

Child Labor

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National Child Labor Committee

105 EAST 22^d STREET
NEW YORK CITY

1915

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The papers in this volume are reprinted from the
Annals of the American Academy of Political and
Social Science, Vol. XXV., No. 3, May, 1905, in
which they were originally published as the Proceed-
ings of the First Annual Meeting of the National
Child Labor Committee.

CHILD LABOR LEGISLATION IN THE SOUTH

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The great manufacturing industry of the South is the spinning and weaving of her principal staple, cotton, and the history of child labor legislation in this section is practically contemporaneous with the first serious entrance of the South as a factor to be reckoned with in the textile trade of the world.

A few farseeing men, particularly in New England, had for many years discerned the great advantages offered by this section, the natural home of the cotton plant, and preparing against the inevitable transfer of the industry to the neighborhood of the cotton fields, had begun to divide their capital between the old mills of the East and the countryside mills springing up in the Carolinas and Georgia; but it is only within the last decade that these conditions have attained general recognition.

The laws against child labor are among the earliest expressions of the awakening of the civic consciousness of the people of the South to the responsibilities of the new industrial era, which has come upon them with the suddenness of a noonday without a morning.

Up to the present time the textile industry of this section has been largely centralized in the two Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and it is in these states that the problems of child labor have been most clearly recognized, and here the battle for the industrial freedom of the child of the South must be fought and won.

Of the 24,170 children under sixteen years of age employed in the factories of the South in 1900, 22,145 (91 per cent.) are found in these four states alone.

The present laws against child labor in the Carolinas and Alabama were enacted in 1903, as the outcome of a long continued agitation of the subject, largely inspired by one of the members of the Board of Trustees of the National Committee, who has stated the case

against child labor with a clearness and cogency unsurpassed in the history of such legislation.

As early as 1887 some wise statesman of Alabama, anticipating the dawn of the new era of industrial progress in his state, secured the enactment of a law which was in many respects the high water mark of legislation on the subject in this group of states. This law limited the hours of work for women and children to eight in the twenty-four, and the age at which children might be employed in the factories at fourteen years.

Through the influence of the Dwight Mills, at Chicopee Falls, Mass., since transferred to Alabama City, Ala., and controlled entirely by Northern capital, this law was repealed in 1895, and the combined forces of public opinion, represented by the press, the pulpit and the civic organizations of the state have never been able to restore it to the statute books.

PRESENT STATUS OF CHILD LABOR LEGISLATION IN THE SOUTH.

For the data contained in the accompanying syllabus of child labor laws in the South I am indebted largely to the Hand Book for 1905, issued by the National Consumers' League. So far as possible the data have been verified by reference at first hand to the original statutes, and it is hoped that the compact form of presentation may assist the student in obtaining a somewhat clearer insight into the present status of legislation on this subject.

Alabama.—(1) Age limit for work in mines is fourteen; for work in factories twelve, with exception of children of widowed mothers, or dependent fathers, or orphans without means of support. No child under ten can be employed under any circumstances.

(2) Proof of age: Affidavit of parent or guardian filed in the office of employer, giving age and date of birth. Furnishing false certificate is punished as a misdemeanor. Penalty for employing child under age, fine of not more than \$200.

(3) Hours of labor: For children between thirteen and sixteen, not over sixty-six hours per week, day work; not over forty-eight hours per week, night work.

(4) There is no educational test required. No compulsory attendance in school.

(5) No provision for inspection or enforcement of the law through any officials.

Arkansas.—(1) Age limit for work in mines, fourteen; for work in factories, twelve; if illiterate, fourteen. Same exceptions made as in Alabama.

(2) Proof of age: Same as in Alabama; for children under fourteen, in addition, certificate of school attendance.

(3) Hours of labor: Night work prohibited for children under fourteen; sixty hours a week's work for minors under fourteen.

(4) Educational test: School attendance compulsory under fourteen for twelve weeks in the year, six weeks to be consecutive. Certificate of school attendance only required for children under fourteen.

(5) No provision for inspection or enforcement.

Florida.—In Florida the youngest children may be employed, provided only that in the case of children under fifteen such employment shall not extend for over sixty days without the consent of the legal guardian.

There is no limitation upon the number of hours of labor, and no proof as to age of the child is required.

Georgia.—In Georgia, employment dangerous to health or morals is more or less completely prohibited, but otherwise there is no restriction whatever placed upon child labor.

Kentucky.—(1) Age limit: Work in mines prohibited for children under fourteen; work in factory prohibited for children under fourteen, with certain exemptions, which may be obtained from a county judge.

(2) Proof of age is required for children under fourteen, certificate of age to be sworn to by parent or guardian, unless employer shall know the age of the child.

(3) No restriction upon hours of labor or night work.

(4) Educational test: No educational test is required for a child to work in a factory, but attendance at school for at least five months a year compulsory for children under fourteen.

(5) A labor inspector and one assistant, at a salary of \$1,200 and \$1,000 respectively and expenses, are provided, but investigation as to violation of the law is left to the grand jury, which is given inquisitorial power, and receives a special charge from judges of the Circuit Courts to make such investigations.

Louisiana.—(1) Labor in factories is prohibited for girls under fourteen and boys under twelve years.

(2) Proof of age: Certificate of school attendance during at least four months of year preceding employment required for children under fourteen. This certificate to be signed by the director of the school district or principal of a public or private school.

(3) Hours of labor: There is no restriction upon night work, but the work of women and minors under eighteen is restricted to sixty hours per week.

(4) Educational test: There are no laws making attendance on school compulsory, but for children under fourteen a certificate of school attendance for at least four months of year preceding employment, signed by the director of the school district or principal of some public or private school, is required.

(5) The superintendent or chief police officer in cities or in town, a member of the police force detailed by the mayor is charged with enforcement of the law.

Maryland.—(1) Work in factory limited to fourteen, except in the canning industry and where there is a widowed mother, or invalid father. No age limit in twenty counties.

(2) Proof of age: For child under sixteen a certificate is required stating that the child is over twelve years, signed by principal or head teacher in school last attended, and a like certificate from parent or guardian.

(3) Hours of labor: Night work permitted; for children under sixteen work is restricted to ten hours in the twenty-four.

(4) Educational test: Child under sixteen must be able to read and write, and must attend school before or during employment.

(5) Enforcement: Attendance officers appointed by school commissioners are charged with enforcement of the law.

Mississippi.—No age limit in Mississippi except that minors may not be employed for more than sixty days without the consent of the parent or guardian.

North Carolina.—(1) Age limit in factories, twelve.

(2) Proof of age: Written statement of the parent or guardian required.

(3) Hours: Night work not prohibited; work for minors under eighteen restricted to sixty-six hours in one week.

(4) Educational test: No requirement of compulsory attendance on school, and no educational test.

(5) There is a Commissioner of Labor and Printing provided

for under another statute, but he has no authority for the inspection of the factories or enforcement of the law.

South Carolina.—(1) Age limit: (1903) ten years, (1904) eleven, (May, 1905) twelve. In factories, mines or other manufacturing establishment exception is made for child with widowed mother or totally disabled father, and for dependent children—these may work in the factory without an age limit for the purpose of earning a support—sworn affidavit to this effect required of the widowed mother, totally disabled guardian, or in case of dependent child, of legal guardian. The officer before whom affidavit is made to endorse on back of certificate his consent that the child may be so employed.

(2) Proof of age: Affidavit of parent or guardian stating the age of child.

(3) Hours of labor: Night work prohibited children under twelve, and from 8 p. m. to 6 a. m. Time may be made up which has been lost through temporary shut-down due to accident or break-down in machinery. Under no circumstances shall a child under twelve work beyond 9 p. m.

(4) Educational test: Children may be employed at any age in vacation if they present certificates showing school attendance for four months during the year and ability to read and write.

(5) No provision for enforcement.

Tennessee.—(1) Age limit in factories and mines, fourteen.

(2) Proof of age: Required of children under fourteen, to be sworn to by parent or guardian, unless age of child is known to the employer.

(3) Hours of labor: No restriction.

(4) No educational test or compulsory attendance.

(5) Grand jury given inquisitorial powers, and judges of Circuit Courts required to give special charge.

Texas.—(1) Age limit: Factories, if illiterate, fourteen; if able to read and write, twelve. In mines, breweries and distilleries, sixteen.

(2) No proof of age required.

(3) Hours of labor: Work at night prohibited for children under fourteen between 6 p. m. and 6 a. m.

(4) Educational test: Child under sixteen must be able to read and write before being employed. Exemptions may be given for

children between twelve and fourteen who are "necessarily employed."

(5) No provision for enforcement.

Virginia.—(1) Age limit: In factories, twelve.

(2) No provision for proof of age.

(3) Hours of labor: No prohibition of night work. Work restricted to ten in the twenty-four for children under fourteen.

(4) No educational test.

(5) No provision for enforcement.

REVIEW OF LEGISLATION.

A review of the legislation shows that Georgia alone among the manufacturing states of the South has no legal limit for the age at which a child may be employed, and it is an interesting, if not significant fact, that in this state, with perhaps one exception, there is a larger proportion of foreign capital invested in the manufacture of cotton goods than in any other of the textile states of the South.

In contrast with Georgia, Louisiana holds a place of high distinction among her sister states in limiting the age for girls at fourteen, in limiting the hours of work for women and minors to sixty per week, and in providing for enforcement of the law and requiring a certificate of school attendance to be signed by the proper school authorities. A glance at the laws of the other states of the group shows at once that this is the nearest to anything like an adequate and effective statute adopted by any state in the group. As, however, the textile industry in Louisiana is largely undeveloped, there being only two factories in the entire State in 1900, the law is of benefit only in preventing the establishment of conditions adverse to the children in the future.

The age limitation in Florida at fifteen and in Mississippi at twenty-one for boys and eighteen for girls is, of course, no legal bar to the employment of such children, as the law is qualified by the provision that such employment must not be for more than sixty days "without the consent of the legal guardian."

When we recall the fact that there were in 1900 only 466 children under sixteen years of age employed in the few small mills in Mississippi, and that there is not a cotton factory in the state of Florida, the absence of legislation on the subject in these states is seen to be barren of the significance it has in Georgia.

The lowest age limit for the group is eleven years, in South Carolina, which, however, on May 1, 1905, will be raised to twelve years.

The highest limit is in Texas, where children under sixteen may not be employed in mines, breweries or distilleries.

In this state, where on account of the vast possibilities of the immediate future, owing to the fact that it ranks first in production and ginning of cotton, effective legislation is most to be desired, there are evidences of a healthy and intelligent interest in securing legislation protecting the child, in the relatively high age limit for factory work, fourteen; in the prohibition of night work for children under fourteen, and the provision that children under sixteen must be able to read and write.

Here, however, as in the laws on the statute books of every state of the group, may be found the marks of the hand of those interested in fastening child labor upon the South, and the law is radically defective in failing to provide for special officers for inspection of the factories and the enforcement of the statute.

In Kentucky, Louisiana and Tennessee only is there any special provision for the enforcement of the laws prohibiting child labor, and in these states the inquisitorial powers given the grand juries furnish a means of enforcement notoriously inadequate.

The proposed legislation defeated in the Committee on Manufactures in the Legislature of North Carolina two weeks ago provided that "No girl under fourteen years should work in a manufacturing establishment. It provided further that no child under fourteen who could not read and write should be hired out to a mill; that the certificate of age and literacy should be issued by a disinterested party, the school principal, instead of a mere statement to the employer by the very interested party, the parent; that there should be no night work in the factory for children under fourteen, and that there should be systematic factory inspection by the Labor Commissioner."

It was demonstrated in the hearing of this bill before the Legislative Committee that the storm centre of the battle for the industrial freedom of the children of the South is not so much in any detail of proposed legislation, as in efforts to make the laws more effective.

So far no textile state in the South has been able to secure legal

provision for any official clothed with authority to inspect the factories and enforce the law, and until this is secured all legislation on the subject must be practically inoperative.

In Alabama, for instance, no citizen and no official of the state or county has the right to demand the inspection of the certificates of age provided for by law or to go behind the barred gates of the factory to ascertain how many children are held under the forms of child slavery forbidden by the statutes of the Commonwealth.

No educational test is required in Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, the Carolinas, Tennessee or Virginia.

In Texas a test of literacy is provided for children under sixteen, and in Louisiana a certificate of attendance for at least four months of the year, signed by the director of the school district or the principal of a private or public school.

In Arkansas and Kentucky alone is provision made for compulsory school attendance, but in the first-named state the school period is only three months, and attendance is required for only six weeks consecutively. Thus in Arkansas a child may be kept in a factory for the year with the exception of two vacations of six weeks each, which must be spent in the school room.

Night work is prohibited in Alabama for children under thirteen, in Arkansas for children under fourteen, in South Carolina (with certain exceptions) for children under twelve, and in Texas for children under fourteen.

It will be noted by the student familiar with the history of child labor legislation that with the exception of Louisiana and Arkansas the statutes in the South are practically a dead letter in another most important particular, namely, the requirements concerning the proof of the age of the child. In those states which require proof of age and even where such proof is to be publicly posted, the affidavits as to age are made out by the parent or legal guardian, the very parties against whose shiftlessness and heartlessness society has found it everywhere necessary to legislate for the protection of the children.

In Tennessee and Kentucky this defect is remedied (sic) by a proviso that such certificate shall not be required where the age of the child is known to the employer! It is against such alliance of greed and thriftlessness that we seek to deliver the children of the land.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

In company with several strangers, curious to see the wonders of the manufacture of cotton, I recently had the opportunity of passing behind the carefully guarded portals of two factories in Alabama, where my interest in the protection of the children was unknown.

In spite of the practical immunity of the mill men from danger of prosecution due to the inadequacy of the law, it was interesting to note the care with which the children had been taught to answer any inquiries that might be made concerning their ages.

Out of at least a score of children, evidently under the legal age limit, twelve, in a mill employing some three hundred operatives, only one child was found who was not "over twelve." This child confided to a little girl who was in my party the information that she was ten years old, and she looked younger still. I asked a little boy, who could not have been over nine or ten years old, how old he was. He replied with a wink and a roguish laugh that he was "most fourteen," and then ran off to tell the other children that the stranger wanted to know his age.

In another mill employing some two hundred hands the proportion of children under legal age was even larger, and there was a larger percentage of girls, but not a child was found who was not "over twelve." The conclusion was irresistible either that all these children had been taught to lie concerning their ages or that here was a most striking illustration of the effect of child labor in stunting physical development.

These two mills may fairly be taken as typical of the average suburban cotton factory in the South. In the rear of one of the factories the houses of the operatives were built around three sides of an open square or plaza, some two hundred and fifty feet wide, with a beautiful woodland crowning the bluff of the river in the rear and great open fields on either side. The houses are fairly comfortable, and neat in appearance, though needing paint. Here no one need dread the much advertised peril of the streets and slums for the children out of the mill. The children playing in this open square and on these streets would be under the restrictions of the mill authorities and could have no other companions than those very children with whom they are constantly thrown in the mill.

Two conclusions must be reached by the careful observer of such conditions: (1) That the surroundings of these families are better than those of the same class of people in the rural districts, and (2) that the condition of the children now found at work eleven hours a day, many of them under the legal age limit, would be vastly improved, and the chances of their becoming effective in the civic life of the state increased a thousand fold, if they might spend their childhood in the fresh air of the playground of the open square, instead of imprisoned in the unhealthy atmosphere of the factory.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF SECURING EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION.

In spite of the fact that the laws prohibiting child labor in this group of states fail to meet many of the requirements of adequate legislation upon the subject, the effort to secure their enactment has in every instance met with tremendous opposition on the part of the mill men.

In Alabama the opponents of legislation again and again succeeded in stifling in committee the bills aimed at improving the condition of the children in the factories, and it required the united efforts of the press, the ministers' unions of the leading cities, the women's clubs and other civic organizations to arouse public opinion to such an extent as to make its voice heard in the walls of the capitol.

An outline of the difficulties encountered in this state, it is believed, will present with some fullness the difficulties that have attended the attempt to secure effective legislation in the other Southern States.

(1) Apathy of the General Public.

Every attempt to secure social betterment finds a common obstacle in the apathy and indifference of the public mind toward its program of reform. In the South, however, this general difficulty has been accentuated by the unfamiliarity of the people with the new industrial conditions, the rural character of the population, the slow development of the civic consciousness, and the fact that the conditions sought to be remedied are of such comparatively recent growth

that the most striking evils of child labor have not had time to develop themselves so as to attract the attention of the community at large. It is always a more difficult matter to create a healthy public sentiment for the enactment of a law that provides against a future peril than it is to arouse a storm of indignant protest against an evil that has become flagrant and notorious and constantly flaunts itself in the face of every citizen. There are hundreds of thousands of our people who have never seen a cotton mill, and many hundred thousand more who have never been inside a factory gate.

Another serious difficulty in arousing public opinion is the fact that many of the mills are managed by men of a humane and just spirit, and actuated by high convictions of duty. Mills controlled by such men have been brought to the front in every public discussion of the evils of child labor, so that in view of the conditions shown to exist in these mills many of the best citizens have concluded that the picture of the evils of child labor has been largely overdrawn, forgetting that the law is never made for the righteous, but the law-breaker.

Terrible as are the evils of child labor, and for one I would not minimize them for one moment, or turn a deaf ear to the cry of one of God's oppressed little ones, the textile industry at the South is yet in its infancy, and the true peril of the situation is in the danger that the evil should so root itself in this new industry as to prevent for many years the enactment of efficient laws on the subject, or that the factories should have been so built up on the shoulders of the children that their removal would prove disastrous to the industry itself.

Taking the statistics of the last census, there were at work in the mills of the South in 1900 only 24,170 children under sixteen years of age—a number smaller than in the factories of the single state of Pennsylvania, yet during the decade ending in 1900 while the number of children at work in other sections of the country under sixteen years of age decreased about 50 per cent., in the Southern states the number of such children increased to an alarming extent.

In Georgia during the decade 1890-1900 the number of children under sixteen at work in the mills increased from 2,400 to 4,500; in Alabama from 501 to 2,438 (386 per cent.); in South Carolina from 2,153 to 8,110; in North Carolina from 2,071 to 7,129. The report of the Commissioner of Labor for this last-named state indicates

that in the last four years this number has been increased to something like 15,000.

The above statistics must be qualified by the statement that the number of factories built in these states in the period under consideration has increased in about the same proportion as the increase in the number of children employed. This, however, is the real peril of our situation, the enormous growth of the factories in the rural districts, demanding every year more and more of the children of the land.

The statistics given, it should be noted, are for children "under sixteen," and, as the legal age limit in textile states is twelve, they do not show the number of children employed contrary to law.

Legislation in these states must also not be estimated merely by certain technical requirements for an effective law. Public opinion in the South is somewhat slow to respond, but when once awakened is resistless in its power, and there has been in many parts of the Carolinas and Alabama a response to this awakened power more far-reaching in its effects upon the children than have been the technically far more stringent statutes in such states, for example, as Pennsylvania.

In Alabama and North Carolina the laws against child labor were adopted as the result of an agreement entered into by the mill men with the friends of the measure, and were based upon their solemn pledge that they would faithfully comply with the letter of the law. That in numerous instances they have failed to do so is undoubtedly true, but that the statutes have resulted in the freeing of many children from the imprisonment of the factory and protecting many others is borne out by ample proofs.

In North Carolina the mill men have pleaded successfully their compliance with the law as a bar to more effective legislation. Such a plea does not meet the needs of the situation, but that it could be made and partially sustained is proof that the law is more effective than would be indicated by a mere reading of its provisions.

(2) Prejudice in the South Against Organized Labor.

One of the inducements offered to investors of capital in the southern mills is the practical immunity of these mills from interference by labor agitations by the labor unions, which in some sec-

tions have proved disastrous to the industry. So far the cotton factories of the South have been largely unhampered by strikes.

In some instances I think it is possible that opposition to efforts looking to a permanent betterment of the condition of the operatives has been due to recognition of the well-known relation between the elevation of a laboring class financially and intellectually, and the introduction of the forces of organized labor.

In Alabama the apprehension of the mill men that the child labor law was but the entering wedge of unionism was used as an argument to convince them of the importance of agreeing to the proposed legislation and of faithfully complying with the law. It was pointed out that nothing could so strengthen the cause of organized labor in the South as its alliance with the cause of innocent, helpless and wronged childhood against the oppression of the capitalist.

(3) Antipathy to Paternalism.

In a section where local self-government has been most jealously guarded for generations at the cost of blood and treasure it is to be expected that there should obtain also a high theory of the rights of the individual. It cannot surprise the student therefore to find this individualism running to an extreme in the denial of the right of the state to interfere between employer and employee in the interests of the commonwealth and the child.

The most stubborn opposition to child labor legislation has been met in this traditional antipathy of the South to everything that savors of paternalism, and the significance of the legislation so far secured is undoubtedly to be found not so much in the scope and efficiency of the laws themselves, as in the establishment of the principle that the rights of the state in and over the child are paramount even to the rights of the parent where the welfare of the child is at stake. To those who appreciate the true condition of affairs in the South this has been an enormous gain that can scarcely be overestimated.

(4) Inability of the South to Provide for Compulsory Education.

It has been universally recognized by those who realize the difficulties inherent in laws that attempt to protect the child by cer-

tificates concerning age, that one of the best methods of securing the object aimed at in the legislation is a compulsory educational law.

When it is recalled that of the 579,947 children in the United States between the ages of ten and fourteen who cannot read and write, 479,000 of the number are in the Southern states, and 232,127 (40 per cent.) in the four textile states—Georgia, Alabama and the two Carolinas—it will be at once seen that here is the largest opportunity afforded anywhere in the country for the elevation of the standard of life by education, as well as the greatest temptation to capital to impose upon the child, in addition to the burden of illiteracy, an enfeebled and dwarfed body.

The South has been fearfully handicapped in her efforts to meet the problems created by the illiteracy of her people. "A double system of public education has been with all its burdens and with its varied difficulties, the inevitable and unchanging issue of our problem of population. With the gravest problems of our civilization challenging her existence and her peace, the South has been expected to assume the task of the education of two populations out of the poverty of one."

Her response to the exigencies of such a condition has been one of the heroic features of the history of her people during the past quarter of a century in her efforts to overtake the educational destitution of her rural population—efforts that must be neutralized if the rapidly increasing factories are to be allowed through the greed of capital and the shiftlessness of parents, to shut out from the school room, within the walls of the mills, thousands of the neediest and most promising of her children.

With the greatest educational problem of modern civilization thrust upon her, it has not been possible for the South to provide for the compulsory education of all her children, and the opponents of child labor laws have ever been quick to seize upon this fact, hiding their hostility to the legislation by a loud protestation of zeal for the cause of education.

It was somewhat of a revelation in Alabama two years ago to find that the very people who were opposing a child labor law, "unless a provision making the education of the children compulsory was attached," were at the same time viciously fighting all efforts to provide for local taxation for school purposes—a measure which

offered the only hope for such an increase of the public school funds as to make compulsory education feasible.

(5) The Commercial Rivalry of States and Sections.

Every effort to secure legislation protecting the child has been met by the persistent and bitter commercial rivalry between the different states engaged in the manufacture of cotton goods.

It has been repeatedly charged that the efforts to secure child labor legislation in the South have been inspired by the jealousy on the part of the New England mills of the growing prosperity of the South. To which it may well be answered, "Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that influences alleged to be trying to injure the southern manufacturing industry by securing effective child labor laws, should at the same time be at work in New England in making the laws in these States more effective still."

It is a fact of history that the protection of the children is one of the most potent of the economic factors in the industrial development of a people, and if the jealousy of New England should result in the protection of all the children of the South nothing could prove a greater boon to every interest of her people.

The mill men in New England are urging that the age limit in those states should not be raised, because they then could not compete with Georgia, which has no law against child labor. The mill men in Georgia claim that the attempt to secure legislation in those states is due to the influence of the New England mills, while in the two Carolinas and Alabama the proximity of Georgia, with no regulation of child labor, is pleaded as a reason why existing statutes should not be enforced.

After all has been said, it must at last be recognized that the inducements the South has to offer to the capitalist desiring to invest in mill property are her splendid water power, salubrious climate, proximity to the cotton fields, cheapness of fuel, and freedom from labor troubles, and not the sacrifice of her children upon the altar of greed.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I have tried thus to give a frank and accurate interpretation of the present status of this legislation in the Southern States, and to present as candidly as possible the situation as it exists, but I would sound no note of pessimism. Whereas in older manufactur-

ing communities legislation for the protection of child life has been a matter of slow growth and marked by the many mistakes and failures of social experiments, in the South the cotton manufacturing industry has almost with its birth brought our people to a consciousness of their obligation to the coming generation.

In the bills presented in more recent legislatures the accumulated wisdom of the century has been drawn upon, and though, as in North Carolina, such measures may for a time fail of enactment into law, through the influence of the professional lobbyist, the interested capitalist and the indifferentism of the people, no one familiar with the history of the modern industrial world can doubt that the pressure of the moral judgment of civilization must at last make itself felt with resistless force.

Though the enactment of the most effective legislation comes somewhat more tardily than we could desire, it is a matter of sincere congratulation that this legislation has reached a more advanced stage of development at this period of the industrial life of the South, and that the southern people are passing on to the period of effective legislation with less of blood-guiltiness than any other section of country in the industrial life of modern times.

In conclusion I venture to suggest:

(1) That for states with such manifestly similar economic conditions as obtain in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama there should be a continuance of the effort to secure so far as possible uniformity in the laws protecting the children.

(2) That in view of the number of humane and just men interested in the manufacture of cotton in the South constant effort should be put forth to win the support and sympathy of these men for a movement in line with the noblest endeavors of their lives. To this end legislation proposed should be wise and conservative, characterized by a full recognition of the stage of the industrial development of the section, and so far as consistent with the protection of the children, containing such provisions as will give the factories abundant time to adapt themselves to the improved conditions.

Overdrawn pictures of conditions that are abnormal are just as imperfect a presentation of the case against child labor as is the exhibition of the prize mill with its schools, kindergartens and libraries an illustration of the average mill. After all has been said the facts of the situation, and the facts alone, can secure an intelligent

and sustained public interest without which no law can be made effective.

The people of the South are not unlike the people in other sections, and iniquitous conditions cannot long maintain themselves in the presence of a well-informed public opinion.

(3) Laws protecting the girls under fourteen years of age are most needed just now, and most likely to secure favorable consideration at the hands of the representatives of the people.

(4) Wherever practicable, proof of age should be required to be supplemented by a standard of physical efficiency, and in all cases there should be required for children under twelve years of age, a certificate showing that they can read and write, signed not by the parent or guardian alone but by the principal or teacher in some public school residing in the county where the factory is located. These certificates should be required to be filed in a public place where access may be obtained to them by all interested parties, and failure so to file them made a misdemeanor.

(5) An inspector for factories, mills and mines should be provided in every state, and this officer appointed by the Governor and empowered to enter any factory or manufacturing plant or mine, required to render bi-annually a public report to the Governor, and to report to the county solicitor and grand jury every violation of the law.