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industrial-home-work system is good or bad, it *is*, and the problem is how can it best be controlled. The department of labor and industry has attempted to meet the problem by adopting regulations, and providing machinery to enforce them. The system of administration, involving constant investigation, should provide a scientific basis for deciding whether the condition of labor in homes can be controlled or whether the whole idea of factory work in the home is obsolete and should be abolished.³⁹

The essence of the problem of control is to put the responsibility for observance of the laws on the employers who give out home work. When the cooperation of the employers is secured through a campaign of education substantial progress can be made toward elimination of some of the evils of the home-work system.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTAL LABOR OFFICIALS

In February, 1926, the Association of Governmental Labor Officials of the United States and Canada appointed a committee "to look into the question of industrial home work, the extent to which such work is conducted in the various States, and the methods being taken to deal with the situation * * *." In the time intervening before the annual convention in June the committee conducted an investigation by questionnaire to the State labor officials. The report made to the convention summarized the information secured and made certain recommendations. The essential parts of the report are quoted here.⁴⁰

Answers to the questionnaire indicate that except for sparsely populated agricultural and mining States industrial home work of some sort is to be found in almost every part of the country. Specific information on the extent, kinds, and conditions of home work, however, is reported as not available in most of the States, and complete information on these points can not be said to be available for any State. Except from a very few States nothing was learned as to the extent of interstate shipment of goods to be worked on in homes, information regarding which was requested. * * *

Replies to the questionnaire and examination of the laws of the various States show that 14 States have some sort of regulation of industrial home work. These are California,^a Connecticut,^b Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio,^c Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

In general, these regulations relate to cleanliness and sanitary conditions of the work place, to freedom from infectious and contagious disease, and (less commonly) to adequate lighting and ventilation and number of cubic feet of air space to be allowed per worker. In most of the States a license or permit must be obtained from the State authority enforcing the labor laws, either by the worker (Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey) or by the employer or person giving out home work (California,^e Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin), this license indicating that the standards of the law have been met.

Observance of certain of the standards of the labor laws relating to women and children is sometimes made a condition of the issuance and holding of a permit to give out home work. Inspection is relied upon as the method

^a In California the regulatory measure consists of an order of the industrial welfare commission acting under its power to regulate the wages and conditions of employment of women and minors; in the other States they consist of State laws, supplemented, in some instances, by rulings of State boards.

^b The Connecticut and Ohio laws, however, have no application to the members of the family living in the home where the work is done.

^c In California the permit must be obtained from the industrial welfare commission, which issued the home-work order.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Industrial Home Work and Child Labor. Special bul. 11, 1926, pp. 29-30.

⁴⁰ U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Proceedings of Thirteenth Annual Convention of Association of Governmental Labor Officials of the United States and Canada. Held at Columbus, Ohio, June 7-10, 1926. Bul. 429, 1927, pp. 34-40.

of discovering whether the standards set by the law are continuously complied with.

In California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (and perhaps in other States by administrative practice) the employer is required to keep a register of the persons to whom home work is given by him, containing their names and addresses, and in some States certain other information. It is usually stated that this register shall be accessible to the inspector. In Massachusetts this register must be sent monthly to the State labor department; in Pennsylvania it must be sent to the labor department quarterly.

Answers to questions 8 and 9 ("What is your opinion as to the effectiveness of these regulations?" and "What would you suggest as the most effective type of regulation on this subject?") were on the whole disappointing. The most significant information yielded was that no uniformity of opinion existed as to the best method of regulation even where there was a recognized industrial-home-work problem and where regulation existed.

In brief, the information obtained from the State labor officials and other sources leads the committee to the following conclusions in regard to the two matters it was especially instructed to inquire into—the extent of the home-work problem and the methods of dealing with the situation that are in effect.

First. As to the information available regarding the extent and conditions of industrial home work in the United States at the present time:

1. Industrial home work is without question a live problem in many sections of the United States.
2. In most localities in which it has arisen, serious evils have been found to follow from its practice.
3. However, information as to its prevalence, the numbers and kinds of workers engaged in it, the conditions under which the work is done, the industries affected, and the interstate aspects of the problem is either lacking entirely or admittedly inadequate in many sections of the country, even in States where the existence of home work (at least in some industries) is known to the State authorities, and even in States where the existence of a home-work problem has been recognized in the enactment of prohibitory or regulatory legislation.
4. Therefore no complete report as to the extent and conditions of home work in this country can be made, and further investigation on the subject is urged.

Second. As to the methods in effect of dealing with the situation:

1. Some system of legal regulation is unquestionably necessary, at least in States where the industrial-home-work problem exists.
2. Certain minimum standards of legal regulation may be agreed upon on the basis of the experience of the States up to the present time.
3. However, no general agreement among the State officials and other authorities appears to exist as to the most effective program for the correction of the evils of industrial home work, and no information is available that can enable the committee to judge conclusively as to the relative effectiveness of the different methods in operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the facts brought out by the inquiry, the committee on industrial home work decided to place chief emphasis "upon the need for further information as to the facts of industrial home work and as to effective methods of correcting the evils found to exist wherever home work is undertaken on any extensive scale. * * *" It made as its chief recommendation a continuation of the study of the industrial-home-work problem by the association and its membership in the various States. In addition the committee strongly recommended that a study of the comparative effectiveness of the different types of home-work regulation should be undertaken by some independent research organization, working in cooperation