

AN INQUIRY INTO  
THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF  
*The House Elections*  
BY  
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The greatest part of the productive power of society, as has been noted in an earlier work, is doubtless the result of the division of labour. The simple example of a pin-making manufactory has illustrated this point quite clearly, as even the most skilled craftsman, working at the peak of his ability for a continuous duration of seven years, has not one one-billionth the productive power of twenty of his compatriots, among whom the various operations of pin-making have been divided, and who apply themselves to the task for six minutes.

The problem of pin-making having been resolved for the foreseeable future, however, the citizens of this pin-rich land must apply themselves to another problem and apportion amongst themselves the labour with which they will govern themselves. For if manufacturing is ever more efficient when reduced to its component operations, why then should not governance follow the selfsame ideal?

And just as our pin manufactory requires a foreman to oversee the correct completion each operation, and to assure the harmonious combination of their various resulting products to create a pin, so too does the government require a presiding officer to direct the labour of his underlings. James Huff retains an intricate knowledge of the component operations of pin-making and is therefore perfectly suited to this task – that of house president.

Does not the foreman require his assistant, to whom he might delegate certain responsibilities and who, in the event of the foreman's absence, is immediately able to assume control and assure that no labour is wasted, and that each man's productive power remains bent to the goal of producing more pins? He does, and in the same manner the house requires a vice-president. Andrew Alexander serves just such a role.

In order to keep its workers apprised of the latest newsworthy items and pin-making techniques, a manufactory would undoubtedly employ a man to disseminate such information. The free exchange of information being no less vital to the efficient working of a house than to the efficient production of pins, the house has seen fit to elect a secretary as well, who provides a written record of meetings.

Since man first moved away from a system of truck and barter and adopted the widespread use of money as a marker for value, so have pin-making enterprises found it among their top priorities to maintain their supply of this money. So too does the house sometimes find the exchange of chickens for pins or books for cloth inconvenient – they therefore select a treasurer, Neil Raman, who maintains the supply of money for the house.

Pin-making institutions certainly keep records recording the date of manufacture, quality, weight and so forth of each of their pins. The wealth of pin-related information serves to maintain the workers' knowledge of trends and patterns relating to the manufacture of pins, so that their labour be eternally divided at maximum efficiency. The house must also, therefore, employ historians to present similar information, the trends and patterns of house life. Viva Zhou, Kathleen Kuo and Liadan Donnelly shall be sure to capture all the minutiae and usage of pins.

And indeed, when labour is used effectively, much time is saved. Having accumulated a surplus of countless pins, the labourers in such a manufactory would have ample opportunity to devote themselves to leisure (or, perhaps, to better themselves by continual education in the manufacture, use and re-use of pins). The house also provides resources for leisure: first, in the form of the at-large representatives, Peter Damm and Jory Harris; second, in the form of the social chairs, Joe Compratt and Julia Rotondo; and third, as the representatives of intramural sport, Stanley Williams and Elizabeth Lee.

Naturally, through the division of labour, there are some workers who may devote themselves not to the production of pins, but instead to the myriad paperwork, organization, and other tasks that accompany such production. For indeed, what once seemed such a simple task – providing pins to the uncivilised peoples of the world – requires a veritable army of workers simply to support such production: the raw materials from which pins are made must be purchased, the finished products must be sold, and workers must receive their daily wages, or else everything that the baron of pin-production has worked for will be irrevocably lost.

The house requires its supporters as well, in order to fulfill those functions necessary to the continued existence of bureaucracy. Jordan Phillips is the representative to the Inter-House Council. (For just as many different makers of pins may find it advantageous to meet together at particular times, and thereby derive the most advantage from the market of pins by careful cooperation, houses do the same.) Max Falkowitz is the representative to the Bartlett Dining Committee, and Margot Spellman is the representative to the Prospective Students' Advisory Committee.

And just as the process of creating one pin is divided into several distinct operations, so too is the house divided into several distinct sections. And as careful communications between the pin-making operations eventually results in a perfectly-formed and unified pin, so too does the house appoint certain representatives, who are then charged with reporting and communicating among the sections, creating a perfectly-formed and unified house. The representatives of sections one through five are, respectively, Anna McGeachy, Danny Sanchez, Peter Salib, Kelsey Shields, and Margot Spellman.

In the course of this short chapter, it is clear that almost all incarnations of the division of labour are not only standards of efficiency, but also lend themselves universally to extended metaphors involving the production of pins. It is clear that in our bustling eighteenth-century world, the humble pin is the commodity that holds the world together. For without pins, certain barons of industry would be led to ever-increasing expansion in order to find markets for their goods. And with this expansion, though manufactory be given slight advantage, there is no doubt that providers of raw materials and consumers of finished products would pay the ultimate price for this rampant mercantilism. Let us all, then, praise the humble pin!