

exemption by the truant officer. The chairman of the executive committee of the Children's Protective Alliance, Mr. N. O. Neslon, has proposed to the women's clubs of the city to share equally with them the expense of such scholarships; and pending action by the women's clubs, Mr. Nelson is personally providing for all these cases, after they have been reported on by the truant officer and carefully investigated by the agents of the St. Louis Provident Association. The cases, of course, accumulate gradually through the year as the truant officers continue their work, so that it is impossible to say at this date how many will present themselves *per annum*. I have not Mr. Nelson's authority to say what the expense involved has thus far been. But a rough preliminary investigation of last year's long-term exemption cases indicated that the number of children properly entitled to scholarships would certainly not exceed fifty, and would probably be less than thirty. Sometimes over a third of the cases approved for exemption by the attendance office are rejected after the Provident Association's investigation. This provisional effort to deal with the problem of the dependent parent is of use, not only in itself, but as an indication of the proper future policy of the state with respect to exemption clauses in child labor and compulsory attendance laws. That policy is: Abolish absolutely all such exemptions—except for brief periods and for reasons arising out of temporary family emergencies—and leave it to the public spirit and philanthropy of private citizens to provide for the limited number of cases of genuine need consequently arising. Some school superintendents and others in Missouri have already begun to talk of the desirability of creating state or county funds for meeting these cases. But the dangers of such a plan are so considerable, and the opposition which it would be sure to arouse so great, that we cannot afford to let the repeal of the present exemption clauses wait upon the inauguration of any such scheme of public relief. There is, I think, small doubt that, at least in large cities, private philanthropy would prove easily equal to the emergency.

ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY, *Secretary*.

St. Louis, December 10, 1906.

REPORT FROM THE CITIZENS' CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

At the time of the Washington meeting of the National Child Labor Committee the District of Columbia had practically no compulsory education law, had practically no provisions for the special care of juvenile criminals, and had no child labor law. At the present time, a fairly satisfactory compulsory education law has been in operation for three months, and has caused an appreciable increase in the number of pupils in attendance at the public schools; in the second place, a juvenile court has cared for all offenders under the age of seventeen since July 1st, and by means of an efficient probation system has brought about a distinct improvement in the treatment of this phase of the child problem in the District of Columbia.

As reported at the national meeting of a year ago, a bill to regulate the employment of children in the District of Columbia was introduced into Congress on the first day of the session. A hearing on this bill was granted by the committee of the House to which it was referred, on March 16th. In the original form, this bill was regarded as containing the best provisions for the regulation of children's labor in use at the present time. When passed by the House, on April 9th, many essential features had been eliminated, and other amendments had so weakened the bill that the friends of the measure decided that they could not accept it in that form. Urgent representations were made to the committee on education and labor of the Senate, which finally granted a public hearing on the subject on April 30th. As a result of that hearing, the measure was reported to the Senate in practically its original form on May 3d, and was debated on June 6th and June 12th. Owing to the fact that the session was nearing its close, it was impossible to bring the measure to a vote, and the bill was left on the calendar during the summer recess. It was called up for consideration on December 10th and debated at some length, but no vote was taken. At the present time it is the unfinished business on the Senate calendar and may be called up at any time. The writing of this report was delayed, in the hope of being able to report definite action by the Senate, but at present a delay of some time seems inevitable.

During the year 1906 two public meetings on the subject of child labor in this city have been held; the first under the auspices of the Unitarian Club, and presided over by the Hon. William E. Chandler; resolutions indorsing the bill were passed and sent to Congress. The second meeting was held under the auspices of the Associated Charities, Mr. Charles F. Weller presiding in the absence of Mr. Gifford Pinchot.

At the present time a lively public interest exists in the local problem of children's employment and has manifested itself in an earnest effort to persuade Congress, the legislative body for the District, to enact local regulations during a session when a number of national measures of unusual complexity were severely taxing the strength and patience of the members of both houses. The local child labor committee feels that it owes a special debt of gratitude to Hon. Fred T. Dubois, of Idaho, who, among the many friends of the bill, has been conspicuous in urging the measure and assisting the committee in the difficult task of securing the attention of a national body for a local measure.

While this report is made by the local committee, it must be clearly understood that it would have been practically impossible to have secured the consideration which the bill has received without the aid of the national committee. The fact that the members of the Congress are peculiarly sensitive to public opinion in their own states, has made the services of the National Child Labor Committee invaluable in the effort to secure this much needed reform.

HENRY J. HARRIS, *Secretary.*

Washington, D. C., December 12, 1906.