

CHILD LABOR LEGISLATION.

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In a number of states, either upon the initiative of the Consumers' League or in co-operation with it, bills will be introduced at the present sessions of the legislatures for the purpose of more effectively restricting the employment of labor.

In California the movement takes the form of effort for more effective compulsory education, its leaders believing that the effective way of stopping children from working to their own harm is to keep them in school all the time the public schools are in session until the children reach the age of fourteen years, and believing that this constructive way of reaching the evil of child labor meets the needs of a state in which manufacture is in its infancy and much of the work now required of children is in fruit picking or fruit packing, and therefore free from the objections urged against indoor occupations.

In Wisconsin, the State Consumers' League and the Milwaukee Children's Betterment League are co-operating for the promotion of two bills, one extending the annual term of required school attendance from twelve weeks (the present requirement) to the full term during which the public schools are open; the other bill making more effective the restriction under which children may enter factories and stores. The vice of the present Wisconsin statute is that in practice it now places upon the deputy factory inspector the duty of presenting to the county

judge evidence upon which the latter may decide, in any given case, whether or not the family is dependent upon the earnings of a boy or a girl under the age of fourteen years. This overburdens the inspectors with work for which they are not especially adapted, to the serious detriment of the work for which they exist, namely, the inspection of factories; and it puts a premium upon simulated poverty for all such greedy parents as are eager to exploit their children. In case of real poverty, the state of Wisconsin is as well able to care for the family and let the children under the age of fourteen years attend school, as the state of Massachusetts, which has long pursued this enlightened policy. Since, however, Wisconsin leaves to the unhappy children of the very poor the duty of trying to support the family, it follows that Milwaukee and many other manufacturing centers are developing child-labor on a somewhat startling scale at cost of the school attendance of those children who most need education. The movement in Wisconsin has thus far been conducted on broad lines of co-operation with the educational and philanthropic bodies throughout the state and promises to achieve prompt success.

In Illinois, where the number of children at work has doubled in five years, two bills are ready for introduction into the legislature. One bill provides for school attendance

throughout the term of the public school for all children under the age of fourteen years; the other remodels the factory law (which has not been amended since 1897) for the purpose of making it more certain that children nominally fourteen years of age at the time of beginning work shall be really so; and that illiterate children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years shall not work unless they also attend the night schools. The State Federation of Women's Clubs has published in large editions the following:

STATISTICS SHOWING ILLITERACY AND INCREASE OF CHILD LABOR IN ILLINOIS.

ILLITERACY INCREASING IN ILLINOIS.

In the census of 1890, in tables showing per cent able to read and write among persons ten to fourteen years of age, Illinois ranks fifth. In the census of 1900, same table, Illinois ranks fifteenth.

FEW CHILDREN COMPLETE THEIR EDUCATION IN CHICAGO SCHOOLS.

During the school year of 1900-1901, the records show that the number of children in the first grade was 47,410. By the time the fifth grade was reached they numbered but 24,013. When the eighth grade was reached the number was only 9,987.

NO EDUCATIONAL TEST REQUIRED OF CHILDREN.

Twenty states demand an educational test before securing work. Illinois makes no such demand.

AFFIDAVITS AT PRESENT ARE INEFFECTIVE.

There are 19,000 children at work in the state, one-third of whom are believed to be under the age of fourteen.

NO LAW PREVENTING NIGHT WORK FOR CHILDREN.

New York, Massachusetts, Ohio and New Jersey have laws prohibiting night work for children. Illinois has none.

EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN ON THE INCREASE.

The State Factory Inspector's report for 1901 shows that in places inspected there were 19,839 children employed, as against 14,256 for the previous year, an increase of 5,583.

In Pennsylvania, Governor Pennypacker in his inaugural address recommended that a law be enacted

prohibiting the night work of children in that state. So far as is known to the writer, however, no bill dealing with child labor in Pennsylvania has been drafted for enactment during the present winter; although that great and rich commonwealth has thirty-six thousand children at work in its factories and stores, not counting the boys at the breakers in the coal regions; and notwithstanding the farther fact that Pennsylvania has, according to the Census of 1900, more illiterate children between the ages of ten and fourteen years than Maryland or West Virginia and stands next to Florida, when measured, in the scale of the states, by the illiteracy of its children of school age.

The legislature of Georgia, which recently adjourned without enacting any measure for the protection of its working children, will reconvene in June when the same bill which failed to pass at the recent session will again be introduced. Meantime, the children in Georgia, as in the other southern manufacturing states, are wholly without legal protection.

The legislature of Alabama will convene on January 20, and there will again be submitted to it the bill which failed to pass at the last session. This bill is here printed in full because it is substantially the same measure which the friends of the children are endeavoring to have enacted in North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, the four great cotton manufacturing states of the South.

SECTION 1: Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Alabama that no child under the age of twelve (12) years shall be employed in or about any

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Labor Bill.

factory or manufacturing establishment within this state unless a widowed mother or totally disabled father is dependent upon the labor of such child, or in case a child is an orphan and has no other means of support. No child under the age of ten (10) years shall be so employed under any circumstances.

SEC. 2. Be it further enacted, That it shall be unlawful for any factory or manufacturing establishment to hire or employ any child unless there is first provided and placed on file in the office of such employer an affidavit signed by the parent or guardian or person standing in parental relation thereto, certifying the age and date of birth of said child; any person knowingly furnishing a false certificate of the age of such child shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be brought before a magistrate or justice of the peace for trial, and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than five nor more than one hundred dollars, or be sentenced to hard labor for a term not exceeding three months.

SEC. 3. Be it further enacted, That no child under the age of sixteen (16) shall be employed at labor or detained in any factory or manufacturing establishment in this state between the hours of 7 P. M. and 6 A. M., or for more than sixty (60) hours in any one week or more than eleven (11) hours in any one day.

SEC. 4. Be it further enacted. That no child be employed at labor

in or about any factory or manufacturing establishment unless he or she can read and write his or her name and simple sentences in the English language: Provided, that the provisions set forth in said Section 4 of this Act shall not go into force and effect until one year from the date of the passage of this bill.

SEC. 5. Be it further enacted, That no child under the age of fourteen (14) years shall be employed at labor in or about any factory or establishment, unless such child attends school for at least twelve weeks of each year—six weeks of said schooling to be consecutive—the year to be counted from the last birthday of the child preceding such employment; and at the end of every year a certificate to the effect that this law has been complied with, signed by the teacher of the school or schools attended by the child during said year must be produced by the parent or person standing in parental relation to said child, and filed by the employer of said child. All such certificates shall be open to public inspection.

SEC. 6. Be it further enacted, That any person, persons, corporation, or representative of such corporation, who violates any of the provisions of this Act, or who suffers or permits any child to be employed in violation of its provisions, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction shall be punished by a fine of not more than (\$500) five hundred dollars.

ABOUT "CHARITIES."

I think CHARITIES one of the best agencies for making known the great work which is being done.—FRANCES A. KELLOR, University of Chicago.

CHARITIES is to me an exceedingly interesting publication. I am driven about many things, but I always take time to read it pretty carefully.—(Mrs.) SARA T. D. ROBINSON, Lawrence, Kan.