

SAVING CHILDREN.

Movement Against Child Labor
Grows Steadily.

BEGUN BY TRADE UNIONS.

Need of Protection For the Nation's
Boys and Girls Is at Last Recognized.
Many States Have Passed Remedial
Legislation.

The persistency and patience of the organized workers in behalf of the children of the nation are being rewarded. After years of heroic effort and weary periods of misrepresentation and misinterpretation by the gradgrinds of industry the goal of ultimate success gradually but surely is being reached.

The child, our nation's most priceless possession, is at last being recognized by society as its most valuable asset.

Some other influential portions of society have at last, after our repeated warnings, continual struggles and gratifying successes, been convinced that we are right in asking protection for the child. They are taking a leaf from our book of endeavor and aspiration and are now rendering us valuable aid in behalf of better child labor laws. This is as it should be, and as it should have been years ago. If it had been so our newly discovered auxiliaries could more consistently claim credit they are now appropriating without stint. This is another evidence of the truism, "Nothing succeeds like success."

The period has now arrived when the average member of a legislature is proud if he can make a good record on "child labor legislation," and while this inclination prevails it will be well to press home in every state legislature the most complete and efficient measures in the interest of the children.

The Ohio law is without doubt the most enlightened and humane. It provides fourteen years as the age limit for employment of children in factories, fifteen years in mines (during school term) and sixteen years in dangerous or unhealthful employments. That state has also enacted a law making eight hours a maximum day's work for children, including girls up to the eighteenth year.

The most essential feature now required in some states is more capable factory inspectors to enforce the child labor laws of the state. These can be obtained if a firm demand is made for them.

We succeeded in having the child labor law of the District of Columbia strengthened during the last session of congress. Formerly inspectors were appointed at the option of the District commissioners. We protested that the duty should be made mandatory instead of optional. The District of Columbia appropriation bill now contains a provision requiring the detail of two privates of the metropolitan police for the enforcement of the provisions of the act to regulate the employment of child labor.

Several efforts have been made by persons interested in exploiting the labor of children to have what they are pleased to call "broad and liberal interpretations of the law," but the courts have decided otherwise. The last case under Judge De Lacy was decided Oct. 6, 1910, in which he held that the spirit as well as the letter of the law should be strictly observed, saying: "Violators of the child labor law deserve the severest censure. The boys and girls taken from school and play are deprived of their birthright. Those who exploit them should be

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punished severely." It is not so long ago that when labor's representatives made similar statements they were denounced as "blatant agitators," "dreamers," etc., but through their righteous endeavors we have lived to enjoy hearing judges, ministers, statesmen and even politicians applauded for such lofty sentiments.

Forty-four states now have child labor legislation of some form. In twenty-eight states the working age limit is fourteen years; in ten, twelve years; in three, sixteen years; in two, fifteen years, and in one state (Georgia) ten years. Five states now have a forty-eight hour week for children; five, a fifty-four hour week; two, a fifty-five hour week; two, a fifty-six hour week; two, a fifty-eight hour week; twenty-four, a sixty hour week; two, a sixty-six hour week.

The law should provide that the maximum working hours for minors should not exceed eight hours per day. Uniform state legislation in this regard should be immediately urged.—Samuel Gompers in American Federationist.

Eight Hour Day For Women.

The senate of Washington state has passed a bill providing for an eight hour day for women. The bill applies to all female workers in hotels, restaurants, mercantile and mechanical establishments.

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