

THE
VAL-DES-BOIS
M I L L

RULES
AND
VARIOUS STATUTES



REIMS
IMPRIMERIE COOPÉRATIVE
24, rue Pluche, 24

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THIS EDITION

This is an English translation of the original French text, made for the website leonharmel.com in 2026. It follows the original sentence by sentence, without cuts or additions.

The text is given in full, translated from the 1909 edition. It has been typeset in the spirit of the original: title pages and headings follow the layout of the book; the illustration has been cut out of the digitised document and restored.

The table of contents refers to the pages of this edition; each entry is a link.

The numbered notes are those of the original work; here they are numbered continuously from beginning to end.

Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

leonharmel.com

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Notice on Val-des-Bois

The firm of Harmel Frères was founded in 1797. Its first establishments were in the Ardennes.

It came to settle at Val-des-Bois in 1840.

The Mill stands in the valley of the Suippe, an important industrial centre, where a large number of spinning and weaving mills are gathered together¹.

The working population numbers about 300 families, that is 1,200 people, half of whom are employed at the mill.

The social organisation of Val-des-Bois is not the fruit of a pre-conceived plan. It is the result of experience and of the gradual development of associations organised to call forth the workers' initiative. We have pursued the application of the democratic doctrine: *the good of the worker by the worker, and with him, never without him, still less ever in spite of him.*

This method is slower and demands more patience, but it gives more solid results.

From 1861 we began the fundamental associations, bringing together the members of the family by categories: children, young men and girls, fathers and mothers. The Christian spirit that animated these groups soon made them schools of devotedness.

The chapel, built in the yards of the Mill (small at first, then enlarged step by step), has been the fruitful centre of a generous apostolate, often going as far as sacrifice.

1. The single-storey buildings cover two and a half hectares.

The annual output is 1,700,000 kilos of woollen yarn, single or twisted, combed-wool, carded-wool or fancy, and 700,000 kilos of dyeing.

Sales vary from 5 to 6 million a year, a large part of them abroad.

It has made the population of Val-des-Bois a true family, in which mutual love shows itself in touching examples of unselfishness.

The social doctrine of Val-des-Bois proceeds from the Gospel; it has been applied with discretion, in the fullest religious and political freedom.

As early as 1867, the whole of the religious, moral and economic institutions formed “The Christian Corporation of Val-des-Bois”.

From the social and vocational education of the workers was born, in 1883, “The Factory Council”, intended to give the working people an effective share in the government of the Mill.

Finally, in 1903, the mixed union was replaced by the “Workers’ Union”, which was put in possession of the union house².

Our experience has strengthened us in this social conviction: the more one exalts the dignity of the worker, loyally and unselfishly, the better one knows how to set beside the notion of duty that of inprescriptible right, the more one gains his confidence and, it is fair to say, the more one deserves it.

Sharing in the management develops the feeling of responsibility and a sense of industrial realities; the result has been a spirit of concord and peace, strengthened every day by mutual affection.

2. The Union House comprises an Assembly hall with a Theatre that can seat 800 spectators, a vast Union hall and a Council room.

VAL-DES-BOIS MILL

RULES & VARIOUS STATUTES



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GENERAL RULES

OF THE

Workshops of Messrs HARMEL Frères

At VAL-DES-BOIS (Marne)

Val-des-Bois Mill

General Rules of the Workshops of Messrs Harmel Frères at Val-des-Bois (Marne)

Discipline is necessary in the interest of all; it is the basis of all organisation. Freely accepted, it is gentle and fruitful.

It is in this spirit that the present rules, drawn up and discussed by Messrs Harmel Frères on the one hand, and by the Factory Council, representing the Workers' Union, on the other, have been established by common agreement between the parties, who mutually undertake to respect them and to have them carried out.

Article 1. — Engagement and departure of the worker.

During the worker's first eight days of work at the mill, neither he nor the employers are bound by any mutual engagement. Once this period has passed, both are bound to give one week's notice for workers paid by the piece or by the hour, and one full month's notice for clerks. Written acknowledgement of it is given to the person concerned. No notice is valid without the card that records it; under twenty-one years of age, no one can validly give notice without the consent of the parents. The end of the notice will also be the end of the verbal tenancy of the house and gardens.

The following may be dismissed immediately:

1. Workers or clerks who gravely insult an employer;
2. Those who are guilty of acts contrary to good morals and public decency;
3. Those who refuse to do the work ordered, when the refusal persists after the intervention of an employer;
4. Those who leave work for two or more consecutive days without permission;

5. Those who come to work in a state of manifest drunkenness;
6. Those who knowingly do bad work of a serious kind, or allow it to be done.

Art. 2. — Working hours.

The actual working time is ten hours.

At each return to work, all the machines must be put in gear at the signal.

Art. 3. — Sunday.

The workshops are closed on Sundays and feast days, these days being reserved for the service of God and for the family.

Even tidying up is absolutely forbidden. Urgent repairs that cannot be done during the week are undertaken only on a note signed by an employer on the day before.

In order to make it easier for the worker to fulfil his religious and family duties on Sunday, barbers are allowed to practise in the mill on Saturday, during working hours.

Art. 4. — Pay.

Accounts are made up every fortnight, on Saturday evening.

Pay takes place on the following Thursday, at the morning return to work, at the office.

The earnings of the members of one family are itemised and totalled on a slip which is handed to the head of the family or to the person who takes his place.

The accounts of the piecers and bobbin winders are drawn up by the office and not by the spinners.

Clerks are paid at the end of each month.

Any claim that is not made within twenty-four hours of the pay is considered void.

Art. 5. — Savings Fund.

A Savings Fund is established in the Mill and accepts the smallest deposits. Interest is paid from the first day of the month following the deposit, at 4 % a year.

A delegate of this fund goes to the schools every fortnight to receive the children's deposits.

When an account goes beyond a certain figure, the depositor is invited to invest it outside the mill.

Art. 6. — Workers' Union.

A workers' union was founded on 24 December 1903; the workers may freely ask to be admitted to it by the Union Chamber, and may likewise withdraw from it afterwards. The statutes are given to the members. This union is recognised by the employers and has the power to negotiate with them, either directly through the Union Chamber or through the Factory Council, which represents it.

Art. 7. — Factory Council.

The Factory Council establishes a real cooperation of the workers in the professional and disciplinary management of the mill.

Its aim is to maintain between employers and workers an affectionate understanding based on mutual confidence.

It is composed of ordinary elected workers who meet with an employer every fortnight.

They are called upon to give their opinion on any change in wages, on the disciplinary measures to be taken, and on questions of accidents, hygiene, apprenticeship and work.

They are the spokesmen of their fellow workers for the claims these have to make to the employers.

Finally, they study the reforms that might make the work easier and more profitable.

The women workers have their own council, which has the same functions.

Art. 8. — Separation of the sexes.

The separation of the sexes is established during work, at the times of leaving and of returning.

The women workers must keep to this rule by leaving at the signal given a few minutes before the general departure, and, when returning, by going straight to the special doors reserved for them; finally, during work, by refraining from going into the men's workshops on any pretext whatever.

Art. 9. — Discipline; direct appeal to the employer.

The employers reserve to themselves the hiring and dismissal of the workers. They likewise reserve to themselves the review of the fines, the proceeds of which are paid into the Mutual Aid Society.

In the case of a serious fault, the foreman makes his report to the employer, who hears the worker and then gives his decision. Direct appeal to the employer is a standing right of the worker, and no foreman may take offence at it.

Art. 10. — Responsibility.

The head of a team, spinner or other, is responsible for his machines and for his assistants (piecers, bobbin winders, etc.).

1. If there is bad work, he will have to pay a fine in proportion to the damage caused;

2. If there is damage, loss of wool, or harm done to tools, electrical apparatus, etc., by the assistants, it is he who will pay the compensation, saving his recourse against those responsible;

3. It is he who sees to the scrupulous carrying out of the measures for the prevention of accidents;

4. Finally, he is responsible for the oiling and cleaning of the machines and the cleanliness of the floors, as well as for the big cleaning on Saturday.

Art. 11. — The worker's initiative.

The worker's initiative should bear on two points: the improvement of the equipment and its defects.

If the worker discovers some means of improvement that makes the work easier or the product more perfect, the employers willingly bear the cost of a trial in the best conditions, under the supervision of the Factory Council. If the improvement is found to be good and practical, a bonus is given, in proportion to the value of the invention.

An Improvement Council, made up of the most skilful workers, studies with the employers the best way of running the machines.

Finally, the worker is asked to point out the defects he notices in the working of his machine. If his remark is not acted upon, the factory councillor raises it again at the fortnightly meeting.

Art. 12. — Prohibitions.

It is forbidden:

1. To leave one's machine or one's workroom without a need of the work;
2. To leave the yards of the mill during work without a permit, to be handed to the porter;
3. To pass the gates with any goods whatever without a pass;
4. To bring wine or spirits into the yards or the workshops;
5. To pay footings or to make others pay them;
6. To bring any newspapers whatever, posters or circulars into the workshops;
7. To smoke in the workrooms;
8. Licentious talk, swearing and blasphemy are forbidden;

9. Lotteries, trading and the exchange of objects are forbidden. With the employer's permission, the collection for the young soldiers may be made at the time of their departure. If, for an exceptional reason, another subscription list is authorised, it may only be taken round by the councillors of the Mutual Aid Society.

Art. 13. — Absences.

Leave of absence can be granted, in the worker's interest, only for serious occasions: weddings, funerals, baptisms, First Communion, etc., and even then such leave is granted only for very close relatives.

For other reasons, leave depends on the good running of the machines, and the employer is the judge of it.

A mere notice of absence given by a third party in the name of the person concerned cannot take the place of leave, except in a case of force majeure.

For an unjustified absence, the fine is fixed at one franc a day for young people under 16 and for women workers; it is fixed at two francs for men workers over 16. An absence of half a day entails half the fine. The fines are paid into the Fund of the Mutual Aid Society.

But if the absentee belongs to a team, the whole of the fine goes to those who have suffered a loss through the absence, without their ever being able to claim anything on account of leave lawfully granted.

The Factory Council will fix the fairest way of sharing it out.

Art. 14. — Visits to the Mill.

Entry to the workshops is forbidden to visitors who are not accompanied and provided with an authorisation signed by an employer.

Workers and clerks are expressly forbidden to bring anyone whatever into the mill.

Art. 15. — Drink shops or Stores.

In order to prevent any abuse, foremen and clerks are forbidden to keep a drink shop or a store selling any goods whatever. The aim of this restriction is to keep their authority above all suspicion.

Art. 16. — Mutual Aid Society.

A Mutual Aid Society specially for the staff of the mill was founded on 21 January 1846. Its administration is entrusted to commissioners elected by their fellow workers.

Since this institution is necessary to all families, to protect them from the hardships brought on by illness, its obligations and benefits are extended to all the workers, who, by the very fact of their work at the mill, belong to the society.

The doctor's consultations take place every day and are announced in the workrooms.

Art. 17. — Accidents.

An insurance policy taken out with a company secures the compensation and pensions according to the law.

Every injured worker must, as far as possible, at once report his accident to his foreman, who makes a note of it.

Art. 18. — Disagreement.

Any disagreement about the present rules will be settled by the Factory Council.

The factory councillors have signed, in approval of the present rules, which were drawn up with their assistance:

Messrs Baudry, Victor, spinner.

Bruno, Charles, card stripper.

Christophe senior, joiner.

Faynot, L., spinner.

Guiot-Boudin, twister.

Jolivet, Alfred, tuner.

Leroy, Jean, dyer.

Mangin, Armand, packer.

Pierson, Auguste, fitter.

Thiry, Joseph, combed-wool spinner.

Vitu, Jules, carded-wool spinner.

The Union Chamber, having been consulted, gives its full approval:

Messrs Andry, Émile, foreman.

Bruno, Charles, card stripper.

Champion, François, accountant.

Corvisier Stéphane, cashier.

Dorbon, Jules, storekeeper.

Fèvre, Henri, combed-wool spinner.

Gérard, Joseph, labourer.

Gobinet, Ernest, references.

Hallet, Henri, piecer.

Jolivet, Alfred, machine tuner.

Lallemand, Eugène, salesman.

Mangin, Armand, packer.

Pioche, Adolphe, labourer.

Vitu, Jules, carded-wool spinner.

The Council of the Mutual Aid Society, to which the articles of the present rules have been submitted, declares that it accepts them.

Measures for the prevention of accidents

I. Rules for Engines and Shafting.

Article 1. — The engine must be started only after a double warning from the engineman.

These two warnings must each last for a certain time, and be given with an interval of at least ten seconds.

Art. 2. — The engine must be stopped as soon as any signal whatever has been transmitted by the apparatus.

In the event of an accident, the person who asks for the engine to be stopped will do well to repeat his signal until the slowing down of the engine has shown that his signals have been heard.

Art. 3. — In order to avoid misunderstandings which might, in certain cases, have fatal consequences, it is expressly forbidden to use the signalling apparatus to transmit anything other than orders to start or stop the engine.

Art. 4. — The *oiler* alone is in charge of the oiling, cleaning and supervision of the shafting. Every other worker is forbidden to touch it, on any pretext whatever.

Art. 5. — To clean or dust the shafts and pulleys of the shafting safely while they are running, one must not leave the ground; one must use a pole, with either a brush or a hook, wrapped with old ropes. The use of a ladder or of any other support for rising above the ground is strictly forbidden, except for oiling.

Art. 6. — The wheels, hangers and bearings must be cleaned only when the shafting is at rest, and only during the regular stoppages laid down by the rules.

Art. 7. — When someone is at work on the shafting during the hours of rest, or in the morning before starting, the foreman of the workroom where this happens and the stoker must be informed.

The stoker starts only on an order from this foreman.

Art. 8. — The workers employed on the shafting are expressly advised not to wear loose clothing: smocks, unbuttoned jackets, wide trousers, ties with hanging ends.

They will preferably wear the jacket fitted at the waist, without tails, with flat sleeves that are not slit.

II. Rules for the Carding Engines.

Article 1. — While the carding engines are running, every woman worker is expressly forbidden:

a) To clean any part of the carding engine or of the driving gear with waste, rags, etc.;

b) To dust, or to remove the fluff from the covers, frames, pulleys, etc.;

c) To remove the fluff that gathers round the bearings or on the side of the sweepers and the workers;

d) To remove or displace the gear guards.

Art. 2. — The card strippers must take out or put back the workers without ever getting a woman worker to help them in this operation.

Art. 3. — The oiling of the machines must be done while they are stopped.

Art. 4. — To carry out the complete cleaning of a carding engine, if the shafting is running, the driving belt must first be removed. Taking it down and putting it back together must be done by special workers.

Art. 5. — When a carding engine is put to grinding, the grinder must remove the wheels and pinions that gear into the cylinder and the doffer.

Art. 6. — It is forbidden to clean any part whatever during grinding.

Art. 7. — It is forbidden to remove, with any instrument whatever, the wool that gets caught at the feed. The woman worker must stop the machine and call a card stripper.

III. Rules for Gill Boxes, Drawing Frames and Roving Frames.

The woman worker to whom a machine is entrusted must always keep in view:

- a) The good upkeep of this machine;
- b) The quality and quantity of the work that this machine must produce, which must always be perfect.

Article 1. — While the machines are running, every woman worker is expressly forbidden:

- a) To clean the gears, even with a stick wrapped in rags;
- b) To put her hands into the combs, under the pressure rollers and into the rubbers to remove the fluff and the neps from them or to feed the slivers of wool into them;
- c) To leave the machine running for cleaning if the pressure rollers have been removed, thus uncovering the entrance to the rubbers.

The cleaning of the rubbers must be done with the stick covered with card clothing; the cleaning of the combs with the comb brush.

- d) To remove or displace the gear guards.

Art. 2. — The parchments are glued while the machine is stopped, with the pressure lifted.

Art. 3. — The women workers are advised not to wear their hair hanging down, to be careful and attentive, and to report any defect at once.

Art. 4. — It is forbidden to leave one's machine without a plausible reason. The woman worker is responsible for her own work and for that of the bobbin girls who work with her. If a woman worker is waiting for a fresh supply, she uses her free time as the head of the department directs, either cleaning her machine or helping her companions.

Art. 5. — The women workers must ensure every day the good oiling of their machine. The combs must always be clean. They are cleaned at least 3 times a day, at the signal given by the bell. The cleaning must be finished half an hour later. Neither string, nor cotton threads, nor wool waste, nor paper must be found on the floor. The Saturday cleaning begins as soon as the signal is given.

Every day, the machines must be very clean and the floor well swept before leaving.

IV. Rules for the Spinning Mules.

Article 1. — The mules must be set in motion only by the spinner (minder) to whom they are entrusted.

If he is absent, this task belongs to the first piecer alone. Every other worker is expressly forbidden to put them in gear.

Before putting in gear, the worker must make sure that no person is exposed, and give a loud warning by shouting: “Look out!”

Art. 2. — While the machines are running, every worker is expressly forbidden:

- a) To clean the headstock motion, or the inside and the top of the carriage;
- b) To remove the gear covers;
- c) To enter, on any pretext whatever, the space between the carriage and the roller beam;
- d) To oil the motions of the headstock and the carriage.

Art. 3. — While the machines are stopped but the shafting is running, every worker is likewise forbidden:

- a) To clean under the machines while the bobbins are being doffed. The cleaning must be done when the carriage is three quarters of the way out, at the last draw before doffing;
- b) To climb over the headstock or to go under the carriage in order to get from the front to the back of the mule, or the other way round;

c) To stand, on any pretext whatever, between the carriage and the roller beam without having taken off the driving belt, or without having securely wedged the catch;

d) To stand above the roller beam at the moment when the carriage is fully out or has begun to run in.

For in either of these positions the carriage starts instantly as soon as the winding-on pulley moves, which may happen from many causes. Anyone who found himself under the machine in such a case would be struck by the carriage without having time to get out of the way.

Art. 4. — For the Saturday cleaning, care must be taken to throw off the belts of the main shafting.

Art. 5. — The worker who *stops* a machine in order to clean underneath it (which he must do when the carriage is *three quarters of the way out*) stands at the starting lever for the whole time of the cleaning; he watches those who are cleaning and puts the machine in gear only after giving warning with the shout “Look out!” and after making sure that no worker is exposed.

Art. 6. — The lower clearer rollers of the fluted rollers should be cleaned *from the front of the mule*; where the workers have not yet adopted this way of cleaning, it is done by stopping the machine when the carriage is three quarters of the way out, and after the catch has been securely wedged. During this time, the spinner keeps his eyes on those who are cleaning and sets his machine in motion only after giving the starting signal and making careful sure that every worker has left the space under the machine.

Art. 7. — The foreman or the manager must be called as soon as any accident occurs or anything abnormal happens.

STATUTES
OF THE
MUTUAL AID SOCIETY

Statutes of the Mutual Aid Society of Val-des-Bois (Marne)

Chapter I. Organisation and resources of the Society.

Article 1. — Aim of the Society.

On 21 January 1846, a Mutual Aid Society was set up by Messrs Harmel Frères in their spinning mill at Val-des-Bois.

The aim of this Society is:

1. To provide the doctor's care and medicines to sick members and to their families (Article 7);
2. To pay them an allowance during their illnesses;
3. To pay them an additional allowance in case of accidents;
4. To provide for their funerals;
5. To pay for school supplies in the mill schools for children under thirteen, but only by decision of the Commissioners and in the following cases: when the mother is a widow, when there are five children, and when the family is in need;
6. To found a mutual Pension Fund for old age.

The Society forbids itself the right to concern itself with political or religious matters. Any discussion of this kind is strictly forbidden.

Art. 2. — Members of the Society.

All the workers are Members of the Mutual Aid Society by the very fact that they work at the Establishment. They cease to belong to it on the day when they are given a week's or a month's notice (according to the agreements) of their departure from the Establishment.

Members of the Society who leave the Establishment are not entitled to any compensation for their payments.

The employers are honorary Members.

Art. 3. — Resources of the Society.

The resources of the Society consist of:

1. A first payment made by the workers when the Fund was founded, and afterwards by newcomers (Article 8);
2. A payment made by the members every fortnight or every month (Articles 4, 5 and 6);
3. The fines;
4. The gifts made by the honorary Members.

Art. 4. — Ordinary subscriptions.

The subscriptions are based on wages and fixed as follows, except for married women:

Earnings per day	Earnings per fortnight	Subscription per fortnight	Allowance per day
3.30 fr. and above	40.00 fr.	0.75 fr.	1.50 fr.
2.50 to 3.25	30.00	0.60	1.20
2.00 to 2.45	24.00	0.50	1.00
1.50 to 1.95	18.00	0.35	0.70
1.00 to 1.45	12.00	0.25	0.50

Those who are paid by the month pay 1.65 fr. a month and receive 1.50 fr. for each day of illness.

This subscription gives the right:

1. To the doctor and medicines, according to Articles 7, 32 and 33;
2. To a sickness allowance, according to Articles 29 and 30;
3. To the allowance in case of accident, according to Article 29;
4. To burial, according to Article 34.

Art. 5. — Married women.

Married women, whether working in the workshop or staying at home, pay 15 centimes a fortnight. On this condition they belong to the Mutual Aid Society and are entitled:

1. To the doctor and medicines free of charge, according to Articles 32 and 33;
2. To the confinement allowance, according to Article 31;
3. To burial, according to Article 34.

Art. 6. — Children over thirteen. Elderly parents.

Children over thirteen who do not work at the Establishment and have no other occupation, and elderly parents who live with their children, may belong to the Mutual Aid Society by paying 15 centimes a fortnight, which entitles them:

1. To the doctor and medicines free of charge;
2. To burial, according to Article 34.

Except for the mother of a family, no person may be admitted to the Society who follows an independent trade, that is to say work that is not supplied by the workshop or by the employers.

Art. 7. — Families.

Families who live on the work supplied by the mill or by the employers belong to the Mutual Aid Society if all the Members over thirteen pay the subscriptions mentioned in Articles 4, 5 and 6. — In this case, all the children under thirteen are entitled:

1. To the doctor and medicines free of charge;
2. To burial, according to Article 34.

By exception to the rules, and for reasons easy to understand, the mother of a family who stays at home to look after the household may at the same time follow an independent trade without ceasing to belong to the Society.

Art. 8. — First subscription.

The first payment is double for each class.

Art. 9. — Extraordinary subscription.

Should it happen that, as a result of too great a number of sick or injured, the Fund were so exhausted that it could not meet the relief granted by the rules, the fortnightly subscription may be raised by one fifth, but only by the General Council. (Article 15.)

Chapter II. Administration of the Society.

Art. 10. — Council.

A Council of ten members is elected by the members, namely: eight workers from specified trades, according to Article 12; a secretary from outside these eight workers; a president, who may be chosen from among the honorary members; a vice-president.

The officers, made up of the president, the vice-president and the secretary, will be responsible for signing documents, whether for the administration or from the legal or judicial point of view.

Half of the Council will be renewed every two years at a general meeting, whose place, day and hour are fixed by the Council and posted up in the workshops.

The elections are held by secret ballot, by a majority of the votes cast.

The outgoing Councillors are eligible for re-election.

Art. 11. — Electors and those eligible.

Men aged eighteen are electors. Those who are twenty-five years of age and have three years' service at the mill are eligible.

Art. 12. — Composition of the Council.

The Council must have among its members at least one combed-wool spinner, one carded-wool spinner, one locksmith or joiner, and one labourer, scourer or packer. If one of these four elements were not represented on the Council, the election of the eighth Commissioner would be annulled, and the ninth or tenth by number of votes would be taken, and so on, until this gap was filled.

If there is an equal number of votes, the eldest is preferred; if an elected Member does not accept, the one who has obtained the most votes is called upon to replace him.

Art. 13. — Resignations.

In the event of the resignation or departure of a Commissioner, he is replaced by one of the three who had the most votes after the last one elected, at the choice of the Council.

Art. 14. — Honorary Commissioners.

Every Member of the Society who has held the office of Commissioner for six years will by that very fact be an honorary Commissioner.

The honorary Commissioners are called to sit on the Council, where they have a deliberative vote on the matters specified in Article 15.

They sign the minutes of the elections and the statement of the fund every half-year.

Art. 15. — General Council.

The meeting of the honorary Commissioners with the Commissioners in office constitutes the General Council.

This meeting takes place in the week before the General Meeting.

It is also called to take extraordinary decisions, such as:
Additional allowances;

Economical purchases;
Raising of the subscriptions (Article 9);
Amendment of the Statutes.

Art. 16. — Installation of the Council.

The minutes of the appointment of the Council must bear the signature of the President, of the outgoing Commissioners, of the newly elected and of the honorary Commissioners.

Art. 17. — Appointment and Duties of the Secretary.

As soon as it is installed, the Council appoints a Secretary, who at the same time performs the duties of Treasurer.

The Secretary may be taken from outside the Council; he regularly enters the receipts and expenses in a special book.

Twice a year, he presents the report on the financial situation to the Members of the General Council, who approve it with their signatures; this report is then read at the General Meetings and posted up.

At the election meeting, the Secretary gives the summary of the year, so as to keep every member informed of the operations of the Fund.

Art. 18. — Duties of the Commissioners.

The Commissioners, in accepting their office, declare that they submit to the following conditions:

1. To attend the fortnightly meetings scrupulously, under pain of a fine to be fixed by the Council when there is no legitimate cause;
2. Never to repeat outside what is said at the meetings and might cause annoyance to a colleague. Anyone guilty of breaking this rule may be excluded from the Council at the second offence;
3. To visit the sick.

A Commissioner may be excluded from the Council if the President and the five other Commissioners ask for his resignation for ha-

bitual absence from the meetings, for indiscretion or for a question of honour.

Art. 19. — Attendance.

At each meeting, the Commissioners sign a register prepared for the purpose, to record their attendance.

It is totalled up every year, but is communicated only to the Members of the General Council.

For a Member of the Council who has nine absences in the course of a financial year, the year would not count towards becoming an honorary Commissioner.

Art. 20. — Rights of the Commissioners.

The Council administers the Fund, judges in the last resort, according to the Statutes, the cases in which allowances are to be granted or refused, and settles the cases not provided for by the rules.

It alone manages the proceeds of any collection made in the Establishment for the benefit of anyone at all.

Art. 21. — Order of the Meetings.

There is a meeting of the Council every fortnight, on the Wednesday before the pay. The order of business is fixed as follows:

Reading of a part of the rules, so as to go through them in two months;

Receipts and expenses of the fortnight, and, every month, the state of the Fund;

Allowances to the sick;

Allowances to the injured;

Claims;

Art. 22. — Claims.

Any member who has a claim to make concerning a decision of the Council is bound to explain himself before the Commissioners, at the place and time of the meetings, and nowhere else. He withdraws at once, so that his claim may be judged in his absence.

Art. 23. — Visiting the Sick.

The Commissioners visit the sick, take them their allowance, make sure that they duly receive the doctor's visits and the medicines prescribed, and finally report to the Council all the abuses and breaches of the statutes and rules they may have noticed in the course of their visits. These visits are made at least once a week.

At each meeting, the Members of the Council share out among themselves the visits to be made, and they report on them at the following meeting.

Art. 24. — Appointment of the Doctor.

At the meeting of the General Council that follows the elections, the outgoing Commissioners and the newly elected, in agreement with the President, appoint the Doctor of the Society. He is allotted a fixed sum a year, in return for which the said doctor undertakes to call every day at premises specially set aside for consultations, and to visit the sick as often as their condition requires.

Art. 25. — Census.

Every year, about 30 September, the Council draws up the list of the families that belong to the Mutual Aid Society, and of the individual members. This list remains posted up in the meeting room. The Doctor of the Society is invited to take note of it.

Chapter III. Relief Granted.

Art. 26. — Formalities to Be Completed.

When a Member is ill, he must notify one of the Commissioners at once, or have him notified. The Commissioner has the Establishment's Doctor informed and hands the Secretary a slip recording the date on which work stopped.

Benefits may be given only on a slip from the Doctor certifying the illness and stating, where applicable, the day on which work could be resumed. The benefits are fixed according to the statutes by the Council every fortnight; they are paid on a voucher signed by at least three Commissioners and by the Secretary-Treasurer.

Art. 27. — Doctor.

The Society's Doctor comes to the mill every day. A stroke of the bell announces his presence, and the Members who need him may come to the consultation at the dispensary. Those who wish for a home visit have their names entered with the porters. Those who have given notice in accordance with Article 26 are also visited.

If a Member thinks fit to call in a doctor other than the Society's, it is at his own expense.

If the Doctor judges it necessary to call in a colleague, he alone must pay him.

Art. 28. — Medicines.

Medicines are bought by the Council of the Relief Society, on the Doctor's proposal. They are delivered to the sick by the Doctor himself or on a voucher signed by him.

The following are not considered medicines: cod-liver oil and syrups. The Council may supply them to a sick person only as an extraordinary benefit.

For trusses, the Society pays half.

Art. 29. — Benefits.

Every Member whose illness has been certified, as stated in Article 26, receives the benefit shown in the fourth column of the table. (Article 4.)

Sundays, holidays and days of general stoppage, even accidental, are not paid.

The first three days of an illness are not counted for the benefit, except in the case of an injury in the workshop during work.

From each voucher issued, the Member's usual subscription is first deducted.

Art. 30. — Chronic Illnesses.

A sick person is deemed to suffer from a chronic illness when he has been more than four months without working.

Any sick person who cannot, within five months, show a full month of work is considered to be in a permanent state of illness.

The benefit is reduced by half at the end of the fourth month and withdrawn at the end of the eighth month.

Art. 31. — Childbirth.

The childbirth benefit, granted to married women, is fifteen francs paid to the midwife, who undertakes to give daily care for ten days, and for fifteen days if necessary.

Art. 32. — Hospital.

When a sick person is cared for temporarily at the hospital of Reims and has not incurred the forfeiture of Article 33, the Society takes charge of the fee due to that establishment, reimbursing itself from the sick person's benefit.

If the benefit is insufficient, the Society bears the remainder.

Art. 33. — Exclusion from Benefit.

The following have no right to any benefit:

1. Those who were fully sixty years old on joining the Society;
2. Members whose illness the doctor finds to date from before their joining the Society or to result from an earlier accident;
3. Those who are ill as a result of fights, brawls, drunkenness or debauchery;
4. Those who, during their illness, enter a tavern of the village or the neighbourhood;
5. Those who, without being forced to, do anything harmful to their recovery.

If it is proved that the sick person can easily earn as much as the Fund allows him, the Fund may be released from its obligation towards him.

Art. 34. — Burials.

The Society pays the costs of Christian burial as follows:

Over 15 years	38.00 fr.
From 12 to 15 years	21.75 fr.
From 10 to 12 years	19.25 fr.
From 8 to 10 years	18.25 fr.
From 7 to 8 years	17.50 fr.
From 3 to 7 years	12.00 fr.
From 1 to 3 years	9.75 fr.
From 0 to 1 year	9.25 fr.

These sums are handed to those entitled to them:

For the bell-ringing;

For the religious service (High Mass over 15 years, Low Mass from 12 to 15 years);

For the coffin;

For the digging and filling of the grave.

In addition, the family may, free of charge, have a Low Mass said in the chapel on the day of its choosing.

Art. 35. — Annual Mass.

Every year, in the parish church, a Mass of the Blessed Virgin is sung for the prosperity of the Establishment and of each of its Members in particular, followed by a prayer for the repose of the souls of the deceased Members.

This Mass, sung on Whit Monday, is paid for by the honorary members.

Certified true and correct.

Val-des-Bois, 18 July 1906.

The Secretary,

Signed: Stéphane Corvisier.

The President,

Signed: Léon Harmel.

SUB-PREFECTURE
OF REIMS
FRENCH REPUBLIC

The Ministry of the Interior,

Having regard to the law of 1 April 1898,

Decrees:

Art. 1. — The Statutes of the Mutual Aid Society of Val-des-Bois, no. 61, at Warmériville, as annexed to the present decree, are approved.

Art. 2. — The Prefect of the Marne is charged with the execution of the present decree.

Done at Paris, 10 October 1906.

Signed: G. Clémenceau.

For the official duplicate:

The Director of Mutual Societies,

Signed: Mascle.

Certified true copy:

The Sub-Prefect,

Signed: Dhommée.

Seen, to be annexed to the decree of 10 October 1906.

For the Minister of the Interior:

The Director of Mutual Societies,

Signed: Mascle.

Explanation of Article 6 concerning Elderly Parents.

Elderly parents who have not worked at the Val-des-Bois mill, and who live with their children who work at the mill, may belong to the Relief Fund (after admission by the Council). Like the women, they pay a subscription of 15 centimes per person per fortnight.

This subscription of 15 centimes entitles them:

a) During the first six months after their admission, to the doctor's visits and to medicines. The burial remains at the children's charge.

b) From the sixth month after their admission up to two years, they will be entitled: 1. to the doctor's visits; 2. to medicines; 3. to Christian burial with a Low Mass.

c) From two years after their admission, they will be entitled: 1. to the doctor's visits; 2. to medicines; 3. to Christian burial with a sung Mass

STATUTES OF THE WORKERS' UNION

AND

Internal Regulations



Union Chamber

Officers:

Messrs Jolivet Alfred, frame setter, *President*.
Champion François, accountant, *Vice-President*.
Corvisier Stéphane, cashier, *Treasurer-Secretary*.
Andry Emile, foreman, *Vice-Secretary*.

Syndics:

Messrs Bruno Charles, card stripper.
Dorbon Jules, storekeeper.
Dupuis Albert, combed-wool spinner.
Fèvre Henri, combed-wool spinner.
Gérard Joseph, labourer.
Gobinet Ernest, samples.
Hallet Henri, piecer.
Lallemand Eugène, salesman.
Mangin Armand, packer.
Pioche Adolphe, labourer.
Vitu Jules, carded-wool spinner.

Honorary Syndics:

Messrs Varlet François, retired.
Scherrer Charles, —
Esqui Emile, foreman.
Dufour Augustin, spinner.

Workers' Union of Val-des-Bois

Statutes

Title I. — Foundation and Purpose

Article 1. — Foundation.

A Workers' Union is established in the Val-des-Bois mill. It is governed by the law of 21 March 1884 and by the following provisions:

Art. 2. — Name; Duration; Registered Office.

The Union bears the name *Workers' Union of Val-des-Bois*. Its duration is unlimited. Its seat is at Val-des-Bois, Warmériville (Marne).

Art. 3. — Object.

The Union's sole object is the study and defence of the interests of the workers, by those concerned. To this end, it organises its own institutions: the factory council, the trade competitions, the family fund for supplementing the wages of large families, the veterans' society, the cooperative, the consumer society, direct purchasing, the loan fund, the union library, the brass band, the dramatic society, the youth society and the gymnastics society.

It gives active support to the general institutions of the mill: schools, mutual aid society, savings bank, provident institutions, old-age pension, and to the various societies that can awaken initiative and lead the workers to take charge of their own affairs.

Art. 4. — Members.

To be a member of the Union, one must:

1. Belong to the Val-des-Bois mill in any capacity whatever;
2. Be accepted by the Union's officers;

3. Subscribe to the present Statutes.

Children, boys and girls, from the age of thirteen, with their parents' permission, and women are admitted; but while enjoying the advantages of the Union, they may take part neither in the elections of the Union Chamber nor in the administration.

Art. 5. — Withdrawal.

Any union member who ceases to belong to the Val-des-Bois mill thereby ceases to belong to the Union. A union member may withdraw from the Association at any moment, but without prejudice to the Union's right to claim the subscription for the current year. Lastly, the union officers have the right to exclude a member for a serious offence, of which they remain the judges. In all these cases, the departing member loses his rights to the union patrimony.

Art. 6. — Subscription.

The subscription is fixed at 0.25 fr. per month per household, whatever the number of union members in each home.

The officers may propose to a general meeting an increase in the subscription for the setting up of a pension fund or for other creations useful to working-class families.

Title II. — Administration

Art. 7. — Union Chamber.

The Union Chamber is composed of fifteen syndics elected in general meeting. The electors are the men over eighteen years of age.

The Chamber must meet every month, on the first Tuesday, and more often if the president judges it useful.

It appoints the officers and fills any vacancies that may occur among its members.

Its deliberations are valid whatever the number of members present.

Art. 8. — Honorary Syndics.

After ten years in office, a syndic may ask to be replaced and remain an honorary syndic. In that case, he is not bound to regular attendance.

Art. 9. — Officers of the Union.

The Union is administered by its officers, elected by the Union Chamber. The officers comprise a president and a vice-president, who thereby become president and vice-president of the Union; a secretary and a treasurer.

They must be French and enjoy their civil rights, be fully twenty-five years old and have belonged to the Union for at least three years.

In addition, the Union Chamber may elect an honorary president.

Art. 10. — Duties of the Officers.

The officers meet every Tuesday.

They take the decisions and measures concerning the Association. They pronounce the admission of new members; they prepare the proposals to be submitted to the Union Chamber at its monthly meetings and to the general meetings.

They administer the Union's patrimony and buy the necessary books, instruments and furniture. They may take buildings on lease.

They draw up the budget, order expenditure and collections, decide on purchases and sales, settle, submit to arbitration, and appoint and dismiss all agents.

Each month they give an account of their management to the Union Chamber, to which they submit each year the report intended for the General Meeting on all the operations of the financial year, on

the changes in membership, on the financial situation and on the general progress of the institutions founded by the Union.

Art. 11. — President and Vice-President.

The president, or failing him the vice-president, directs the work of the Association, orders the convocations, and presides over the meetings both of the Union Chamber and of the general meetings; he has the casting vote in the event of a tie.

He signs all official documents; with the secretary he signs the minutes of the meetings and any extracts made from them.

He acts in the name of the Union and represents it in all the acts of civil life. He is its official agent.

In the absence of the president and the vice-president, the officers may delegate their powers to one of their number.

Art. 12. — Secretary.

The secretary draws up the minutes of the meetings of the officers, of the Union Chamber and of the general meetings. He sends out the convocations; he keeps up to date the registers of entry into and departure from the Union; he is in charge of the archives.

Art. 13. — Treasurer.

The treasurer collects the subscriptions and dues, the gifts and the bonuses allotted to the Union.

He manages the union patrimony under the supervision of the officers.

For the institutions created by the Union that remain under its patronage, he sees that the accounts are well kept and the special funds in good order. He reports on their situation to the annual general meeting.

Title III. — Meetings

Art. 14. — General Meeting.

The general meeting is composed of all the members of the Union. It is held in May or June. It may be convened in extraordinary session when the officers judge it necessary.

The meeting is convened by notices posted at the office and at the mill gates at least eight days before the meeting. The questions on the agenda are stated on the notices.

The decisions of the meeting are taken by majority, whatever the number of members present; only the electors of the Union Chamber are admitted to vote.

The meeting holds the elections to complete the Union Chamber. It decides on the proposals made. However, proposals arising from the individual initiative of its members are submitted to it only with the approval of the officers, to whom they must be addressed a fortnight in advance.

The decisions of the general meeting bind all union members, present and absent.

Art. 15. — Discussions.

All political or religious discussion is forbidden.

Title IV. — Miscellaneous

Art. 16. — Receipts and Expenditure.

The resources of the Union consist of:

1. The monthly subscription under Article 6;
2. Gifts and legacies;
3. The profits of the Consumer Society.

The expenditure of the Union is as follows:

Upkeep of the building lent by the mill; upkeep of the furniture, lighting, heating, library, subsidies to the institutions created by the Union, overheads.

Art. 17. — Liquidation.

In the event of the dissolution of the Union, the general meeting appoints two commissioners for the liquidation

The Union's buildings were built by the mill, which remains their owner. Messrs Harmel frères intend their annual gifts to be used first of all for the purchase of the necessary furniture, in return for which the furniture would rightfully be assigned to them in the event of dissolution.

If any sum whatever remains in the Union's funds, it will be shared among the families paying the union subscription at the time of the liquidation.

Art. 18. — Annual Feast.

The annual feast of the Union is fixed for the third Sunday after Easter.

This new wording of the Statutes was approved at the extraordinary general meeting of 19 September 1909.

The first Statutes were deposited at the Town Hall of Warmériville, in duplicate certified by the Officers, on 28 December 1903.

The amended Statutes were deposited at the Town Hall of Warmériville on 20 September 1909.

THE OFFICERS:

Alfred Jolivet: *President.*

François Champion: *Vice-President.*

Stéphane Corvisier: *Secretary-Treasurer.*

Emile Andry: *Vice-Secretary.*

Internal Regulations

Article 1. — Regulations.

The present Internal Regulations of the *Union of Val-des-Bois*, voted at the General Meeting of 19 September 1909, are binding on all the members of the Association until amended by a later general meeting.

I. — Union Organisations

Art. 2. — General Meetings and Assemblies.

The General Meeting of May or June (Art. 14 of the Statutes) begins with a roll call of all the union men over 18 years of age; an attendance token of 0.25 is handed to each of those present.

Another general assembly, announced by notice eight days in advance, with roll call and attendance tokens, takes place in winter, to serve as the general meeting of the Factory Council.

Lastly, other, less important assemblies are convened by the Union Chamber to report on the various professional, economic and social institutions of the mill, but without roll call and without attendance tokens.

Art. 3. — Union Chamber.

The *Workers' Union* sums up the professional, economic and social life of Val-des-Bois. The Union Chamber is its soul. It concerns itself with all the institutions, most particularly with those founded especially for the members of the Union; it subsidises a certain number of them. It has itself represented on their Councils, to maintain among them the fruitful bond of solidarity and good fellowship.

It facilitates their action while respecting their autonomy. It also makes it a duty to lend its support to the general institutions, desir-

ing with all its power to help the welfare of the workers

Art. 4. — Union House.

The Union House comprises an Assembly hall, a Union room, a Council room, and a bar with its cellar. It is managed exclusively by the Union Chamber, which is represented each week by duty Commissioners. These have the responsibility, and consequently the disciplinary authority, on the premises.

Art. 5. — Factory Council.

The Factory Council is composed of ordinary workers representing the various trades of the mill: combed-wool spinner, twister, piecer, packer, carded-wool spinner, card stripper, fitter or joiner, dyer, labourer. It is elected by the union members.

The women workers choose from among themselves delegates representing the various trades: minder, doubler, oiler, twister, winder, who form the women workers' Factory Council.

Each Council meets every fortnight with an employer, but without any foreman or clerk present.

Their duties are as follows:

a) Accidents: application of the special rules for engines, bobbin frames, spinning frames and cards; reporting of dangerous places and defective things; investigation of accidents and inquiry into their causes; personal assistance.

All the workers are insured, in accordance with the law of 1898, with an accident insurance company.

As soon as an accident occurs, the Factory Council appoints one of its members to assist the injured person as an advisory guardian; he takes, or has taken, all the useful steps, if need be helps him to choose a lawyer; in a word, he protects the victim's interests and obtains for him the most suitable compensation.

In the case of temporary incapacity, the insurance company pays half the wage and the Mutual Aid Society pays the sickness benefit.

This combination gives the following results:

For a wage of 5 francs a day, half, 2.50 fr.; plus sickness benefit, 1.50 fr. Total: 4 francs.

For earnings of 4 fr.: $2 + 1.50 = 3.50$ fr.

For earnings of 3.30: $1.65 + 1.50 = 3.15$ fr.

For earnings of 2 fr.: $1 \text{ fr.} + 0.70 = 1.70$ fr.

The mill makes the necessary advances, so that the injured person has all the time he needs to argue his case.

Until work is resumed, a report on the injured person's situation is given at each meeting.

b) Hygiene in the mill (water, ventilation, temperature).

c) Apprenticeship. The apprentices are under the patronage of the councillors, who report each month on their progress.

d) Work, production, quality.

e) Wages, rates, unemployment.

f) Complaints. — Every union member has the right to make complaints, of whatever kind, to a member of the Factory Councils; the latter is bound to bring them to the next meeting.

Art. 6. — Trade Competitions.

Every half-year, as far as possible, competitions are held among the young men and young women workers. Marks are given twice a day, from 0 to 5, by the factory councillor or woman councillor representing the Union Chamber, by an employer, by the manager and by the foreman. The marks of the workers' council have a coefficient of ten, against three for the others together. The results are posted and serve for promotion. The rewards are given in the presence of an employer, the foreman and the factory councillors assembled.

Art. 7. — Family Fund.

The purpose of this institution is to raise the wage to the level of the family's needs by a fixed supplement. The minimum wage is fixed at 4.20 fr. per week per head, that is 8.40 fr. per fortnight per head, except in cases of strike or force majeure.

The workers' commission, appointed by the Union Chamber, examines the wages on the Thursday evening of each fortnight and takes account of earnings outside the mill. It fixes the figures and signs the slips that entitle the family to receive the wage supplement in kind or in money, according to the decision of the said commission.

These sums are provided exclusively by Messrs Harmel frères, without any contribution from the workers, but as a free gift and without the employers ever being compellable to continue these payments should they see fit to stop them.

Art. 8. — Collective Payment of Wages.

The wages of the members of one family are added together and handed to the head of the family, in order to strengthen union in the home and to make saving easier.

However, if the Union Chamber judged exceptions necessary, it could ask for wages to be paid directly to children who are of age.

Art. 9. — Veterans.

The Veterans' Society, composed of the workers who have worked more than 25 years at the mill, has its elected Council, its annual feast on the first Sunday of July, its fund and its special meetings.

Art. 10. — Cooperative.

The Cooperative Society has its Statutes, its Council and its administration. Under the terms of Articles 10 and 17, no one may be a shareholder or cooperator unless he belongs to the *Union of Val-des-Bois*.

Art. 11. — Consumer Society.

The Consumer Society deals with the purchase and sale of drinks; it is administered for the benefit of the Union by the Union Chamber or its delegates.

Art. 12. — Direct Purchasing.

The Direct Purchasing Commission, appointed by the Union Chamber, deals with the transactions that the Cooperative Society does not undertake. Payment is collected in cash.

Art. 13. — Loans.

The Loan Fund, founded by the Union, has its own special rules.

Art. 14. — Library.

The Union Library comprises a considerable number of works belonging to the Union. In addition, a subscription to circulating libraries allows the reading to be varied. The books are kept in the boys' schools and lent every day at a fixed and known hour.

Art. 15. — Study Circles.

Study circles are encouraged, above all among the young men, to introduce them to the professional, social and economic knowledge so necessary to the workers of today.

Art. 16. — Brass Band.

The Brass Band of the *Workers' Union of Val-des-Bois* is subsidised by the Union Chamber, which is represented by one of its syndics on the Council appointed by the players.

Art. 17. — Dramatic Society; Youth; Gymnastics.

The same applies to the dramatic society, the youth society and the gymnastics society, the *Young Republican Guard of Val-des-Bois*.

The purpose of these societies is the training of body and mind, to develop agility and health together with intelligence and artistic sense.

Art. 18. — Services Commission.

A Services Commission, appointed each year by the Union Council, is at the disposal of the union members to render the services requested: whether to obtain the papers needed for marriages, or for legal consultations, or to guide and help families in the steps and formalities to be completed in the event of a death, rights of succession, divisions of property, liquidations, placing of children, etc. It offers its advice and its good offices for all contentious questions. It also provides the documents, the information and, if need be, the useful help, whether for the sound investment of savings or for taking out life insurance at reduced premiums.

II. — Institutions of the Mill

Art. 19. — Schools.

The Union Chamber appoints a schools commission, charged with attending the children's examinations:

On leaving the infant school, and twice a year for the boys' and girls' schools.

In addition, the commission warns the parents whose children are absent without legitimate reason and works to secure the regular attendance of all the children up to the age of 13. It opens evening classes and vocational classes.

Art. 20. — Mutual Aid Society.

The *Mutual Aid Society of Val-des-Bois* is compulsory for all the workers of the mill. It has its statutes, its administration, its fund, its resources. It thereby serves all the union members.

The same applies to the dispensary, maintained by the *Mutual Aid Society* for the exclusive benefit of its members, and to the shower-bath institution.

Art. 21. — Savings Banks.

A school savings bank receives each fortnight the smallest savings of the schoolboys and schoolgirls.

A general savings bank receives the deposits of families, with special rules.

Lastly, the corporative bonus fund gathers the rebates of the co-operators under 50 years of age. The interest, 4 % a year, is calculated every half-year.

The Union Chamber studies the means of encouraging saving at every age, considering that reserves are indispensable to meet the accidents of life and to ensure the comfort of families.

Art. 22. — Old-Age Pension.

The mill pays a sum each year to provide old-age pensions for former workers, under certain fixed conditions, without any contribution on their part. It is the Union Chamber that is charged with presenting the candidates.

III. — General Organisations

Art. 23. — Provident Institutions.

The endowment of the *Jeunesse Française*, insurance in case of death and the departmental fire insurance have their section at Val-des-Bois under the supervision of the syndics.

Art. 24. — Various Societies.

The temperance, rifle, military preparation and *Red Cross* societies, while remaining general, include members of the Union. It is on this account that the Union takes an interest in them, as in everything that favours the family and patriotism.

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These Internal Regulations were adopted on Sunday 19 September 1909, at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

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