

# EVERY CHILD *in* SCHOOL

*A SAFEGUARD against  
Child Labor and Illiteracy*



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Children's Bureau

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# EVERY CHILD *in* SCHOOL.

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## BACK-TO-SCHOOL.

Last year in the campaign against child labor 44 States, the District of Columbia, and the city of New York made every effort to awaken communities and individual parents to the child's need for education and to see that he has the opportunity for it through the enactment and enforcement of adequate school attendance and child-labor laws.

"Every Child in School" was the aim of the Back-to-School and Stay-in-School campaign which was started during Children's Year by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor and the Child Conservation Section of the Council of National Defense because thousands of boys and girls had been drawn into work by the war-time demand for labor and the high cost of living.

"Stay-in-School" is still the slogan in many communities where they are combating child labor by creating a sentiment in favor of school attendance.

### COOPERATION.

School superintendents and teachers not only cooperated with the child-welfare committees in this campaign, but also in some communities the school authorities were asked to take charge of the drive. In one State the superintendent of public instruction was appointed State chairman for the Back-to-School drive which was carried on by the county superintendents of schools and the teachers with great success.

The superintendent of schools in one town enlisted the interest of 150 leading citizens. A citizen was considered having gone over the top when, because of his or her personal efforts, at least one boy or girl who would not otherwise have done so entered and remained in school during the remainder of the year.

Not only did the child welfare committees cooperate with the school authorities, but also in many instances they enlisted the interest of employers, rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, and other local organizations to assist in returning children to school and in raising scholarship funds to enable boys and girls to remain in school longer.

## METHODS.

In many communities all the children who had left school during the few months previous were visited and an effort was made to return them to school. Children who had left school in rural districts were followed up and urged to continue their schooling as well as the children in the cities and towns. In a number of rural districts committees were appointed for each township and an effort was made to convince the parents that farm work for children is a loss rather than a gain if it is a substitute for schooling. It was pointed out to them that if the boys and girls of to-day are going to increase production on the farms in the future they must go through a prolonged period of intelligent training.

One county observed "rural day" when the influential men of the neighborhood visited the schools and talked to the children on the value of education. Their visits were planned not only for the purpose of inducing children to remain in school longer, but also to show visitors the needs of the rural schools.

Some communities when first asked to take part in the campaign saw no need for it, as there were no industries which employed children. But in these localities it was found that many children left school as soon as the school attendance law permitted, that few went to high school, and that after all the drive might be beneficial in inducing boys and girls to remain in school longer. In one State 20 of the smaller towns where there were no factories reported as not needing a Back-to-School drive. These 20 towns were enlisted by the superintendents of schools to put over in other localities the idea that it pays to stay in school.

All communities did not follow the same plan for carrying on the campaign, but each decided upon the phase of the drive which was most needed and which should be pushed. In one large city 800 children who were employed on vacation permits during the summer and who failed to return to school were followed up and an effort made to return them to school. In this city "Stay-in-School" was emphasized. Thousands of dodgers were distributed, bringing home to parents the danger of premature work for children and the advantage not only to the child but also to the Nation of giving him the maximum of education. Another line of attack was addressing meetings of parents, teachers' conferences, and children's assemblies in the schools. As a result of the Back-to-School drive in this city the committee recommended more scholarships for children, an increased number of visiting teachers, additional continuation schools, more attendance officers, annual revision in the school census, and a wider extension of vocational guidance work.

In one State an experienced and trained person was employed to go through the State to assist the local committees to secure better enforcement of the school-attendance laws, to make more nearly uniform the methods for issuing employment certificates, and to enlist the interest of employers and school authorities in establishing day continuation schools for working children. An exhibit was prepared illustrating the child-labor law and pointing out the need for more vocational education and vocational guidance.

In many communities publicity was given to better enforcement of the child-labor laws. In one city 50,000 slips urging children to return to school were distributed through the public libraries and factories. A slip was inserted in each book and pay envelope. The same inscription was put on slides and shown in 50 of the smaller moving-picture houses for a week. The inscription read:

Send your child back to school.

The child-labor law says:

Boys must be 15 and pass the sixth grade before leaving school,

Girls must be 16 and pass the seventh grade.

Take the child from the factory.

Give a man a job.

Be patriotic. Obey the law.

Everywhere novel ways were introduced for reaching the parents and impressing upon them the value of an education and the importance of keeping children in school.

The success of the effort to return children to school and keep them there is largely dependent upon the parents. If they have a real understanding of the value of an education and of the training which the schools offer to children they are more likely to insist upon their remaining in school.

In one city a school with traveling teachers was started for parents. The homes were visited for the purpose of informing the parents of the educational opportunities open to their children in the schools in order that they might understand of what the boys and girls are being deprived when they leave school early. A leaflet was prepared giving the names of the schools that provide vocational training and those that have special classes for the handicapped, for the blind and deaf, and for the retarded children and those who have speech defects.

In another city a "Go-to-School Week" was planned when the parents having children in school were urged to visit the schools and learn how they are conducted. Tags were prepared bearing the inscription: "My father or mother has visited school this week. Has yours?" These were won for the children by the parents.



In many localities the ministers of the churches were asked to emphasize the need for education in connection with their sermons in order that the message might reach more parents.

Speakers presented the cause in the moving-picture theaters, and slides were shown urging the parents to return their children to school and to keep them there. In one State a slide was prepared giving the number of illiterates in the State and the number of children who failed to enroll in any school the previous year. "No illiteracy in this State in 1920" is its slogan.

Wherever the drive was undertaken special emphasis was laid on "Stay-in-School." In this the teachers took an important part. They endeavored to make every child understand why, for the sake of his future health, wealth, and happiness he should not throw aside the opportunities which school affords for the sake of a job that may lead nowhere.

In many localities the children were asked to write essays on the subject, "Education Pays." In one State all the pupils of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades wrote essays entitled, "Why go to high school?" Prizes were offered by the State committee for the best essays.

In one town a "Remain-in-School" congress was held at the Central High School for all the eighth-grade children. The object was to make the boys and girls realize the need for a high-school education. The senior high-school students told how high-school training had benefited them and why boys and girls should not leave school at the end of grammar school.

In one State a letter was sent to all the eighth-grade pupils urging them to continue their schooling. In each letter was inclosed the leaflet entitled, "Education Pays," furnished by the Children's Bureau, and which compares the earnings of those boys and girls who go to work with only a grammar-school education with those who have been graduated from high school.

Librarians in several localities inclosed one of these leaflets in each book given to a child. This leaflet was further made use of in a middle-western juvenile court to convince the mothers and fathers of children summoned before the judge that they should make every effort to keep their children in school.

#### RESULTS.

As a result of the Back-to-School and Stay-in-School campaign the school period for many boys and girls has been prolonged. But the real value has been even more far-reaching than keeping a few boys and girls in school. Communities are becoming awakened to

the needs of the working child. They have discovered that the million or more children under 16, who leave school each year to go to work are not forced into work by poverty: many of them are unaware of the advantages of an education or are moved simply by youthful restlessness or distaste for school. They have found that many children begin their working lives with only a scant educational equipment and before they have had a chance to develop physically. They are more and more becoming aware of the waste of early employment and are recognizing the fact that every child who goes to work prematurely contributes to ill health, industrial inefficiency, unemployment, low wages, poverty, and illiteracy. They have learned that the majority of American children are allowed to go to work without guidance or assistance in finding suitable employment and to remain at work with no supervision or protection save what the child labor laws provide.

Many communities, with the knowledge of conditions which the Back-to-School drive helped to reveal, are more convinced than ever that every effort should be made to protect children from excessive and premature employment and provide for the child entering industry some guidance in the choice of occupations. For this reason many communities planned a Back-to-School drive for the autumn of 1919 to return to school boys and girls who during the vacation period had entered employment and who were induced by the wages offered to remain at work. In some localities the school-welfare committees organized for Children's Year have become permanent committees cooperating with the school authorities to carry on every year a Stay-in-School campaign. In one State a School-Welfare circle has been appointed for each school. The following questionnaire was sent in the middle of September to each circle:

Has your school enrollment been checked with the latest school census?

Has your community looked up all the children of school age who are not enrolled?

How many children are out of school?

How many children have been returned to school?

How many children are out of school to assist in the support of the family?

Has provision been made for establishing a scholarship fund?

#### WORK STILL TO BE DONE.

There is need for carrying on each year a Back-to-School and a Stay-in-School campaign in order that no child in the future shall grow up without going to school and learning all that the school can give toward an intelligent and well equipped entrance into working life.

To make a Stay-in-School campaign effective and reduce child labor to a minimum communities should work to secure—

- (1) More and better schools.
- (2) Better-trained and better-paid teachers.
- (3) Better enforcement of the school attendance laws.
- (4) Better enforcement of child-labor laws and higher standards of protection for working children.

MORE AND BETTER SCHOOLS ARE NEEDED IN ORDER THAT NO CHILD SHALL BE DEPRIVED OF THE EDUCATION TO WHICH HE HAS A RIGHT.

When the Back-to-School drive was launched in one State it became known that in many cities and towns the schools were already overcrowded. It was estimated that if all the children in the State who should be in school were returned 40 per cent of them would have to stand. "Schools for all children and all children in school" is the slogan of the child-welfare committee. The chairman reports that "in many cities in the State additions will be made to the school buildings during vacation time and we trust when the schools open this fall there will be no children out of school who should be enrolled." In some of our larger cities many children are permitted to attend school only half-day sessions because the schools are so overcrowded.

It is not sufficient to secure legislation compelling children to attend school. There must be schools for them to go to and they must be made so plainly attractive that boys and girls will want to attend. The results of the Back-to-School drive indicated that the majority of children leave school because they are not interested in school and that the school fails to provide the training which meets their needs. If we are to keep children from going to work too early in life we must provide a schooling which holds their interest, satisfies their need, and gives them a sound foundation on which to build their industrial life when the proper time comes for them to enter industry. The Smith-Hughes Act which provides Federal aid for States establishing vocational training is a step in the right direction.

*Inadequate training, poor equipment, unattractive school buildings often breed discontent. A discontented school child often produces a child laborer.*

The rural schools must not be overlooked, especially when we consider that three-fifths of the American children live outside urban areas. Federal aid for the improvement of the rural school will do away with the cut and dried form of education that is not holding the country children in school, that is not holding them to country life, and that is not awakening their social interest. The day is gone by when farming can be carried on in the hit or miss way of



the past. The need for technical teaching is perhaps more apparent in the rural schools than elsewhere, for the boy or girl at work on the farm usually performs mechanical unskilled duties and receives little intelligent instruction save in very exceptional cases.

In England under the education act of last year it will be possible to build up on the elementary school course a really practical training in the main duties of the various branches of agriculture. It has been proposed to send town children out to the rural continuation schools and thus create a more fruitful movement back to the life of country districts.

In this country it is proposed to extend the principle of Federal aid to the elementary schools. The Towner bill introduced in Congress in May, 1919, seeks to find the alternative to child labor. It provides for an annual Federal appropriation of \$100,000,000 for educational purposes which would be distributed among the States according to population. This aid will not be granted the States unless they agree to abide by certain conditions imposed by the Government.

Of this total proposed appropriation \$7,500,000 will be allotted to the States for the instruction of illiterates 10 years of age and over; \$7,500,000 will be used to teach immigrants 10 years of age and over the English language; \$50,000,000 will be devoted to lengthening school terms and to improving the elementary schools, especially in the rural districts; \$20,000,000 will be used for promoting recreation, physical education, medical inspection, the employment of school nurses; and \$15,000,000 will be used for training teachers.

If Congress grants this appropriation it will mean that all the children of this country may in time have equal educational opportunities.

This year several States have taken steps to provide more and better training for their children. An increasing number of States are establishing consolidated schools in order that the rural schools may have better equipment, better trained teachers, and a more varied course of training.

Iowa passed a new school law this year known as the Evans-Smith Act which provides for the standardization of rural schools. This law carries with it an appropriation of \$100,000 to be used in bringing the country schools up to a recognized standard of efficiency. A rural school to benefit by this aid must be in good repair, with adequate heating and ventilating systems, well equipped with the necessary furnishings to conduct a good school. The school must be conducted for eight months out of each year. The teacher must hold a first-grade uniform county certificate, a normal training cer-

tificate, or a State certificate. If the school is designated by the State superintendent as a standard school it will receive \$6 per capita for each child who has an average attendance of six months for the preceding school year. This is Iowa's way of improving the rural schools and keeping the children in school longer.

*The public schools belong to the community. They will be whatever the community makes them.*

#### BETTER TRAINED AND BETTER PAID TEACHERS ARE NEEDED.

The Back-to-School drive could not be carried on in some communities because the schools were closed for lack of teachers. All over the country it is reported that teachers are leaving the schools for better paid work elsewhere and the attendance at teachers' training schools has decreased to an alarming extent.

The National Education Association recently published figures showing that out of approximately 600,000 public-school teachers in the United States approximately—

30,000 have had no education beyond the eighth grade of the elementary school.

100,000 have had less than two years' education beyond the eighth grade.

200,000 have had less than four years' education beyond the eighth grade.

300,000 have had no more than four years' education beyond the eighth grade.

300,000 have had no special professional preparation for the work of teaching.

In many parts of the country school teachers receive no more than \$40 a month. The public is beginning to realize that no community can afford to have its children taught by underpaid and inadequately prepared young men and women. This last year a number of States because of the shortage of teachers secured legislation establishing a minimum salary of not less than \$1,000 for all teachers in the State. In other States \$1,200 has been fixed as the minimum salary for elementary-school teachers.

*Secure in your community higher salaries for teachers and as a result better trained and more competent instructors for your children.*

#### BETTER ENFORCEMENT OF THE SCHOOL-ATTENDANCE LAWS.

The Back-to-School drive has shown that these laws in many States are not adequate; they are not enforced as they should be in many cities and towns and rarely enforced in the rural districts. Frequently authorities fail to provide a sufficient number of attend-

ance officers to enforce the law. Too often these officers are poorly paid and as a result untrained, inefficient, and often incapacitated for work.

One county child-welfare chairman reported, "The rural districts do not use the truant officers they have." The superintendent of public instruction at the request of the child-welfare committee sent a questionnaire to city and county superintendents of schools asking for the number of truant officers in the district, their approximate ages, previous occupation, and amount of education. With this questionnaire was distributed "The Truant Officers' Opportunity," a leaflet published by the child-welfare committee. Returns indicated that the majority of the truant officers in the State are underpaid and past the active age of life. If compulsory school-attendance laws are to be enforced, an intelligent, well-trained attendance officer who is interested in the welfare of children should be a part of every school organization.

Such figures as are available indicate that in our cities less than three-fourths of the children continue in attendance at school as much as three-fourths of the year. In many rural districts the children attend school a little more than half the time the schools are in session. The terms for rural schools are, as a rule, much shorter than those for city schools. In 10 States the period of attendance required by law is less than five months. It is obvious that the children in these States do not get adequate schooling. In one State the school officers are authorized to consider need for agricultural labor in excusing children in rural districts.

In nearly every community there may be found not only children who are so irregular in school attendance that they do not make their grade, but also children who fail even to enroll in any school. In one State last year it was found that 10,895 children failed to enroll in school. In another State a rural school inspector interested in the Back-to-School drive reported that 1,700 children in his district did not attend a day of school last year. "So many of them stay out in the fall and spring to help in beet fields," he said.

As a result of little or no schooling:

- 1 out of every 10 adults in the city can neither read nor write;
- 1 out of every 5 adults in the country can neither read nor write.

At present the illiteracy rate in the United States is eighth in the list of civilized countries. America can head the list only by providing well-equipped schools which the children shall be required to attend a full school term of nine months.

Irregular attendance at school is not only a loss to the child but it is also expensive to the State. One State found that it cost \$40,000 a year to reteach children who fail in the grades because they did not attend school regularly.

*Irregular attendance leads to retardation. Retardation leads to elimination. Elimination results in child labor.*

*See that the school-attendance laws are enforced!*

BETTER ENFORCEMENT OF THE CHILD-LABOR LAWS AND HIGHER STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WORKING CHILDREN ARE NEEDED IN EVERY STATE.

It was found in connection with the Back-to-School drive that children were working in violation of the laws of their States. Children of school age were in the factories because there were not a sufficient number of attendance officers and factory inspectors to keep them in school and out of industry. No community can afford to have its children at work when they should be in school. Children at work depend largely upon the States in which they live for protection. It is true that the Federal Government has stepped in and has said that child labor must be prohibited in every State up to a certain age. But the Federal child-labor law which provides for an excise tax upon the profits derived from the work of children prohibits only the employment of children under 14 in manufacturing establishments, including canneries, and of children under 16 at any time in mines and quarries and in factories for more than eight hours daily or before 6 o'clock in the morning or after 7 in the evening.

The number of children affected by the Federal law is small compared with the total number of working children in the United States. Although the exact figures relating to the employment of children are not to be obtained, the latest, found in the census of 1910, give the number of working children between 10 and 16 years of age as approximately 2,000,000. Nearly three-fourths of these children are employed in agriculture. Less than 300,000 children are in occupations coming within the scope of the Federal child-labor law. With the Federal law in force, children under 14 in nearly every State will be able to work some time and in some occupation. The Federal law does not set a complete standard, nor one for all children.

Employment in agriculture and domestic service are exempt from the operation of the State laws. In every State children can work long hours at injurious tasks in homes and fields. The country child is neglected. Not only are there no restrictions regarding his employment, but his schooling is often curtailed. Three-fourths of the children at work—those employed on farms—are not protected by the child-labor laws.

England found that if illiteracy was to be destroyed the employment of children in agriculture would have to be regulated. Under



the Fisher Education Act, no child in all England can work at any occupation, including agriculture, before the age of 14. Up to that age he must attend school every year a full school term of nine months. A recent English periodical reported that farmers had been fined for working children in violation of this act.

Though no one can question the wholesomeness of supervised work on farms under proper conditions, it has been found that the States which have a high percentage of illiteracy also have a high percentage of rural child labor.

*Rural child labor and illiteracy go hand in hand.*

### MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN ENTERING EMPLOYMENT.

At the Children's Bureau conferences held in the United States in May and June, 1919, standards of child welfare were proposed, discussed, and formulated. They included standards for working children. The raising of the age at which American children are permitted to enter industry and a more stringent control of the conditions under which boys and girls may assume the burdens of industrial life were urged. The following are the standards proposed by a committee of persons experienced in matters pertaining to children in industry. They are standards toward which every community should work and which surely are none too high for the protection of boys and girls who must be prepared to assume the responsibilities which the generation of to-day will soon lay upon them. The standards are as follows:

*Age minimum.*—An age minimum of 16 for employment in any occupation, except that children between 14 and 16 may be employed in agriculture and domestic service during vacation periods until schools are continuous throughout the year.

An age minimum of 18 for employment in and about mines and quarries.

An age minimum of 21 for girls employed as messengers for telegraph and messenger companies.

An age minimum of 21 for employment in the special delivery service of the United States Post Office Department.

Prohibition of the employment of minors in dangerous, unhealthy, or hazardous occupations, or at any work which will retard their proper physical or moral development.

*Educational minimum.*—All children between 7 and 16 years of age shall be required to attend school for at least nine months each year.

Children between 16 and 18 years of age who have completed the eighth grade but not the high school and are legally and regularly employed shall be required to attend day continuation schools at least eight hours a week.

Children between 16 and 18 who have not completed the eighth grade or children who have completed the eighth grade and are not regularly employed shall attend full-time school. Occupational training especially adapted to their needs shall be provided for those children who are unable because of mental subnormality to profit by ordinary school instruction.



Vacation schools placing special emphasis on healthful play and leisure time activities shall be provided for all children.

*Physical minimum.*—A child shall not be allowed to go to work until he has had a physical examination by a public-school physician or other medical officer especially appointed for that purpose by the agency charged with the enforcement of the law, and has been found to be of normal development for a child of his age and physically fit for the work at which he is to be employed.

There shall be annual physical examination of all working children who are under 18 years of age.

*Hours of employment.*—No minor shall be employed more than 8 hours a day, or 44 hours a week. The maximum working day for children between 16 and 18 shall be shorter than the legal working day for adults.

The hours spent at continuation schools by children under 18 years of age shall be counted as part of the working day.

Night work for minors shall be prohibited between 6 p. m. and 7 a. m.

*Minimum wage.*—Minors at work shall be paid at a rate of wages which for full-time work shall yield not less than the minimum essential for the "necessary cost of proper living," as determined by a minimum wage commission or other similar official board. During a period of learning they may be rated as learners and paid accordingly. The length of the learning period should be fixed by such commission or other similar official board on educational principles only.

*Placement and employment supervision.*—There shall be a central agency which shall deal with all juvenile employment problems. Adequate provision shall be made for advising children when they leave school of the employment opportunities open to them, for assisting them in finding suitable work, and providing for them such supervision as may be needed during the first few years of their employment. All agencies working toward these ends shall be coordinated through the central agency.

#### ADMINISTRATION.

*Employment certificates.*—Provision shall be made for issuing employment certificates to all children entering employment who are under 18 years of age.

An employment certificate shall not be issued to the child until the issuing officer has received, approved, and filed the following:

1. A birth certificate or, if unobtainable, other reliable documentary proof of the child's age.

2. Satisfactory evidence that the child has completed the eighth grade.

3. A certificate of physical fitness signed by a public-school physician or other medical officer especially appointed for that purpose by the agency charged with the enforcement of the law. This certificate shall state that the minor has been thoroughly examined by the physician and that he is physically qualified for the employment contemplated.

4. Promise of employment.

The certificate shall be issued to the employer and shall be returned by the employer to the issuing officer when the child leaves his employment.

The school last attended, the compulsory-education department, and the continuation schools shall be kept informed by the issuing officers of certificates issued or refused and of unemployed children for whom certificates have been issued.

Minors over 18 years of age shall be required to present evidence of age before being permitted to work in occupations in which the entrance ages or hours are especially regulated.

Record forms shall be standardized and the issuing of employment certificates shall be under State supervision.

Reports shall be made to the factory inspection department of all certificates issued and refused.

*Compulsory-attendance laws.*—Full-time attendance officers adequately proportioned to the school population shall be provided in cities, towns, and counties to enforce the school-attendance law.

The enforcement of school-attendance laws by city, town, or county school authorities shall be under State supervision.

*Factory inspection and physical examination of employed minors.*—Inspection for the enforcement of all child-labor laws, including those regulating the employment of children in mines or quarries, shall be under one and the same department. The number of inspectors shall be sufficient to insure semi-annual inspections of all establishments in which children are employed and such special inspections and investigations as are necessary to insure the protection of the children.

Provision should be made for a staff of physicians adequate to examine annually all employed children under 18 years of age.

