

less many legislators voted for them with the thought that they were bestowing a proper reward on worthy mothers for their service to the state. As a matter of fact, however, in most instances the period within which relief can be legally given is strictly limited to those years of the child's life during which it is naturally dependent. After the period of self-support is reached the relief is withdrawn.

The purpose, in most cases, is in no important degree different from the intent of earlier statutes which provided for the care and maintenance of children in state institutions. Social workers have long recognized the fact that it is better for the community, as well as for the individual, to have families kept together wherever possible. No institution yet provided by any state has fully taken the place of the child's own home. Other things being equal, the state would do better by fatherless children if the public funds were used to maintain the family intact than to bring about the division of families by placing children in public institutions.

The chief question, then, that has arisen in connection with the so-called mothers' pension laws has concerned the administrative features rather than the basic principles involved. In Illinois, which was the pioneer in this form of legislation among American states, the juvenile court has been the agency for administering the pension fund, although the money is really paid to the beneficiaries by the county authorities. In many of the states it is doubtful whether the juvenile court as a distinct institution is sufficiently developed to take over with success the handling of such a matter as mothers' pensions. The judges who are frequently assigned to juvenile court duty for special terms could give only a portion of their time to such business of this nature as would come before them, and can not, in the nature of things, be expected to make exhaustive investigations into cases that demand much research before the public funds can be wisely appropriated. For these and other reasons some have held that an entirely distinct board or official organization should administer the pension laws. In Wisconsin there has been a strong demand for a state commission which should give its entire time to the duties connected with the handling of the mothers' pension fund. In other states, as in New Jersey, the whole matter is left to certain county officials who already have similar functions in the distribution of public relief. The Russell Sage foundation was early in the field with a study of widows' pension administration in several American cities, by C. C. Carstens. This report gives much useful information, and it should be consulted by all who are interested in this form of relief.

The amount of the pension bestowed in the different states varies from \$9 to \$15 a month for one child, with lesser sums for each additional child. Only mothers of children under a certain age can receive these pensions. This age varies in different states from fourteen to eighteen years. Pensions can not be granted under the laws until there has been investigation, either by some constituted state or local authority or by an agent of a charitable society. Mothers who, without such aid from the state, would become wage-earners and would be unable themselves to give their children the necessary care will be able from this income, in many cases, to remain at home and care for children who might otherwise be a public charge and maintained by the state in public institutions.

The Pennsylvania law that was



HE SHOULD WORRY

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signed by the governor, in April, provides for the distribution of money through the counties, and acceptance of the law is optional with each county. In any county which accepts the act, the governor shall each year appoint a board of trustees composed of not less than five or more than seven women residents to serve without pay. These trustees are to have sole charge of monthly payments to indigent widows or abandoned mothers found deserted. The payments are to be made directly by the state treasurer through the county treasuries, and are to continue at the will of the trustees, but not beyond the time that the law permits the child to secure employment. The maximum payment is \$13 a month for one child, \$20 a month for two children, \$26 for three children, and \$5 a month for each additional child. No woman can become a beneficiary unless she has been a continuous resident of the county for three years. In Ohio, a mother with one child under fourteen receives \$15 a month, and with five children she may draw \$43 monthly. In New Jersey, the limit is \$30.

Similar laws have been passed during the year by Utah, Idaho, South Dakota, Minnesota, California, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oregon, and Washington, with minor differences in the amounts of the payments allowed and in the administrative machinery.

Minimum-Wage Laws

Most of the states have been slow to commit themselves to the principle of the minimum wage. It will be recalled that while Massachusetts more than a year ago established minimum-wage boards no penalty was prescribed for offending employers, save the publication of their names in newspapers published in the county where their industries are located. The Oregon legislature went far beyond this in the law that was signed by Governor West in March last. By the terms of that statute failure to pay the rate of wages fixed by the boards and in the manner prescribed by law is punishable by fine or im-

prisonment, or both. Oregon is the first state of the union to enact a compulsory clause of this kind. The law applies only to women and children, and prohibits their employment in any occupation in which the sanitary or other conditions are detrimental to health or morals, or for wages which are "inadequate to supply the necessary cost of living and maintain them in health." The employment of minors "for unreasonably low wages" is also forbidden. Minimum wages, maximum hours, and standard conditions of labor are to be determined by an industrial welfare commission, which is authorized to call a conference of representatives of the employers and the employees and the general public to investigate and make recommendations as to the minimum wage to be paid in any given industry. On approval by the commission, these recommendations become obligatory. It is stated by the Survey, of New York, that the powers of this Oregon commission to determine hours and conditions of health and morals are more extensive than those delegated to an industrial commission by the legislature in any other state. The members of the commission are to be appointed by the governor.

That this legislation, radical as it may seem, was not hastily considered is shown by the fact that the bill was drafted only after extended investigation of wages, labor conditions, and cost of living in Portland and throughout the state. This work was begun in August, 1912; the facts were gathered concerning 7,603 women wage-earners in Portland and 1,133 in the rest of the state. A tabulation of wage statistics was made for 4,523 of these women, the payrolls of the department stores in Portland having been placed at the disposal of the investigating committee. It is stated that the constitutionality of the measure has been upheld by the attorney-general of the state. The passage of similar bills in California and Washington will bring the entire Pacific coast under practically uniform legislation. Commissions are now making studies of

the minimum-wage question for Minnesota and other states.

New York's Factory Laws

Although the New York legislature of 1913 has received scant commendation for its labors, it has to its credit a body of factory and housing laws that is declared by experts to mark an advance on any earlier legislation in this field in any state. After the horrible Asch building fire in New York City two years ago, a commission was appointed which went into the subject of child labor, tenement-house labor, the labor of women, and health conditions in factories with great thoroughness, and formulated the amendments to the factory, building, and health laws which have now been passed by the legislature and approved by Governor Sulzer. In this instance the commission plan, which has been applied so extensively in Wisconsin, has been adopted for the supervision of labor conditions in the state. An industrial board has been created, of which the state commissioner of labor is to be chairman. Unfortunately, the upper branch of the legislature which enacted this excellent measure set itself in opposition to the governor's effort to make these laws effective, by refusing to confirm his appointment of Mr. John Mitchell as commissioner of labor.

Workmen's Compensation

In the matter of workmen's compensation laws, a notable advance has been made during the past two years. The new Ohio law is fully discussed on page 90 of this number of the Review, by Mr. Burba, who compares several of its provisions with those of other state laws on the same subject. Among the other new compensation laws of the present year, that of Minnesota was in the nature of a compromise between representatives of the employers and the employees, who had been endeavoring for four years to reach an agreement on some measure of this kind. As finally enacted, the Minnesota law is based largely on that of New Jersey, which offers an option to both employer and employee. Both parties are assumed to come under the plan unless they file statements to the contrary. If the employer refuses he must stand suit without using the defenses of contributory negligence or the fellow-servant rule. If, on the other hand, the employee refuses, the employer is entitled to set up these defenses. The detailed provisions of the bill apply only in case it is accepted by both parties.

The "Blue-Sky" Laws

No state legislation of recent years has met with more general acceptance, especially in the west, than the so-called "blue-sky" laws. The parent of all these various enactments was a law passed by the Kansas legislature two years ago, in response to an energetic campaign waged by Bank Commissioner Dolley. His law was coupled with the phrase "blue sky" because he attempted to limit the activities of investing companies which were believed to have nothing to transfer to the confiding investor but "blue sky." Commissioner Dolley's idea was to protect the average investor in every possible way against these companies, many of which were taking out of Kansas every year millions of dollars for which they were returning nothing but worthless stock certificates. Under the terms of the Kansas law, whenever any company, person, or agent desires to sell stocks, bonds, or other securities in the state, he must submit information to the banking department which will enable that department to determine whether the stocks or other securities thus offered are worthy of the investor's confidence and consideration. A detailed statement must be given of