

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS IN ENGLAND,
GERMANY, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DURING THE PERIOD OF EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION:
INDUCEMENTS AND OBSTACLES

RALPH W. HIDY
Harvard University

For this session the framers of the program deemed a long title necessary in order to set the stage for comparable papers on a common topic. Each of three papers analyzed the inducements and obstacles to the development of business during the period of early industrialization in a separate country. By concentrating on a single question the scholars hopefully provide data for others to perceive comparisons and/or contrasts, even though the data are derived from different chronological periods. The authors were neither prepared nor asked at the time of composing their papers to make comparative estimates themselves.

Readers will note that the essays fail to provide data for easy and full comparison but approach the question posed from three different angles of vision. Professor Hartwell writes as a mature economic historian who has studied and written extensively about the industrialization of the United Kingdom, early and soon. He shows a comprehensive grasp of the published data and presents his analysis in eminently readable fashion, clearly utilizing economic concepts as checkpoints.

Professor Harder set himself a special task in addition to the primary one of answering the basic question. A young scholar trained in a combination of Economics, Economic History, and Business History, he sought to demonstrate how data from Business History, especially histories of firms, could be used to support generalizations about early industrialization in Germany. Such a fusion of the two related disciplines is much needed and Professor Harder's article constitutes a praiseworthy contribution to scholarly literature.

Still a third path to comparable answers was chosen by Professor Teichova. Not being a specialist on the economic history and business history of the United States, she elected to present the views of Czech scholars, including her own ideas, on early industrialization in the United States. Readers of the article will soon appreciate the fact that Professor Teichova is trained as an economist and generally accepts the approach of the "new economic

historians." Having quaffed the wine of the "New Economic History" at Yale and written this paper, she next elected to taste a brew of entrepreneurial history and business history at Harvard before sampling the distilled spirit offered by economists and historians at Wisconsin.