

MODERN SLAVE DENS

Tour of the Legislative Committee to Sweat Shops.

DISEASE AND SEWER GAS.

Long List of Working Places to Be Visited.

Children Under Age Found Slaving on Clothing and Earning a Pittance.

The special committee of the Illinois Legislature yesterday continued its work of investigating the sweat shops of Chicago, visiting a number of places in the northwest section of the city.

The members of the committee were not so prompt in getting around yesterday morning as they were on Friday. Doorkeeper Brown sat in his own room at the Sherman House at 19 o'clock entertaining a crowd of newspaper men, but not a member of the committee was present. Representative O'Donnell wished later on he had been a little more prompt, for before his arrival Doorkeeper Brown gave away one of his secrets, which he had been carefully guarding. Mr. O'Donnell is a member of the House Labor and Industrial Committee and the father of a bill making it criminal to employ children under 14 years of age more than eight hours a day.

After the committee had cut loose from the reporters Friday afternoon Mr. O'Donnell led his colleagues through some of the big retail stores in shops there how the children who carry bags and bundles have to work. When the Representative discovered yesterday his secret was out, he was much excited and not a little vexed. He acknowledged that the visit had been made, but would mention no stores other than the Boston and the Fair. Children there, he said, while they were employed to work but eight hours, frequently have to work ten. He had little to say regarding their being uneducated, but declared he was certain they did not get each year four month's schooling, as the law required. Another member expressed the opinion that these children should at least be allowed to sit down when not at work, a privilege which he discovered is now denied them.

Closely following Representative O'Donnell came Representative May. Mrs. Kealy and Mrs. Morgan entered a few minutes later and about 11 o'clock Senator Noonan, the chairman. Mrs. Morgan submitted the following list for the selection of places to visit:

Places Where They Slave.

J. Caron, No. 55 North Ashland avenue; H. Adams, No. 72 North Ashland avenue; F. Nowaka, No. 71 Bingham street; John Green, No. 715 Branch street; A. Anderson, No. 61 Cornell Carpenter street; P. Harway, No. 41 Cornell street; J. Winkler, No. 41 Cornell street; A. Andrew Kofka, No. 13 Cleaver street; P. Rowland, No. 74 Duane street; S. E. Lund, No. 178 West Division street; Joseph Ulanzky, No. 115 West Division street; C. Landberg, No. 215 West Division street; J. C. Malara, No. 224 West Division street; A. S. Finkner, No. 235 West Division street; Ostrala & Tomczak, No. 249 West Division street; W. Kuchewski, No. 271 Division street; G. Kretzschka, No. 624 Dickson; J. Rosen, No. 65 Evans street; J. Kovac, No. 71 Emma street; H. Stanger, No. 216 West Erie street; W. C. Swenson, No. 102 West Erie street; A. Haggren, No. 201 Fairfield avenue; M. Jachman, No. 23 Front street; Frederick Hansen, No. 25 Grant place; Abraham Peterson, No. 29 Grant place; A. Olsen, No. 34 Grant place; Nelson & Langston, No. 25 Grant place; M. Christy, No. 63 Greenwood street; S. Hollander, No. 32 Hart avenue; J. Ahlberg, No. 62 West Indiana street; S. Hetschberg, No. 486 North Lincoln street; B. Scott, No. 124 Rapwood avenue; L. Haglund, No. 124 North Bay street; A. H. Starob, No. 124 Milwaukee avenue; S. Ross, No. 152 Milwaukee avenue; M. Thompson, No. 124 Milwaukee street; C. Gustafson, No. 263 Noble street; J. Zimmerman and L. Larson, No. 275 Noble street; A. Skerston, No. 319 Noble street; Mrs. Kucher, No. 321 Noble street; F. Sepanski, No. 615 North street; E. Olson & Co., No. 29 West Ohio street; A. Johnson, No. 35 West Ohio street; Mrs. Hubelmann, No. 415 West Ohio street; J. Kofka, No. 46 North Paulina street; H. Locke, No. 284 North Paulina street; J. Wenzel, No. 287 North Paulina street; J. Brown, No. 24 North Ruby street; F. Sabinan, No. 213 Ramsey street; F. Wajonak, No. 1023 North Ruby street; Adam Kheja, No. 1023 North Ruby street; F. Leaver, No. 27 Ross street; L. Swetnam, No. 11 West Street; M. F. Grant, No. 29 West Superior street; E. Labarre, No. 27 Temple street; M. Johnson, No. 276 Youngwood street; Pam Finney, No. 50 Augusta street; P. Hoffman, No. 103 Augusta street; S. Bogardt, No. 417 Aurora avenue; V. Kubota, No. 1193 Astor avenue; J. Jensen, No. 222 Archdale avenue; J. Kucharski, No. 222 Archdale avenue; A. Schmitt, No. 417 North Ashland avenue; J. Lorenz, No. 242 Tacoma street; M. Miller, No. 131 Waukegan street; C. Frank, No. 33 Wabasha avenue; H. B. Stanciele, No. 2384 Wright street; George Uhl, No. 1162 Washington avenue; S. Kopacz, No. 645 North Wood street.

In the Sweating District.

The locality about the intersection of Tall street and Milwaukee avenue was chosen as a starting point and the committee at once left for that place.

Headed by Mrs. Florence Kelley, Mrs. T. J. Morgan, and A. Brand, who acted as interpreters, the committee boarded a Milwaukee avenue trolley and started for the sweating district, where health and strength are every day exchanged for disease by the poverty-stricken ones forced to work in dim basements and crowded tenements. The committee got off the car at Jane street and walked west to Adams avenue, where a sign in a basement window attracted their attention. The sign said, "Hand girls wanted." Descending a pair of icy stairs the committee entered a large room, in which a heavy, musty odor was noticed. Five men and four women were at work on women cloaks, which the proprietor, F. Duberstein, said were for Joseph Hatfield & Co. He stated that the men made from \$2.50 to \$3 a day and the girls from \$1 to \$2 a week, but a careful examination of the employees failed to show one who made over \$10 a week. The employees there worked ten hours a day.

The shop of J. Hirschberg, at No. 523 North Ashland avenue, was the next visited. This shop was also in a basement. Ten men and one girl were at work making women's jackets and cloaks. Hirschberg said that the men were making from \$10 to \$15 a week, and that he paid the girl \$5. He said the goods were for Engel Bros., No. 231 North Market street. His books were then carefully examined.

Received Poor Pay.

The highest pay for any single week was found to have been received by William Levine two weeks ago. That was \$18.65. Last week his wages amounted to \$4. The only explanation of the difference given was volunteered by Jacob L. Bruntz who, after being sworn, said that during the entire winter the shop had been open all the time, day and night, and that Levine had worked twelve or thirteen hours a day. The employees struck, and for the past few days the shop had been closed at 6 o'clock. The place was in a very bad sanitary condition, and a pile of ashes and rubbish occupied a corner of the room.

The committee then went to No. 219 Division street, where Adolph Goldberger operates a vest factory. The factory is located in a large room on the second floor, and is heated with one stove, sixteen inches in diameter and about two feet high. During warm weather the stove is used to heat irons. Four men and seventeen women and girls were at work. The youngest girl was not sure whether she was 12 or 14 years old. She was working fifty-one feet from the stove, sewing on buttons for \$2.50 a week. The proprietor refused to be sworn, but said that his work was for Rothschild & Co. He was notified to appear before the committee as a witness Friday. The factory of Mehlis & Heger, No. 220 Division street, was the next inspected. The factory was located in a store, and was not as bad as the majority. Four men, eight women, and a 14-year-old girl, named Berle Elmer, were at work on pantaloons. The girl said she received \$1.75 a week. She said that in the shop where she had formerly worked there were several girls about 12 years old employed.

The committee were looked upon with great curiosity by the people in the sweat shops and on the streets. Crowds of men and children followed them about wondering what it meant, and in every shop they were watched suspiciously.

After leaving the Mehlis & Heger shop Mrs.

Kelley led the way to a large factory located at No. 123 Samuel street. This is a four-story brick building, about 20x70 feet, with a shop on each floor. The building was well lighted and clean. On the first floor was located the steam engine which operated all the plants, and in the same room twenty girls were at work. On the second floor twenty-five girls and three men were at work making vests. This floor is operated by J. Prebenson, the owner of the building. The third floor is occupied by C. Gancerson as a vest factory. He employed nineteen girls and ten men. On the fourth floor fifteen girls and one man were at work on women's cloaks. Under a table within six feet of a red hot stove were stored a number of large cans of kerosene oil. This building was in the best condition of any visited by the committee during the day. The only stairway in the building is a narrow, wooden affair, and the building is not equipped with a single fire escape.

The next shop visited formed quite a contrast. In the rear of a fine brown stone front house, at No. 238 Division street, the committee found a typical sweat-shop. Amid the whir and din of a gas engine and twenty sewing machines, twenty girls and four men were found at work in a room 20 by 25 feet. Several of the girls were apparently not 15 years old, but when asked their ages they replied that they were much older. They had evidently been instructed to do so. In the rear of the room, behind a rough board partition, were the living rooms occupied by Mrs. Haidet, the proprietress, and her family. The sanitary arrangements were very poor and the odor of the place was very foul. The girls scarcely looked up when the committee crowded into the room, but kept at their work in a tired, spiritless manner.

One of the Worst Dens.

The next place visited was one of the worst. At No. 145 Division street, in a room 30 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 10 feet high, fifty-five girls and ten men were found at work on vests. About thirty foot-power sewing-machines were in the room, and the pale, sickly girls operated them with a rapidity which was surprising. Many of the girls were not more than 14 years old. They received from \$2 to \$7 a week, and only one received \$3. The ventilation in the room was very poor, and the air foul. In the rear of the room was the only washstand the girls had to use. It was a sink such as is usually found in kitchens and was in a filthy condition. The place is operated by Louis Rothman.

Thoroughly disgusted with what they had seen the committee went to No. 636 Holt avenue, where they found a Polish family living in a basement, with a sewing machine comprising nearly all their furniture. Decayed vegetables lay about and the air was reeking with filth. As the men could not speak English the committee did not stop to question him but went to No. 715 Holt avenue, where they found a most revolting spectacle. In a little basement room four girls were at work making trousers. Paul Lowandowski and his wife were also at work, while their infant child lay ill in another room. The child is said to be dying from the effects of sewer gas. The father told how the family suffered and said that they had had Dr. Fenn, who pronounced it sewer gas poisoning. Opening from this room were three living rooms.

Sewer Gas Fumes.

In this room the infant lay in a baby carriage, while the sewer gas poured from a broken pipe under the sink. Health Officer David McDonald, who was with the committee, discovered the break and made a tent with a match. The rush of air out of the broken pipe was so strong that it extinguished the light. In one of the other rooms were the two beds, and in the third a lot of finished work and some decayed vegetables.

In the basement of No. 707 Ashland avenue the committee found a shop operated by Joseph Grigal. In the room, which was 25x30 feet, five girls and four men were at work. The sanitary condition of the place was very bad and the air unfit to breathe.

In the cellar of No. 730 Ashland avenue M. Aaron keeps a sweat shop. The committee signed and slid down an icy pair of stairs and entered the cellar. The air was foul and the three men and seven girls who were at work there were pictures of poverty and misery. The only articles manufactured there were men's coats.

In the basement of No. 718 Ashland avenue the committee found ten girls and two men at work on men's trousers. They said they worked ten hours a day. The place was in a filthy condition. Joseph Lozinski, who runs the establishment, says his work is for Simon Leopold and Kohn Bros. The men there make \$3 a week and the girls from \$2 to \$5.

The committee then adjourned and returned to the Sherman House.

QUEER CUSTOMS.

Mr. Charles Haze, the British Resident of the Basm District in Borneo, has just sent to the Royal Geographical Society an interesting account of some of the native customs which he learned in his journeys in Saramat. After sleeping in a chief's house one evening he found at the head of his bed a box containing the dead body of his host's wife. It appears that the natives always keep corpses for three months. The body is then removed from the house and conveyed with much ceremony to the tomb. Every one present sends one or more cigarettes made of tobacco, wrapped in the dry leaves of the wild tobacco, to his dead relatives in "Apo Log-gau" (Hades). These cigarettes are placed on top of and around the coffin; and, should the body be that of a man, his weapons, tools, and a small quantity of rice, with his "priok" (cooking-pot), are deposited in the tomb with him that he may be able to continue his daily pursuits in the other world. But if of a woman, her large sun-hat, her little hoe—used for weeding in the paddy field—her beads, earrings, and other finery are placed with her body, that she may not be found wanting on her arrival on the other side of the grave. Mr. Haze once was present upon the corpse of a boy who was placed in the coffin, and he watched the proceedings from a short distance. As the lid of the coffin was closed an old man came out on the veranda of the house with a large gong and solemnly beat it for several seconds. The chief said that this was always done before closing the lid, that the relations of the dead who had already passed out of this world, might know that the spirit was coming to join them. There was another strange ceremony called "Dayong Juna," in which the dead are supposed to send messages to the living, and which proved that "spiritism" was of very ancient practice among them.

Stamp News.

New York Press: "Had you observed," said Henry Romicks to me yesterday, "that here is a large and growing demand for canceled postage stamps? It is a fact. Canceled stamps of the larger denominations actually bring a fair price. I have been investigating the matter. It has no connection with the oft-repeated fable that the government would pay a large bonus to every man who collected 1,000,000 old stamps. I find that the principal collectors of canceled stamps are Indians. I believe if the authorities will look into the subject they will discover that certain people are making a regular business of canceling old stamps and reselling them as new. Chemicals exist, you know, that will remove the best cancellation ink yet discovered. It is easy to see how the business might become profitable if it is not interfered with by the government."



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