

SOURCE 1

Extract from a government report on the effects of war on the economy, September 1914

(PRO ref: CAB 37/121/106)

HOW TO USE THIS SOURCE TO HELP YOU ANSWER THE BIG QUESTION :

Look carefully at this source and consider what it tells you about how workers were affected by the war and how they contributed to the war effort. You should consider:

ASK YOURSELF:

- What does this report tell you about the state of British industry in 1914?
- How has the war affected businesses?
- How might this have affected workers?
- Why is this source unreliable as evidence for explaining how the war affected British workers?

SOURCE 1

Business is reported normal in 3,206 cases, slack in 5,842, while 998 report pressure of work. Full time is being worked in 55.4 per cent. of factories, 42.3 per cent. are working short time, and only 2.2 per cent. have closed or are preparing to close. There is abundant evidence that employers are making every effort to keep their factories open.

The causes assigned for slackness of trade are :—

1. Some *trade depression* previous to the outbreak of war caused by (a) over-production following a period of good trade, particularly in cotton spinning, woollen, clothing, and metal industries; and (b) trade disputes, particularly in the building and textile machinery industries.

2. *Shortage and high price of raw materials*, of which are (a) beet sugar from Germany and Austria, required in certain food-trades—the making of preserves, sweets, confectionery, and biscuits; (b) Belgian and Silesian spelter (zinc) much used in the metal industries—brass-making, galvanising of metal sheets, of wire and hollow-ware; (c) timber from the Baltic, used in making boxes, barrels, tool-handles, matches, furniture, and wood-pulp for paper; (d) dyes from Germany necessary to textile dyeing, chemicals, and paint and colours; (e) flax from Russia and Belgium necessary to the linen trade; (f)

3. *Lessened and cancelled orders* due to customers withholding orders, especially for luxuries. This is given as the reason in 4,976 of the 5,842 cases of slackness.