the glue room, which is also located on the second floor, are standing a number of specimens of rare woods to be used in veneering. These woods are all imported by the company, and come from Honolulu, Australia and Central America.

One of the handsomest pieces is one called Cocobola, from Honolulu.

"We do a good deal of this veneering work," said Mr. Hughes, "especially in mahogany work. We have found that veneered wood is more lasting in every way than the solid stuff."

The ground floor of the main building is given over to the handling of the rough lumber as it comes in. Here it is sawed into suitable lengths and shapes, and sent to the upper floors for the completing touches.

A repair department that takes care of all the tools used in the establishment occupies a large section of this floor.

To the north of the main building is a smaller brick edifice which is used as

a shipping department. A sidetrack of the Southern Pacific runs directly alongside the factory between these two buildings.

On the other side of the plant is the big boiler, which is fed entirely by shavings from the machines above. As soon as all the blowers are established in the floors above, the engine will be fed automatically, and there will be no shavings or sawdust littering the factory floors.

In the basement are two big engines, of 300 and 400 horse-power, respectively. The flywheel of the latter weighs 16,000 pounds.

All the machinery of the building is propelled from a main shaft running the entire length of the basement of the main building, 400 feet.

As even the present immense plant covers only about half the available space in the company's plat, there is ample room for future development; and the company proposes to expand as rapidly as the conditions of business will warrant its doing so.

"The fight against us was made directly by the central governing body of the building trades, for the leaders understood the importance of our plant. As many as five strikes in one day have been called on jobs where we were furnishing mill work; and it was often necessary for us to deliver material at night on jobs where there was a time limit for their completion.

"At that time I was not devoting my entire time to this business, and was only at the factory night and morning. My brother, G. G. Hughes, however, was then general manager, as he still is; and he bore the brunt of the battles.

"You may judge of the severity of the methods employed and the vigilance and courage necessary to both the strike-breakers and the company officers by the fact that it was necessary to escort our men to and from their homes. At night their homes were stoned, and other violent means were taken to intimidate them. The men were often so nervous that it was hard for them to keep from getting caught by the machinery.

"We kept twenty advertisements for men in eastern papers—all the way from Brownsville, Tex., to Montreal, Canada. Soon we began to receive letters from men anxious to take the places of the strikers. Then they started coming on here, and we were able to fill our vacancies. Had we depended upon union labor we never could have kept our plant running, except at the cost of submitting to industrial despotism.

"To these men and to those of our old men who stood faithfully behind us in those troublesome days we feel very grateful, as they were essential factors, necessary to our success.

"During the big strike, Mr. Lester Robinson, the secretary, bought into the business, and lent his support toward defeating the unions. His coming in at that time showed that he had the courage of his convictions, and he feels that he has been fully rewarded by the way matters have turned out.

"Well," said Mr. Hughes, as he stood rubbing his chin reflectively, after making the rounds and telling of the various workings of the plant, "It sort of makes us feel good to know that after so many seemingly insurmountable difficulties, we have a plant that is at least as big as anything of its kind in the United States, and perhaps the biggest.

"We had a hard struggle with the unions, and for a time it looked as if they were going to get the better of us. But a good many of the local people were brave enough to stand by us through the entire conflict; and had it not been for the Times it would have been impossible for us to have succeeded at that time.

"This company was the keystone in the scheme for unionizing the building trades of the city, and had we not been able to withstand the fight they put up against us, there could not have been a building erected here for a good many years unless it were under the domination of the labor unions. The cost would of course have been much greater than it is.

"At the present time I do not think that any of our men are members of the union. We do not ask any questions of them when hiring them, and only require good workmanship as the standard of employment. However, if we find a union agitator in the building, we have no hesitation in summarily kicking him out.

"The men are with us on this matter, and are as much against the unions as we are."

The results of the policy pursued by the Hughes Company are shown by the great increase in their business since the big strike was settled and the principle of the open shop established. The business has grown to five times what it was then, and has made necessary the great plant which has been described in this sketch. Two hundred and thirty men are regularly employed there, and about thirty million feet of lumber are yearly converted into doors and sash.