

PLANS TO SWOOP ON GLASS PLANTS.

Davies Decides on Stricter Measures to Enforce the Child Labor Law.

IS STIRRED BY A WOMAN.

Chief Learns of Mrs. Van der Vaart's Discovery in South- ern Illinois.

More frequent visits to the glassmaking plants of Illinois to search for violations of the child labor law are to be made by the state factory inspectors. Chief Inspector Davies said yesterday he believed several deputies soon would be available for the work. They probably will be kept on the glass industry for several months.

This plan appealed to Davies as being the most feasible after he had talked with Mrs. Harriet M. Van der Vaart, Miss Jane Addams, Dr. Cornelia B. De Bey, and Miss Anna Nicholes, at Hull house. Mrs. Van der Vaart told of the discoveries she had made of the manufacturers' schemes for dodging the law. She and her associates proposed the appointment of a resident inspector, who should be an expert in the line.

Tells of Finding Violations.

"I had hoped," said Mrs. Van der Vaart, "to find that the law was being faithfully observed. That is what we have been working for. I learned that violations were frequent. The glass factories have been the worst offenders and the owners labored hardest to prevent the enactment of the law."

"It is impossible to complete the reform in so short a time," replied Davies. "Much has been done. Fewer children than ever before are working in the factories. There have been prosecutions and convictions and the manufacturers are coming nearer to living up to the law than in the past."

Davies Explains His Task.

Davies then went into details of the business of his office, showing that there are eighteen inspectors—eleven men and seven women—and that the funds at his disposal were so small that with rigid economy much was left undone.

"We are covering every city in the state," he said. "We are inspecting every manner of industry. There are the stores, sweat shop, and theaters, in addition to the great manufacturing plants. This year the force will have visited 300 cities and made 31,000 inspections."

"Counting the last investigation of the glass works, they have been inspected four times in the last year and a half. We cannot go oftener to them without slighting other industries. The coal mines now are to be under the factory inspector."

Praise for Mrs. Florence Kelley.

"The law once was enforced at the glass works," said Mrs. Van der Vaart, "by Mrs. Florence Kelley. Go down to the manufacturers and ask them. They will tell you Mrs. Kelley was their scourge."

"Seven of the inspectors are women," said Davies. "They will not work outside Chicago. They cannot pack up their grips and start out through the state as men can. By the way," he suggested, "why not have the club women in Alton and the other cities in which the glass works are located help out our work?"

"It was tried and it was of no use," Mrs. Van der Vaart confessed. "When the thing first was proposed to them the club women took to it with enthusiasm. But they came back in a few days with all their ardor cooled. The owners of the plants appear to dominate public sentiment. The women talked with their husbands and their minds changed."

Shows Conditions Are Improved.

The official report for the year 1895 of Mrs. Kelley, whose administration of the state inspector's office was championed at Hull house, shows that she made around 6,000 inspections in forty-eight cities. There were 542 convictions against 1,300 for 1904. In a letter she told of her efforts to enforce the law against one glass company and of her failure. She wrote that the concern employed 1,800 persons, of whom one-third were children. Of the latter, 200 were boys under 14 years old. She said it was impossible to do anything with the management, and that she could not get a conviction. The plant today gives work to 3,500 persons, of whom ninety-four are children. Mrs. Kelley reported that no attempt was made by the officials of the company to keep records of juvenile employees.