

## CHILD LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES.<sup>1</sup>

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About thirty years ago the employment of young children in American industries assumed proportions that called forth protests from many quarters and especially from organized labor. The evils of such premature employment have increased continuously from that date to this and the volume of protest has grown proportionately, and now includes the organized womanhood of the country, the public educational authorities, charitable and philanthropic associations, State and local child labor committees, and lastly a National Child Labor Committee, representing the widest diversity of geographical distribution and of political, ecclesiastical, business, and social interests. We now have a national problem on our hands that has attracted the attention of the President, the Congress, nearly every State Legislature, and practically the entire press of the country.

The program of the child labor movement has assumed definite shape in at least three demands: (1) The absolute elimination of the child under fourteen years of age from the ranks of wage earners and from gainful and industrial occupations. This means that the years up to the fourteenth birthday shall be sacredly guarded, and their chief purpose be directed to play, physical development, intellectual and industrial education. The child under fourteen is therefore to be regarded as having no economic value, no proper status as a producer of

<sup>1</sup>The complete paper, of which this is merely an abstract, will be printed later, and will be mailed by Dr. Lindsay to any member of the Association desiring it. The abstract was received too late to be inserted in its proper place in the Proceedings.

wealth, but to be guaranteed by society this period of freedom and growth as an investment for the future and an asset of the State. (2) The further prohibition of employment at nightwork, or in occupations dangerous to life, health, and morals for all children up to the sixteenth birthday. This means that owing to the peculiar dangers, physical and moral, incident to night work for children entering on the adolescent period, and in occupations like mining, and where dangerous machinery or poisonous materials are used, and hence greater judgment demanded, the age limit at which legal employment may begin is raised from 14 years to 16 years. (3) For all children between fourteen and sixteen years of age who may be legally employed in occupations not dangerous to life, health, or morals, a state license or employment certificate is demanded which shall guarantee that the child so employed has the necessary physical development and strength for its work and has had a certain modicum of an English education to fit it for intelligent citizenship.

In the efforts to realize this program reliance has been had chiefly thus far on State legislation, supported by an educated public opinion on this subject. National legislation is not impossible, however, and if the Beveridge-Parsons Child Labor bill now before Congress becomes law it will both necessitate and greatly facilitate more effective State regulation along lines it is now following. It will not take away from the States any of their present opportunities to carry out this program within their respective borders.

The National government should do more to give its citizens in the several States more adequate information concerning the real extent of the evils of child labor, which has so many ramifications in matters of the greatest public concern, such as the public school, normal family

life, the physical efficiency of our racial stock, and the moral and intellectual training of our citizenship.

In conclusion, I submit the following table of statistics of child labor based on the last Federal Census. I wish to condemn severely recent attempts to discredit and minimize the statistics of child labor, which are obviously intended as an apology for employers who have resisted legislation to protect childhood, violated existing agreements, evaded existing legislation, and shown a lack of concern for the children of the nation.

SOME UNITED STATES CENSUS STATISTICS OF CHILD LABOR.

	1880.	1900.	Increase 1906 per cent. estimated.	
Population of Continental United States .....	50,155,783	75,568,686	50.6	83,189,756
Total number of children 10 to 15 (inclusive) years of age.....	6,649,483	9,613,252	44.5	10,502,380
Number of children 10 to 15 (inclusive) years of age engaged in gainful occupations .....	1,118,356	1,750,178	56.5	1,939,524
Boys .....	825,187	1,264,411	53.2	
Girls .....	293,169	485,767	65.7	
Per cent. which children 10 to 15 (inclusive) years of age at work constitute of all children 10 to 15 inclusive	16.8%	18.2%		
Total number of children 10 to 15 (inclusive) years of age engaged in trade and transportation .....	38,657	122,362	216.5	147,352
Boys .....	35,609	100,174	181.3	
Girls .....	3,048	22,188	627.9	
Total number of children 10 to 15 (inclusive) years of age engaged in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits ...	133,007	283,869	113.4	329,127
Boys .....	86,171	170,653	98.0	
Girls .....	46,836	113,216	141.7	

	<i>Children 10-13 (inclusive).</i>	<i>Children 14-15 (inclusive).</i>
All gainful occupations.....	790,623	959,555
Agricultural .....	604,265	457,706
Trade and transportation.....	21,875	100,487
Mechanical and manufacturing pursuits	62,532	221,337
Domestic and personal service.....	101,513	177,518
Professional service .....	438	2,507