

EGYPTIAN "TEMPLE" FACTORY

3,000 EMPLOYEES CHEER MR. BERNHARD BARON AT CARRERAS' OPENING CEREMONY

St. Pancras is justly proud of the fact that it contains the largest and most up-to-date factory under one roof, in Great Britain. This huge building of Messrs. Carreras, Ltd., the cigarette and tobacco manufacturers, which occupies the Mornington-crescent site in Hampstead-road, N.W.1, and took over two years to construct, was officially opened on Saturday by Mr. Bernhard Baron, the philanthropic managing director of the company, in the presence of a large company which included the 3,000 employees of the firm whom he delights to call "his children."

Covering nine acres the building has 392,000 feet of floor space and to its construction—taken part in by 800 men—went 26,000 cubic yards of reinforced concrete, weighing 70,000 tons, 7,500 tons of cement, and 2,800 tons of British steel rods. The conception and construction of the factory are British throughout: nearly 400,000 square feet of Canadian maple are in its floors; the window frames are of British bronze, and every cog of its hundreds of machines, from the wonderful ventilating plant in the roof to the transformers of electric current in the basement, are of British make.

The façade of the building, which is 80 feet high and stretches 560 feet along Hampstead-road, is something fresh in London architecture—a conventionalised copy of the Temple of Bubastis, the cat-headed goddess of Ancient Egypt. Two great bronze cats of Bubastis, ten feet high, flank the main entrance. Behind them rise twelve tall pillars against the face of the building. The colours with which they are decorated were ground from Venetian glass, and cannot be dimmed, while over all is set the winged solar disc, the emblem of Ra, the Sun God.

By the desire of Mr. Baron, Saturday's opening ceremony was as simple as possible, but in spite of that, great crowds, attracted by the array of bunting flying from the fourteen flag poles on the summit of the building, lined the footpaths for hundreds of yards each side of Hampstead-road. Mr. Baron, with his son, Mr. Louis B. Baron (another director of the firm) received his guests in the splendid entrance hall of the factory. They included the Mayor of St. Pancras (Councillor Alfred Squire, F.A.I., J.P.), Lord Riddell, Viscount Knutsford, Sir Alfred Yarrow, Bart., Major Sir Richard Barnett, M.P. (for South-West St. Pancras), the Earl of Arran, Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P.: Mr. Edward S. Baron; Mr. W. J. Yapp, Mr. W. Loudon, Directors of Carreras, Ltd.; Mr. H. W. Danbury, Secretary of Carreras, Ltd., Sir George May, Mr. A. I. Belisha, Mr. Marcus E. Collins, Major Salmon, M.P., Sir J. C. W. Reith, Professor Turnbull, Mr. W. Harrison, Sir Charles Starmer, Sir Robert McAlpine, Alderman T. A. Collins, J.P., Alderman J. H. Mitchell, D.L., J.P., Mr. Frank Hodges, M.P., Mr. O. H. Collin, the Rev. C. J. Danbury, Mr. J. G. Buchanan, and Dr. Donald Hall.

At the luncheon at which Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., and Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., paid tributes to Mr. Baron's work for humanity, Mr. Baron was presented by Lord Knutsford with a bust of himself (executed by Mr. Reid Dick, A.R.A., the famous sculptor) as a mark of appreciation from a number of friends. The bust has been placed on the left hand of the entrance hall.

In proposing the toast of Carreras, Ltd., Mr. A. I. Belisha said that the original subscribers of the company's shares were receiving to-day the equivalent of 500 per cent. on the amount they subscribed. Mr. Baron, he said, was the "Prince of Benefactors," for no one had done more for the poor and needy in our time.

Mr. Baron's reply was "My workpeople I regard as my children. I have only done what I think was right. Excuse me saying more—I am played out."

Later he presented a cheque for £1,000 to Mr. W. T. Watson, works manager for Sir Robert McAlpine and Sons, who erected the factory. Massed about the platform on which he stood some 3,000 of the girls employed by the firm cheered Mr. Baron to the echo and all within reach clamoured for the privilege of shaking hands with him.

These girls on arriving at the age of 21 all earn £2 5s. a week and the pay of some of them amounts to £3 or £4—pay which is con-

tinued through illnesses. Many wore smart dance frocks, for after the opening ceremony all were invited to join in the dancing and refreshments, and each, together with all the other employees of the firm, was presented with a silver medal, bearing the portrait of Mr. Baron with these words above, "My thanks for your help," and a picture of the factory.

Although 3,000 men and girls are employed in the factory which contains hundreds of machines, it is so vast that it appears quite capable of housing nearly double the number. Spaciousness and light are the main features of the building, and this is due to the fact that the windows reach from floor to ceiling and that each machine—all are mechanical marvels—has its own motor and thus eliminates overhead shafting.

The chief marvel of the factory, however, is the air conditioning plant built on the roof and having an effective bearing in all parts of the building. By this wonderful installation Messrs. Carreras can be said to make their own climate, for the air which enters the building is first washed clean with water, and then adjusted to the required temperature and humidity. Thus, outside, London may be shivering, or sweltering, damp or dusty, but inside every day is a fine day and all weather is fine weather, ensuring ideal atmosphere for the manufacture of the perfect cigarette.

The making of cigarettes at the factory is indeed, wonderful to contemplate. In the basement are innumerable hogsheads of tobacco leaf from Virginia, each having paid a duty of £450 to the State. Nearby is a department where hundreds of smartly-clad girls with deft fingers, break the brittle tobacco leaves apart, and adjacent is the stripping department where girls—hundreds of them—all seated in bins strip the stalks from the leaves. Thus stripped the tobacco is pushed along on hand trolleys to another department where it is tossed and thrown about in a manner reminiscent of hay-making; although the accompanying scent is far more agreeably pungent.

Through all these processes a slight mist envelopes the workers, this being caused by the dust and sand contained in the leaves. The next process is damping. This is done with the aid of sprays and requires discriminating skill as only a certain amount of moisture must be introduced. The tobacco is next put into cutting machines and after that it commences to take the form which the smoker knows so well. However it is not yet perfect, and it is not until it has been shaken and kneaded together in troughs that it is ready for the cigarette making machines. These machines—there are 75 on one floor—are manipulated by girls and each turns out 1,000 cigarettes a minute. The machines are fitted with dust extractors, for even by this time all the sand has not been separated from the tobacco. These extractors work on the vacuum principle and suck up and deposit in bags at the side of the machine all remaining particles of dust and foreign matter.

Marvels of ingenuity also are the packing machines. Into these are inserted in different places by the quick fingers of girls the flat packets, cigarettes, and coupons and from each no fewer than 36,000 packets ready for sale are turned out daily. In another department, devoted to hand packing, hundreds of girls work at a speed which is simply amazing. The cigarettes packed by hand are of the cork-tipped variety which do not take so kindly to the machines.

One of the most pleasing features of the new factory is the provision made for the comfort of the employees, each of whom has a place to hang his or her clothes and what is more to the purpose to dry them should they be wet. There is also a welfare centre and rest room. This is really a well-equipped miniature hospital with a doctor always within call and a nurse at all times in attendance.

Altogether the factory is an ideal one. It is, as Mr. J. R. Clynes remarked on Saturday, a palace with palatial furnishings and comforts for the workers, and no one is prouder of it than Mr. Bernhard Baron himself who has watched this factory of his dreams become a wonderful reality. Photographs appear on pages 6 and 7.