

DAVID CLARK EXHIBIT NO. 4.

THE LUMBERTON INCIDENT.

Frank Britt, a tenant farmer of Columbus County, N. C., hurt his foot while plowing and a bad case of blood poisoning was the result. Being absolutely without means and having a wife, three children, and a feeble-minded mother-in-law to support, he had to appeal to his two brothers, one of whom, Oliver Britt, was employed at the Lumberton Cotton Mills, Lumberton, N. C. Neither of his brothers were in good financial condition, but they did the best they could and contributed a considerable amount for doctor's bills and for having his leg amputated. The Lumberton Cotton Mills had some vacant houses at that time and at the request of Oliver Britt and as an act of charity they allowed the sick man and his family to be moved from his farm into one of the mill houses and to use the same without paying any rent.

Also as an act of charity, for Mrs. Frank Britt was a green hand and skilled hands were plentiful, they gave her work in the mill. Mrs. Britt could not make enough to feed the family and brought her oldest daughter, Lonie Britt, to the mill and, alleging that she was 12 years of age, secured work for her.

The superintendent, seeing her in the mill and noting her size, ordered that she be sent out; but the overseer, realizing the desperate straits of the family, allowed Mrs. Britt to persuade him Lonie was 12 years of age and she worked in the mill for 25 days. The second daughter, Flossie Britt, said by her mother to be 9 years old, never worked in the mill a single day.

The condition of Frank Britt, in spite of the amputation of his foot, became rapidly worse and he finally died. The wife, three children, and mother-in-law immediately left the mill, as the women's labor alone could not support the family, and moved back to the country where it is legal for even a boy of 7 to toil from sunrise to sunset and under the heat of noontime sun. They are now living there in a miserable hut and in almost destitute circumstances and were recently seen by a person who has been investigating this incident. The mill records show that Flossie Britt never worked a single day. They show that Lonie Britt worked in the mill for only 25 days. Her mother has now filed a statement to the effect that she was born on March 6, 1902, and her uncle, Oliver Britt, a very intelligent man, says that she is about 12 years of age.

The day before Frank Britt died, and while he was suffering agony from his blood poisoning, Photographer Hine, of the National Child Labor Committee, sneaking around among the cotton mills, came upon the scene. He did not do anything to relieve the suffering of the dying man or give money or aid to his wife or children. All he did was to back the two little girls up against the house and take their photograph, get a statement from the half-witted mother-in-law, and go his way.

He presented the photograph at the National Child Labor Conference on January 4, as girls of 6 and 7 years of age who were working regularly in a

cotton mill. Since that time the National Child Labor Committee have been repeating the story over the country. I heard Owen Lovejoy tell a Boston audience of the photograph and intimate that it was one of a large number that he had.

The Lumberton incident is typical of the work of the National Child Labor Committee.

They have referred in some of their papers to a mill boy who had all of his fingers cut off as an illustration of the brutality of cotton mill work. As a matter of fact, the boy to whom they refer had his fingers cut off in some farm machinery while visiting his grandfather on his farm. They were about as near the truth as usual.
