

## Has Illinois the Best Laws in the Country for the Protection of Children?



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## HAS ILLINOIS THE BEST LAWS IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN?

MR. W. L. BODINE, superintendent of compulsory education of Chicago, in an article published in the *Juvenile Court Record* for August, 1904, makes the statement that "Illinois now has the best laws in the country to protect its children." Mr. Bodine's position and the importance of the subject together warrant a careful consideration of this statement.

The superintendent of compulsory education of the second city in the republic is in a position to know the strength and weakness of the laws affecting the children in his community. If his estimate of them is correct, the fact is of great importance, particularly during the present year when a large number of legislatures will be asked to consider and enact measures for the protection of children.

Because Illinois is the third great manufacturing state in the Union (coming next after New York and Pennsylvania), and because of the influence of Chicago, many states have in times past imitated the legislation of Illinois dealing with child-labor and compulsory education.

If the best laws in the country are those of Illinois, it is desirable that they should be largely used as models in framing measures for other states. If, however, they are not yet the best laws, it would be unfortunate to have them thus copied, and their avoidable defects or omissions embodied in the laws of states which might otherwise move forward more rapidly and directly toward the effective protection of all their children.

For the sake of the children of Illinois, also, the correctness of this statement should be carefully considered. If there are still aspects of the Illinois law which compare unfavorably with the statutes of other states, it is desirable in the interests of the children that the facts should be known and the defects remedied. For Illinois aspires to afford her children the best protection.

The progress achieved during the past twelve years in the

enactment, and even more in the enforcement, of laws for the protection of children in Illinois amounts to a revolution, and has placed Illinois in 1904 where Massachusetts has stood since 1894. The present law of Illinois is copied, with some modifications, from that of Massachusetts, which it excels only in respect to the hours of labor of children and the inclusion of telegraph messenger and office boys, the latter excellence of the Illinois law being offset, however, by the fact that in Boston the street occupations of children (peddling, selling newspapers, and blacking shoes) are regulated, as they have not yet been in the cities of Illinois. As to the hours of labor, the Illinois law excels that of Massachusetts in that it permits children to work only eight hours in a day, forty-eight hours in a week, and not after 7 P. M.; while Massachusetts permits children to work ten hours in a day, fifty-eight hours in a week, and until 9 o'clock at night. Massachusetts has, however, fallen out of the first rank of the states in her care of her children, being supplanted in that noble position by New York and Colorado.

Is it true that Illinois now has the best laws in the country for the protection of the children?

There are two objective tests which can be applied in seeking an answer to this question. One test is that which is afforded by the decennial census of the United States, which reveals the effectiveness (or the incompetence) with which the states are dealing with the education of their children, by revealing the numbers and the percentages of the children between the ages of ten and fourteen years, in each of the states, who can read and write.

The second test is an annual one and is applied locally by each community for itself. This is the departure of the pupils from the schools, their age, and their recorded acquirements at the moment of departure.

Where pupils virtually all complete the work of eight years of the curriculum of the public schools, the laws for the protection of the children are thereby shown to be working efficiently. It is claimed by citizens of Colorado that this is the case in the schools of Denver. Where, however, the pupils fall out of school after

finishing the work of the first, second, third, and fourth years, as appears to be common in many large manufacturing centers, Chicago among the number (where only a minority of the pupils complete the work of the first five years of the public schools), there the laws for the protection of the children appear to need further amendment.

Let us apply these two objective tests to the laws of Illinois. It is by no means ancient history that between 1890 and 1900 Illinois fell from the sixth to the fifteenth position in the scale of the states, when they are graded according to the ability of their children between the ages of ten and fourteen years to read and write. This means that up to the year 1900 fourteen states had proceeded more effectively with the task of abolishing illiteracy than Illinois. These states are Nebraska, Iowa, Oregon, Ohio, Kansas, Indiana, Connecticut, Utah, Massachusetts, Michigan, Washington, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and New York. In 1910 this test will be applied again. It will be a matter of the highest interest to observe whether Illinois will then have regained the points in the scale of the states which were lost in 1890-1900. If the statement is correct that the laws for the protection of her children are the best in the country, it is reasonable to suppose that the fact will then manifest itself in the total abolition of illiteracy among children of sound mind who have been in the country as much as one school year.

The following tables show both the actual number of illiterate children in each state in 1900, and the percentage of illiterates compared with the whole number of children of the age mentioned, for both 1890 and 1900. In the first table the second column shows the number of illiterate children in each state in 1900, those states standing nearest the top which have the least number of illiterates, and those states nearest the bottom which have the largest number of illiterates.

## CENSUS 1900.

(*Population*, Vol. II, Part II, Table 65, p. 422.)

## ILLITERATE CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF TEN AND FOURTEEN YEARS IN EACH STATE.

Alabama .....	66,072	1. Wyoming .....	72
Alaska .....	1,903	2. Oregon .....	175
Arizona .....	2,592	3. Idaho .....	209



Arkansas .....	26,972	4. Utah .....	220
California .....	1,279	5. Nevada .....	275
Colorado .....	742	6. Vermont .....	287
Connecticut .....	436	7. Washington .....	340
Delaware .....	845	8. Montana .....	374
District of Columbia .....	398	9. Hawaii .....	394
Florida .....	8,389	10. District of Columbia .....	398
Georgia .....	63,329	11. Nebraska .....	412
Hawaii .....	394	12. Connecticut .....	436
Idaho .....	209	13. South Dakota .....	472
Illinois .....	4,044	14. New Hampshire .....	557
Indiana .....	1,453	15. Rhode Island .....	691
Indian Territory .....	12,172	16. Colorado .....	742
Iowa .....	883	17. North Dakota .....	836
Kansas .....	878	18. Delaware .....	845
Kentucky .....	21,247	19. Kansas .....	878
Louisiana .....	55,691	20. Iowa .....	883
Maine .....	1,255	21. Maine .....	1,255
Maryland .....	5,859	22. California .....	1,279
Massachusetts .....	1,547	23. Oklahoma .....	1,295
Michigan .....	1,744	24. Minnesota .....	1,365
Minnesota .....	1,365	25. Indiana .....	1,453
Mississippi .....	44,334	26. Massachusetts .....	1,547
Missouri .....	11,660	27. Wisconsin .....	1,688
Montana .....	374	28. Michigan .....	1,744
Nebraska .....	412	29. Alaska .....	1,903
Nevada .....	275	30. Ohio .....	2,048
New Hampshire .....	557	31. New Jersey .....	2,069
New Jersey .....	2,069	32. Arizona .....	2,592
New Mexico .....	4,354	33. Illinois .....	4,044
New York .....	4,740	34. New Mexico .....	4,354
North Carolina .....	51,190	35. New York .....	4,740
North Dakota .....	836	36. West Virginia .....	5,819
Ohio .....	2,048	37. Maryland .....	5,859
Oklahoma .....	1,295	38. Pennsylvania .....	6,326
Oregon .....	175	39. Florida .....	8,389
Pennsylvania .....	6,326	40. Missouri .....	11,660
Rhode Island .....	691	41. Indian Territory .....	12,172
South Carolina .....	51,536	42. Kentucky .....	21,247
South Dakota .....	472	43. Arkansas .....	26,072
Tennessee .....	36,375	44. Virginia .....	34,612
Texas .....	35,491	45. Texas .....	35,491
Utah .....	220	46. Tennessee .....	36,375
Vermont .....	287	47. Mississippi .....	44,334
Virginia .....	34,612	48. North Carolina .....	51,190
Washington .....	340	49. South Carolina .....	51,536
West Virginia .....	5,819	50. Louisiana .....	55,691
Wisconsin .....	1,688	51. Georgia .....	63,329
Wyoming .....	72	52. Alabama .....	66,072

The United States.....579,947

The United States.....579,947

PER CENT. ABLE TO READ AND WRITE AMONG PERSONS TEN TO FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE.

1900.

1. Nebraska .....	99.66
2. Iowa .....	99.63
3. Oregon .....	99.58
4. Ohio .....	99.51
5. Kansas .....	99.48
6. Indiana .....	99.45

1890.

Iowa .....	99.23.	1
Massachusetts .....	99.17.	2
Ohio .....	98.92.	3
Kansas .....	98.86.	4
Connecticut .....	98.79.	5
Illinois .....	98.75.	6

7. Connecticut .....	99.43	Nebraska .....	98.75.	7
8. Utah .....	99.34	New York .....	98.62.	8
9. Massachusetts .....	99.33	Wisconsin .....	98.35.	9
10. Michigan .....	99.30	Minnesota .....	98.21.	10
11. Washington .....	99.30	Oregon .....	98.20.	11
12. Minnesota .....	99.29	Michigan .....	98.17.	12
13. Wisconsin .....	99.27	Indiana .....	98.00.	13
14. New York .....	99.26	California .....	97.93.	14
15. Illinois .....	99.18	New Jersey .....	97.86.	15
16. Wyoming .....	99.08	Pennsylvania .....	97.82.	16
17. Vermont .....	99.05	Washington .....	97.75.	17
18. South Dakota .....	99.00	Maine .....	97.57.	18
19. California .....	98.99	Vermont .....	97.57.	19
20. Pennsylvania .....	98.99	South Dakota .....	97.55.	20
21. New Jersey .....	98.81	Colorado .....	97.21.	21
22. Idaho .....	98.77	New Hampshire .....	96.63.	22
23. Colorado .....	98.48	Montana .....	96.47.	23
24. New Hampshire .....	98.31	Utah .....	96.24.	24
25. District of Columbia .....	98.25	Wyoming .....	96.23.	25
26. Rhode Island .....	98.12	Idaho .....	96.18.	26
27. Montana .....	98.07	Rhode Island .....	96.03.	27
28. Maine .....	97.92	North Dakota .....	95.58.	28
29. North Dakota .....	97.65	District of Columbia .....	94.61.	29
30. Oklahoma .....	97.26	Missouri .....	94.48.	30
31. Missouri .....	96.64	Nevada .....	92.83.	31
32. Delaware .....	95.49	Oklahoma .....	91.81.	32
33. Maryland .....	95.36	Delaware .....	90.96.	33
34. West Virginia .....	94.74	Maryland .....	90.54.	34
35. Nevada .....	91.88	West Virginia .....	89.16.	35
36. Kentucky .....	91.56	Texas .....	85.55.	36
37. Texas .....	90.74	Kentucky .....	85.17.	37
38. Florida .....	86.24	Florida .....	82.43.	38
39. Tennessee .....	85.08	Tennessee .....	80.94.	39
40. Virginia .....	84.33	Arizona .....	79.62.	40
41. Arkansas .....	83.80	Arkansas .....	77.89.	41
42. New Mexico .....	80.07	Virginia .....	77.32.	42
43. North Carolina .....	78.25	Mississippi .....	73.47.	43
44. Arizona .....	77.79	New Mexico .....	72.04.	44
45. Mississippi .....	77.62	North Carolina .....	69.38.	45
46. Georgia .....	77.21	Georgia .....	66.73.	46
47. Indian Territory .....	75.61	Alabama .....	64.50.	47
48. Alabama .....	71.11	South Carolina .....	61.03.	48
49. South Carolina .....	70.44	Louisiana .....	57.26.	49
50. Louisiana .....	67.12			

It may be urged that the relative illiteracy is not a fair test of the excellence of the laws for the protection of children; for the agricultural states of the Northwest, having neither vast foreign immigration nor highly developed manufacture and commerce, are confronted by no such task as the education of the immigrant children who flood Chicago and are tempted to remain illiterate by reason of the opportunities for employment for all comers. Granting, for the sake of argument, that the task of Washington, or of Nebraska, may be lighter than that of Illinois, what is to be said of the present relation of Illinois to New York? Why should

New York stand higher in the percentage scale than Illinois? Why should it have, in fact, only 704 more illiterate children between the ages of ten and fourteen years than Illinois? New York has *more* immigrants, *more* manufacture, *more* commerce, of the character which absorbs the labor of children; why, then, should it have only 704 more illiterate children between the ages of ten and fourteen years, and stand higher in the percentage table than Illinois?

The answer to this is that its laws have long been, and still are, better than those of Illinois in one important particular; namely, the requirement that children under the age of sixteen years must be able to read and write English *before* they begin to work in manufacture. This law has been in force since 1892. For twelve years, therefore, the schools of New York city have been flooded with pupils between the ages of six and sixteen years, eager to learn to read and write English in order to be able to go to work. And the results are visible in the decennial census of 1900.

It is, however, not immigration, nor commerce, nor manufacture, which determines the amount of illiteracy among children; but the excellence or the defects of the laws of the states. If immigration, manufacture, and commerce made the burden of illiteracy too great for the laws to master, New York should stand at the foot of all the states, for it has all three in greater degree than any other state. Instead of this, however, we find at the bottom of the list of all the states exactly those which are crying out for more immigration, commerce, and manufacture; namely, the great agricultural states of the South.

The second test — the departure of the pupils from the schools and their recorded acquirement at the moment of departure — can be applied at any moment, in any city, by a scrutiny of the rolls of the different classes in the public schools.

Colorado requires the completion of the work of the first eight years of the public schools, or an equivalent in work done in other schools or at home. The pupils must be ready to enter the high schools. An examination of the rolls, showing the age and the class reached by *all* the pupils at the time of leaving school,



would settle the question of school attendance between Colorado and Illinois. It is much to be wished that such an examination might be made in both states, but especially in Chicago.

Meanwhile it is obvious that that statute which requires them to complete the whole work of the first eight years of the schools affords better protection to the children than that which, like the statutes of Illinois, merely requires pupils to attend school until they reach the age of fourteen years, regardless of what they learn or fail to learn, and supplements this perfunctory attendance by the demand that such as have not learned to read and write must thereafter attend a night school. Reading fluently and writing legibly are very elastic terms. Children are sometimes described as able to read fluently when they can repeat in parrot fashion a few lines of the first reader. It is related that, after a change of administration in New York city, the reader used for testing children who came to get their "working papers" was changed by the examiner at the office of the board of health, and many children failed during the next week because they had been taught by their older brothers and sisters to read just that portion of the previous reader which had been used for years as the test for all comers. In Chicago the writer has known many pupils who dropped out of the third-year class in the schools, nominally able to read, but so little habituated to reading that after two or three years they had wholly lost the art.

New York, while requiring a smaller amount of completed school work than Colorado, goes much farther in this direction than Illinois; for New York requires that, before leaving school, pupils shall have had, *since the thirteenth birthday*, 130 days' attendance in school, in which they must have received instruction in "reading, writing, geography, English grammar, and the fundamental principles of arithmetic up to and including fractions." This is the work which a child would normally complete who entered school at the age of six years and was regularly promoted to the age of twelve years. The statute having taken effect in 1903, it appears that the number of pupils is very large who have spent the years in school, but have not completed the required work and achieved the required promotions.



The immediate effect of this beneficent statute is to stimulate teachers to get the pupils along more regularly and speedily through the grades and toward the completion of the required minimum of work.

Equally marked is the effect of the new law upon the board of education and the superintendents as a stimulus toward providing means for helping the pupils forward.

By the establishment of special classes for the deaf, the dull, the crippled, and the recent immigrants over the age of twelve years, the normal children are freed from the presence of those who might be dragging backward, and wasting the time of the teacher and the normal children, hindering their regular advancement. School nurses to the number of forty, co-operating with the school physicians in New York city, follow up the pupils dismissed by reason of contagion or vermin, and get them back into school at the earliest possible moment, thus playing the part of scientific attendance agents, improving the regularity of attendance at school, and helping the pupils to cover the required work before the arrival of the fourteenth birthday.

Play centers, where the pupils spend in peaceful, useful, directed play the afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays (formerly so fruitful of that idleness which leads to petty offending), contribute to the intelligence and good behavior of the school children and to their ability to cover the required work before reaching the age of fourteen years. It is necessary to visit the roof gardens on the school buildings in the summer evenings, and to see the thousands of children under the direction of teachers and caretakers, dancing happily and decorously to the music of the bands furnished by the board of education of New York city, before it is possible to appreciate what New York is doing for the protection of its children from the temptations of the streets.

Excellent as is the effect of the statutory requirement of specified school work to be completed before the child leaves school, in stimulating efforts of teachers, superintendents, and members of the board of education, it is perhaps more far-reaching in its influence upon parents of pupils who are to be wage-earners, inducing them to keep the children in school with greater regu-

larity than ever before, in order that they may not miss the required promotions and thus be detained in school after the fourteenth birthday. The laws of Colorado and New York by this means place a premium upon regularity in attending school from the day of entrance at the age of six years, saying virtually to the parent: "Your child must go to school until the sixteenth birthday. If, however, you keep him up to his work so well that he completes a certain portion of the curriculum by the time the fourteenth birthday arrives, he may then leave school and begin to work." *Both states enforce fines and imprisonment upon parents who disobey the compulsory-attendance law.* The parent is thus treated in both these states according to the methods of the best modern pedagogy — the reward of virtue and the penalty of evil-doing following rationally upon the line of conduct selected by the parent.

Illinois, on the other hand, ends the term of compulsory school attendance at the age of fourteen years for all who can read and write, and requires beyond that merely attendance at night school. Thus, although parents are punished by fine or imprisonment if pupils play truant, exactly as in New York and Colorado, they have none of the stimulus, such as fathers in those states enjoy, for getting the pupils forward through a required amount of school work. While Illinois punished three hundred parents in one year for the truancy of their children, New York and Colorado (while they, too, punished parents of truants) were stimulating thousands of fathers, mothers, and children to regular school attendance on the part of the children in order that these might complete the allotted task by the arrival of the fourteenth birthday.

One of the proverbial difficulties in the way of the perfect enforcement of child-labor and compulsory-education laws is that of proving the age of the child which is alleged to be fourteen or sixteen years old, and therefore exempt from further school requirements or restrictions upon its work, while in truth the child may be but eleven or twelve years old. The demand that the child must, in addition to being fourteen years old, have completed a certain amount of school work is found, in practice, to

strengthen the age restriction of the child-labor law very effectively. Of what use is it for a parent to swear falsely that a lad is fourteen years of age when he is eleven, if he must continue in school until he has finished the work of the first five years, or the first eight years? The temptation to perjury on the part of parents is thus reduced, to say nothing of the borrowing of passports and other records.

New York state, however, reinforces the age requirement of the child-labor law still further by having every child examined by a physician of the local board of health, who signs and files in the office of the board a statement that the child is, in his opinion, of the normal stature of a child of fourteen years, and is in good health. This is an excellent safeguard for the undersized, anemic children who are clever and faithful enough to finish the work of the first five years of the curriculum in five or in six years, and whose greedy parents would gladly turn the achievement to account, not by giving the child the due reward of its faithfulness in the shape of more opportunity for school life, but by crowding it into a sweatshop or the messenger service.

While two states, Colorado and New York, thus excel Illinois in requiring a stipulated amount of school work of the children before letting them leave school, twenty states excel Illinois in the length of the term of required school attendance. Twelve states require the children to attend school to the age of sixteen years (unless the children are at work under restrictions which, in several states, are rigidly guarded). These twelve states are Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Besides these, eight other states require children to attend school to the age of fifteen years. These are Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. It is an interesting item that of these twenty states, which require more years of school attendance than does Illinois, eleven are included in the list of fourteen states which in 1900 had reduced their child illiteracy more nearly to zero than Illinois had succeeded in doing. Thus, although a larger percentage of the children were able to read and write at



the age of fourteen years than in Illinois, these states still kept them longer in school.

When thus tested by the two available objective tests—the decennial census and the departure of the children from school, considered in connection with the age at which they are permitted to go and the acquirement required at the time of leaving—Illinois appears not to have the best laws in the country for the protection of the children. There are, however, some further comparisons which can profitably be made.

A law which far excels any in force at the present time in its effective defense of the interests of childhood is the unique statute of Colorado which defines the delinquencies with which a child under the age of sixteen years may be charged, and holds the parent, guardian, *or other adult person* responsible who contributes to the delinquency of a child.

Excellent as is the truancy law of Illinois, it is limited in its operation to the seasons when the schools are in session. But the delinquencies of children know no such limitations. Boys commit petty offenses out of school hours, on Saturdays, Sundays, and during vacation. Moreover, the compulsory-education law of Illinois ceases to take effect upon a child when he reaches the fourteenth birthday, unless, being illiterate, he may be required to attend a night school until he has either learned to read and write, or reaches the age of sixteen years. If a boy in Chicago buys cigarettes wherewith to stupefy himself and render his school attendance useless, the truancy law is of little value to him. If he spends the hours after school in picking coal from a railroad track, at the risk of his life, it is not the truancy law which meets his case. What such boys need is the protection of a law which would bring into court the mother and the cigarette dealer, in the case of the former; and the railway officials who fail to police their tracks, together with the family who profit by the child's thefts, in the case of the latter.

The law of Colorado holds responsible, for *all* the delinquencies of *all* the children until they reach the age of sixteen years, *all* those adult persons who contribute to such delinquencies. If a boy fetches beer for the family, the man who sells him the beer



and the family who send him to fetch it are alike held responsible. If a boy carries telegrams to a disreputable house, the operator who sends him is liable to a fine or to jail for a year. The boy who steals rides on a coal train involves the conductor in his delinquency; and the junk dealers find it unprofitable to purchase junk from children whose detection involves a year in jail for the adult participant in their offenses.

The child in Colorado thus has the fullest benefit of a rigid compulsory-education law, *and also* of this wide-embracing enforcement of adult responsibility. Colorado goes beyond the enforcement of parental responsibility, and includes with it *adult responsibility*. *Whoever* contributes to the delinquency of a child is responsible before the law of Colorado.

Mr. Bodine makes the statement that "every juvenile corrective institution in Chicago is overstuffed with boys who are there largely because their parents have not taken enough interest in their education." This statement, being unquestionably true, affords a powerful argument for the prompt adoption in Illinois of the Colorado juvenile delinquency law, for the purpose of reinforcing the compulsory-education law through all those periods to which, by its very nature, it cannot apply; namely, holidays and the two years between the fourteenth and the sixteenth birthdays. When all the juvenile institutions of Chicago are overcrowded, it would be folly to try to get on with one of two excellent laws for reducing the number of delinquent children, when both laws can easily be had.

Mr. Bodine makes the prophecy: "We shall always have corrective institutions, but the punishment of parents will keep them from being overcrowded." The people of Colorado say in effect: "If we must have corrective institutions, let us keep the children out of them as far as possible, and fine and imprison adults instead." And there appears to be a certain fine justice in supporting the efforts of parents to bring their children up righteously, by punishing those persons who defeat these efforts. Why should the whole burden of punishment fall upon fathers and mothers, while offenders outside the family who tempt the children go free?

Underlying the effective legislation of Colorado for the protection of the children is the fact that the voting constituency in that enlightened state has, for eleven years, included all the mothers, the teachers, and all the other interested women in the community. It is impossible to overstate the value to the children of this vast body of people in the electorate who are by nature, by training, and by the usages of our national life chiefly occupied with the bringing up of children and youth. It is a nobler form of the enforcement of the responsibility of all the adults for all the children in the community. Illinois has not, and cannot have, the best laws for the protection of the children until all the mothers, teachers, and other women vote, and thus completely share the responsibility, as they have long done in Colorado. In order to have the best laws in the country for the protection of the children, Illinois would need to possess, in addition to its own truancy law, and that wider measure of Colorado for enforcing the responsibility of adults who contribute to the delinquency of children, the complete enfranchisement of the women.

The statutes of Illinois possess several points of unquestioned excellence, none of which are, however, peculiar to themselves. One of the best requirements is that children shall not work after 7 o'clock at night. This is excelled by the Michigan statute which prohibits the employment of children after 6 P. M. Another excellent point is the legal limit of eight hours imposed upon the working day of children under the age of sixteen years. This provision, however, is found in the laws of Colorado, Arizona, Montana, and Utah, as well as in those of Illinois. An admirable provision in the laws of Illinois is that which prohibits the employment of children in occupations dangerous to the health. This also is common to the laws of Massachusetts, Ohio, Colorado, and several other states.

Among the most important laws for the protection of children are those which deal with child-labor. No form of child-labor is more injurious than the street occupations. In five years of residence in New York city the writer has not seen one girl under the age of sixteen years engaged in selling papers, or any other

articles, upon the streets, or in begging. Can as much be said for Chicago?

This absence of girls from the street trades is due to the very rigid provision in the penal code holding parents and guardians responsible for girls, and guilty of cruelty when they are permitted thus to work under the age of sixteen years. Under the statute of 1903, newsboys under the age of fourteen years are required to wear badges loaned to them by the board of education of New York city. They must not work under the age of ten years, or during school hours, or after 10 o'clock at night. They must be able to read and write. They receive their badges (*gratis*) in connection with licenses, for which the parents must apply with the children, and for the children's compliance with which the adults are held responsible. A similar law of Massachusetts is in force in Boston. Have the laws of Illinois any such provisions?

There is no good measure for the protection of children in the laws of Illinois which cannot be found in the laws of other states also. But there are several excellent provisions missing from the Illinois laws which could be embodied in them with immense advantage to the children of Illinois.

To recapitulate briefly: It appears that the laws of Illinois for the protection of children *are excelled by those of twenty states, which require their children to attend school to the age of fifteen or sixteen years*, while Illinois permits all who can read and write to leave school at the age of fourteen years, merely demanding attendance at night school of those between fourteen and sixteen years who have not yet learned to read and write. They are excelled by those of two states (Colorado and New York) which require pupils both to reach the age of fourteen years and also *to complete a certain amount of school work before leaving school*. They are excelled by those of New York in numerous respects, among which one is the requirement that children before beginning work shall be declared by a physician of the local board of health to be of *normal stature of a child of fourteen years and in good health*; and another is that requirement, which has been on the statute books of New York since 1893, that children, *before beginning work*, be able to read and write.



The number of children at work in Illinois grows by leaps and bounds. The demand for children's work presses unceasingly as the improvement of machinery renders the children available and the increasing immigration furnishes them by thousands to meet the demand. To pause in the process of improving the laws for the protection of the children means the growth of illiteracy and child-labor. To gain upon these evils, new and progressive measures must be adopted year after year, as rapidly as public opinion can be educated. To be satisfied with less than the best would be unworthy of the third greatest state and the second city in the republic.

If, however, Illinois is to rise again from the fifteenth to the lost sixth place in the scale of the states, as shown in the census of 1890-1900; and, still more, if Illinois is to acquire that which she has never yet possessed, namely, standing in the front rank of the states which take enlightened care of their children, it will be necessary to avoid all vainglorious boasting and face the facts as they are, realizing that a large task awaits the legislature. For it will be necessary to enact comprehensive measures, covering the following twelve important points:

1. A required amount of the work in the curriculum of the public schools to be covered by all the children, either in the public schools or in private schools, or in some other manner (in institutions or at home), preferably the work of the first eight years, as in Colorado.

2. Required school attendance to the age of sixteen years, except for children exempted after compliance with the foregoing school requirement.

3. A physician's examination of all the children at the time of beginning work, and the filing of a signed statement of a physician of the local board of health that at the time of the examination the child is of the normal stature of a child of fourteen years and in good health.

4. School physicians, with powers much enlarged beyond those of the present medical visitors of the Chicago schools.

5. School nurses provided by the local board of health.

6. Special classes in the schools on a large scale, not only for



the deaf and crippled as now, but for all the recently immigrated children over the age of ten years, and for the pupils who are subnormal, but not idiotic.

7. Play centers under the charge of the local board of education.

8. Branch libraries in the public school, to reinforce the school work in the English language.

9. Regulation of the street occupations for children under the age of sixteen years, prohibiting the employment of girls.

10. The Pennsylvania prohibition of the employment of boys under the age of sixteen years underground in mines.

11. The Colorado law enforcing adult responsibility for the delinquency of children under the age of sixteen years.

12. The admission to the electorate of the women of the state, in order that the mothers, the teachers, and the rest of the women interested in children may help with the enactment and the enforcement of laws for the welfare of the children.

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