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TWO STUDIES OF CHILD LABOR IN THE SOUTH

CHILD LABOR IN INDUSTRIALIZED AGRICULTURE
IN HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

By SAVILLA MILLIS SIMONS

CHILD LABOR IN SOUTHERN DEFENSE AREAS

By MYRON FALK

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A STUDY OF CHILD LABOR IN INDUSTRIALIZED
AGRICULTURE IN HIDALGO
COUNTY, TEXAS

SAVILLA MILLIS SIMONS

CHILDREN IN NEED OF PROTECTION

DURING recent years the statement has frequently been made that child labor in this country has been abolished. Unfortunately this statement is only partially true. Such self-congratulation has been based on the accomplishment of important steps in the control of industrial child labor, such as the adoption of the industrial codes under the short-lived National Industrial Recovery Act, the enactment of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and the decision of the United States Supreme Court in upholding the latter act.¹ Such pronouncements, however, failed to take into consideration large groups of children, the most numerous being those employed in industrialized agriculture.

Agricultural child labor is for the most part unregulated by either federal or state child labor legislation. There is no federal legislation covering the whole field of child labor in agriculture, although two federal measures have attempted some control. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 prohibits the employment of children under sixteen years of age, during periods when they are legally required to attend school, in the production of agricultural products that are shipped in interstate or foreign commerce.

This provision does not attempt to give any protection to children outside of school hours and actually gives little protection during school hours. Because so many varied exemptions are permitted in state compulsory school-attendance laws, it is extremely difficult to be certain of the periods when a particular child is legally required to attend school. Dependent as this provision of the act is on state laws, with their many variations, it does not set any uniform standard throughout the country for children employed in agriculture.

¹ *United States v. Darby Lumber Co.*, 312 U.S. 100 (February 3, 1941).

The Sugar Act of 1937 has had some effect in regulating the employment of children in the cultivation of two agricultural crops—sugar beets and sugar cane. This act makes benefit payments for growers of sugar beets and sugar cane dependent upon compliance with the requirement, among others having to do with labor standards, that no child under fourteen years of age is to be employed in the production of the crop and that children fourteen and fifteen years old may not be permitted to work more than eight hours a day. These provisions do not apply to children in the families of growers.² No specific provision is made in the act for a certificate system, essential to effective enforcement of a minimum-age standard. However, a co-operative plan has been worked out by the Sugar Division of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor for making age certificates or proof-of-age cards available for children fourteen and fifteen years of age employed by producers subject to the act.

In only nine states—California, Florida, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin—do the child labor laws definitely extend coverage to employment of children in industrialized agriculture, and in only four of these states does the legislative standard apply to employment both outside and during school hours; in the remaining five states the standard applies only to work during school hours. In twenty-one states employment in agriculture is excluded from the child labor law either by a specific exemption or by omission from the occupations that are enumerated as covered by the act. Eighteen states have a general minimum-age provision applying to all employment during school hours, but enforcement of this standard for agricultural employment is weak and does not even nominally affect employment during the long school vacations, when most farm work is done.

The trend apparent in recent years in certain crops and areas toward large-scale industrialized farming, requiring large numbers of seasonal workers, has increased the employment of children. Chil-

² The exemption applies to children in the immediate family of the legal owner of at least 40 per cent of the crop at the time the work is performed.

dren under sixteen years of age constitute a significant part of the labor force in large-scale production of cotton, berries, fruit, and the so-called "stoop crops," such as vegetables and sugar beets. Beatrice McConnell, of the United States Children's Bureau, testified before the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee in 1940:

More children are engaged in agricultural work than in all other types of employment combined. Most of them are not helpers on the traditional home farm. They work as laborers, to meet the seasonal industrial demands of commercial growers, in the cultivation and harvesting of many kinds of crops in extensive and widely separated agricultural areas of the country.³

She further stated:

Children of all ages work in hand operations in the cultivation and harvesting of many of the crops, under circumstances that differ little from sweatshop employment in industry. The employment of such children is further encouraged by the fact that many farm producers prefer hiring workers with large families because family labor is cheap.⁴

The findings of a study made by the Children's Bureau in one of the important agricultural areas of this country in 1941 indicated that child agricultural laborers are a seriously neglected group of children and are growing up without the opportunities that are usually considered essential for normal development. This study also showed that child labor in agriculture is closely related to low wage rates, low family earnings, and lack of public assistance to supplement inadequate and irregular family earnings. Many of the children included in the study worked in the fields along with the older members of their families, often staying out of school to do so. Yet the combined earnings of all members of these families, mainly dependent on agricultural labor for a living, were too small to enable them to live at a level usually considered necessary for health and decency. The situation of many of these families was epitomized in the words of one father who said: "It is work or starve for my children."

³ Statement of Beatrice McConnell, director, Industrial Division, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, in *Child Labor in Agriculture, Submitted to a Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. Senate, Pursuant to S. Res. 266, May 27, 1940*, p. 65.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

INDUSTRIALIZED AGRICULTURE IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

This study of the employment, school opportunities, and health of children in representative families of agricultural laborers was made by the Children's Bureau early in 1941 in Hidalgo County, Texas, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, an important area of large-scale industrialized agriculture. The county is a leading producer of grapefruit and winter vegetables and also raises cotton and a variety of other crops on the rich land of the river valley, which has been developed through irrigation from the Rio Grande River.

It has been possible to develop large-scale cultivation of crops requiring hand labor in the lower valley area because of a plentiful supply of cheap family labor brought across the border from Mexico, especially during the early years of land development in the Rio Grande Valley. The agricultural field workers used in the cultivation and harvesting of the crops in this area have consequently been predominantly Mexican or of Mexican descent.

Most farms require a large supply of temporary labor for the harvesting of the crops, although they employ only a small force of laborers regularly throughout the year for crop cultivation and maintenance work. The prevalent system for recruiting labor to harvest the crops is that of labor contracting, in which neither the grower nor the packing-shed has any direct relationship with the harvest hand. Commonly the citrus and the vegetable packing-sheds purchase the grower's crop while it is standing in the fields, arrange with labor contractors, known as "crew leaders," "jefes," or "truckers," to handle the harvesting, and pay the contractor a flat rate for a specified quantity of produce. The labor contractors recruit their own harvesting crews of twenty-five or thirty or more persons, truck them to and from the fields, supervise the field work, and pay them on a piece-rate basis for the harvested produce.

In the harvesting of cotton the labor contractor usually is employed by the grower and paid a flat amount for weighing the cotton in the field as the pickers bring it in and for hauling the cotton to a gin. The labor contractor recruits a crew of pickers and pays them according to the number of pounds of cotton picked. In harvesting citrus fruit the general practice is to use only men and older boys,

because physical strength is required in the work of handling large quantities of heavy fruit. On the other hand, all members of the family—men, women, and children—are employed in harvesting cotton and many of the vegetables.

METHOD OF STUDY

The Children's Bureau study was made during the winter-vegetable season in the early months of 1941. The study was made by means of a house-to-house canvass in a number of areas where agricultural workers lived in concentrated settlements. These areas consisted of parts of five towns of different size and character and certain settlements in the open country near these towns, which were believed to be representative of the settlements of agricultural laborers in the section of the county that lies in the Rio Grande Valley.

Households were included in the study if they had children between the ages of six and eighteen and if either the economic head of the family or any of the children of these ages had worked for hire in agricultural field operations on at least five calendar days since December 1, 1940. For each of these households information was obtained on family composition, migration history, employment, and income during the year preceding the interview and on whether the family had received relief or medical care during the year. In addition, detailed information was recorded on the employment and education of each child between six and eighteen years of age. Information was obtained on 342 families with 998 children between the ages of six and eighteen.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES

All but 13 of the 342 families included in the study were of Spanish-speaking heritage, a reflection of the fact that agricultural field workers in Texas in the Rio Grande Valley are predominantly Mexican. Practically all the families were legal residents of the state of Texas, and almost 90 per cent of them considered Hidalgo County their permanent home, to which they always returned from any migration to follow the crops. These agricultural workers are not migrants, therefore, without permanent homes, moving continually

from one place to another in search of work. At the same time, a majority of the families interviewed had migrated⁵ in search of work at some time in the past, and most of these had migrated during the preceding year. Most families had not migrated every year, but the migration history of the family commonly dated back more than five years, and nearly all the families with a history of migration had migrated at some time within the last five years.

According to the prevailing pattern of migration found among the families who had migrated during the preceding year, the families lived at home in Hidalgo County during the winter and spring months and left home at the end of the harvest season in the valley to follow the cotton crop in north Texas during the summer months. They returned in the fall, when cotton-picking was over, to work in the local fruit and vegetable harvests. They typically migrated only within the state of Texas.

The families studied were large, with an average of 6.6 persons in a family. One-third had eight or more family members sharing the same home and dependent on a common income.⁶ The large size of the families was due partly to the fact that, in addition to the economic head and his immediate family, the households often included grandparents, married sons and daughters and their young children, or other relatives.

CHILDREN A SIGNIFICANT PART OF LABOR FORCE

At the time of interview the 342 families studied had a total of 2,258 members present in the home. Almost two-thirds of these were under eighteen years of age. These children and youth constituted a significant part of the labor supplied by these families of agricultural laborers. Owing to low wage rates and irregular and insufficient work for adult members of the family, the children's earnings, al-

⁵ For the purpose of this study "migration" was defined as the movement of two or more members of the family from a dwelling-place in one county to a dwelling-place in another county for the purpose of seeking, or accepting, work or of returning from such work.

⁶ All persons who were in the household on the date of interview and dependent on a common income were considered family members, with the exception of boarders, lodgers, and guests. Family members not living in the household on the date of interview were not counted, except in the case of an economic head of the family who was contributing to the support of the household although temporarily absent.

though small, were considered necessary to the maintenance of the family.

More than half the 1,315 family members who had been employed at some time during the preceding year were under eighteen years of age, and two-fifths were under sixteen. Child laborers were, therefore, an important part of the labor force furnished by these families for agricultural field work. Nearly 69 per cent of all the children and young people between the ages of six and eighteen years in these families had been employed at some time during the preceding year. This included nearly all those between fourteen and eighteen years

TABLE 1
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGES
GAINFULLY EMPLOYED, HIDALGO COUNTY
TEXAS, 1941

| Age in Years | Number in Families Studied | Number Working | Per Cent Working |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Total | 998 | 685 | 68.6 |
| 6 and 7 | 161 | 19 | 11.8 |
| 8 and 9 | 148 | 65 | 43.9 |
| 10 and 11 | 182 | 134 | 73.6 |
| 12 and 13 | 171 | 148 | 86.5 |
| 14 and 15 | 175 | 166 | 94.9 |
| 16 and 17 | 161 | 153 | 95.0 |

of age and 55 per cent of the children under fourteen years of age. A considerable number of very young children had worked.

The figures in Table 1 show the extent to which children of different ages had been gainfully employed at some time during the year preceding the interview. It will be seen that most of the children who were ten years of age or over at the time of the interview had been employed at some time during the preceding year, as had nearly 44 per cent of the children only eight and nine years of age.

KINDS OF WORK

The largest number of the children who had been employed had worked as cotton-pickers during the summer and fall months. Although much of this work occurred during school vacation, many

of the young cotton-pickers missed the early weeks of school of the fall term. The families frequently picked cotton until the end of the cotton-picking season in the northern part of the state and returned to their homes in Hidalgo County only in time for the citrus and winter-vegetable harvests. Of 412 children who migrated out of Hidalgo County after the close of school in May, 1940, only 15 returned to the county before the opening of school in the following September. Since the children did not enrol in school in the communities to which they migrated for the cotton-picking, those who attended school at all did not enter until late in the fall, after the family's return. Only half the children of the ages normally expected to be in school—six to fifteen years of age inclusive—who had migrated during the year enrolled in school during the 1940-41 school year, and only one-fifth of these had enrolled by November 1 of the school year. This meant that, of a total of 487 children of school age who had migrated out of the county or had come into the county late in the year, only 49 were enrolled in school nearly two months after the fall opening.

In addition to picking cotton during the summer and fall months, a majority of the working children worked in the winter-vegetable harvest. A considerable proportion, 40 per cent, of all the children between six and eighteen years of age were found to be working during a representative week selected for study, usually within two or three weeks preceding the date of interview and falling within the school term. More than four-fifths of the young people sixteen and seventeen years of age and almost three-fourths of the fourteen- and fifteen-year-old children were found to be working during this week, even though school was in session.

Child labor during the school term was sufficiently common among children at all age levels to constitute a serious problem. Forty-two per cent of those twelve and thirteen years of age were employed. Even among those as young as ten and eleven years, over a fifth were working. A few children (twenty) who were less than ten years of age were likewise working during the school week. Four of these were only six or seven years of age, while the remaining sixteen were eight or nine years old.

Practically all the children working in the selected work week were

employed as field laborers in the harvesting of vegetables, strawberries, or citrus fruit. For the most part they gathered and tied carrots, beets, and radishes and cut spinach, broccoli, and other greens. The children frequently worked with other members of the family, and their earnings were included in the wages paid to the chief worker, usually the father, or an older brother. Sometimes, however, children worked separately from their own families but always as members of a crew drawn largely from their immediate home neighborhood and, therefore, composed of friends and relatives. In such cases the wages were paid directly to the child.

CONDITIONS OF WORK

The working conditions of the crew members, children as well as adults, were characterized by irregular work and long hours away from home. Usually the workers were picked up by the contractor at their homes early in the morning and driven in his truck to the fields. Often the truck stopped first at the packing-shed, where the crew waited while the contractor received his instructions for the day.

Because of the irregular character of the work, there was great variation in the amount of work that most of the harvesting crews had in any given week or day. Most of the family members, adults as well as children, worked only a few days in the week. There were, however, some instances in which it was reported the children had worked all seven days of the week.

Hours of work and length of time away from home were affected by many factors, including the number and size of the fields to be harvested; the size of the crews assigned; the type of crop; weather conditions; the distance to be transported; and amount of waiting time required either at the packing-shed or in the field, for assignments and for loading, trucking, and unloading produce. The number of hours in a day that the children were reported to have been away from home in connection with their work varied from as little as two to as much as sixteen hours. The weekly spread of hours reported ranged from three to as high as ninety-three and a half.

The workers usually did not return until late in the day. This was sometimes true even if there was little work and the harvesting was

finished early in the day, because of long waits for the truck while *the harvested crop* was delivered to the loading platform of the packing-shed. For example, one family reported that the truck picked up Alberto and Ricardo,⁷ twelve and fourteen years of age, between 6:00 and 6:30 A.M. The boys worked only a few hours each day because there were long waits at the packing-shed for orders. They did not reach home until 8:00 or 9:00 P.M. on any of the three workdays of the week selected for special study because the truck first delivered the vegetables at the shed and then returned to the field for the crew.

Another family said that the nine-year-old girl left by truck in the morning with her mother and, after stopping at the shed, reached the fields and began to work about 10:00 A.M. She stopped working at 5:00 P.M. because it was drizzling and, with the other workers in the crew, rode to the packing-shed on top of the carrots in the contractor's truck. The carrots were dumped at the shed, and the girl and her mother arrived home at 8:00 P.M.

INTERFERENCE WITH EDUCATION

The children included in this study were seriously deprived of educational opportunity. Nearly 18 per cent (148 out of 837 children) usually considered to be of school age (six to fifteen years of age inclusive) had never been enrolled in school. Only 58.3 per cent of the 837 children of these ages had been enrolled during the 1940-41 school year up to the time of interview, which fell between the latter part of January and March 28, 1941. Attendance of children who were enrolled in school was irregular and for less than the full school year. A study of school records for the school year 1940-41 showed that few children attended the full 35 weeks of the school year. Only 62, or 13.7 per cent of the 454 children for whom information was available, attended as much as 32 weeks, missing not more than 3 weeks of school. The median number of weeks attended by those enrolled was between 20 and 24 weeks out of a possible 35. Approximately a fifth of these children attended less than one-third of the school year.

⁷ The names used in reporting information concerning particular families are fictitious.

The length of time the children were enrolled in school was affected especially by late entrance in the fall and to a certain extent by withdrawals early in the year. Of the 460 children six to fifteen years of age inclusive for whom information was available on the date of entering school in the 1940-41 school year, only a little more than half (52.6 per cent) had enrolled by November 1 and only 49, or one-fifth, of the group of children in families who migrated during the year to work in the crops had enrolled by that date. The majority of these migratory children, 58.7 per cent, enrolled in school between November 1 and December 15. Twenty-one per cent enrolled after the middle of December. On the other hand, nearly four-fifths (78.4 per cent) of the children who had not migrated and were enrolled in school entered during September. Sixteen per cent of the 464 children six to fifteen years of age inclusive who had attended local schools in Hidalgo County during the 1940-41 school year and for whom information was available dropped out during March or April. There was also a high percentage of absences among the children actually enrolled in school at the time of interview. Twenty-nine per cent (142 of the 488 children enrolled) were absent from school at least one day during the week preceding the date of interview, and more than two-fifths of these gave work as the reason for absence.

Frequent interruption of schooling due to work in the fields is evident in the histories of the children included in the study. For example, Pedro, a thirteen-year-old boy who had worked in the harvesting of crops since he was ten years old, did not enter school until November 24, 1940, and was dropped from the rolls on April 1, 1941. He had attended school a total of 63 days during this period. He had had some work during 28 weeks of the year preceding the date of interview. He had enrolled in school each year for the last four years but was still in the first grade. Pedro's sister, twelve years old, had also enrolled in school four different years and was still in the first grade. During the current school year, she entered school after cotton-picking and withdrew in April, having attended 60 days. The reason for her nonattendance was that she was required to stay at home to do the housework and care for the younger children while her mother worked in the fields.

A fairly complete school record was obtained for two brothers who had always lived in the locality and had not migrated to follow the crops. The seventeen-year-old boy had begun work in the harvesting of the crops at the age of seven. He entered school at the age of eight and was enrolled four years. During the last three years he had attended school 37 days during the first year, 34 days in the second, and 25 days in the last. He was reported to have left school because "the family needed his earnings." His fourteen-year-old brother had worked in the fields for five years. School records showed that he had enrolled in school each year for eight years and gave the number of days he had attended school during the last six years, which may be compared with the standard school year in Texas of 175 days. The records showed that he had attended school 82 days in the first year, 135 in the second, 34 days in the third, 26 days in the fourth, 35 days in the fifth, and 49 days in the sixth year, making a total attendance of 361 days, only about a third of the approximately 1,050 days the local schools were in session during these years.

In another family in which the father was ill the main source of income for the family had been the work of the five children in the local vegetable and cotton harvests. The fourteen-year-old boy had left the third grade in school at the age of twelve, after attending school a total of 309 days in the four years in which he was enrolled. The twelve-year-old brother after four years in school was still in the second grade. During the first three years he had attended 107 days, 142 days, and 57 days, respectively. In the fall of 1940 he withdrew, after attending only 13 days, when his father became ill.

POVERTY AND CHILD LABOR

Even though it involved keeping the children out of school to spend long hours riding in crowded trucks and working in the fields in all kinds of weather, the families commonly felt it was necessary for the children to work with the older members of the family whenever work was available. This was the situation in the family of Mr. Garza, who has already been quoted as saying, "It is work or starve for my children." There are eight in the Garza family, with three children of school age and three younger children. Except in

the cotton season the father cannot earn the \$5.00 a week required to feed the family unless he has the help of the children.

The Garzas want their children to have an education, but after enrolling them in school each year the parents have felt that it was necessary to keep the youngsters out of school for the larger part of the school term. Juan, the fourteen-year-old boy, has worked in the fields since he was seven, and his two sisters since they were eight. Part of the time the two girls, thirteen and nine years of age, stay home to do the housework and take care of the three younger children, while the mother works in the fields. When there is work for everybody, as at the height of the cotton-picking season, both parents and the three older children work, while the six-year-old child takes care of the two younger children.

During the year preceding the interview, the family of 8 had managed to maintain itself on the family's earnings from field labor, which were reported to amount to only about \$310. The family had had no employment in eleven of the fifty-two weeks in the year. During the remainder of the year at least the father and Juan had had work, and frequently the mother and the two girls had worked one or more days a week.

During this year Juan had not attended school at all. The two girls were reported to have attended school during only nine weeks. They had worked some in the fields during more than half the weeks of the year and stayed at home doing housework during the remainder of the time.

During the week preceding the interview the mother had stayed at home, and the father and the three older children—fourteen, thirteen, and nine years of age—had had four days' work, pulling beets and tying them in bunches. The four workers had left home about 7:30 each morning in the truck of the contractor, worked without taking time off to eat, and returned home about six o'clock in the evening. They were paid 20 cents a basket of 125 bunches of beets. The combined earnings of the father and the children for their four days' work amounted to \$4.08, their total income for the week.

The story of the Garzas is not exceptional but is illustrative of the situation of a large number of the families included in the Children's

Bureau study. Even though these families had the help of the children, the combined earnings of all members in a large proportion of the families were not enough to provide even what are ordinarily considered the essentials of life. The median total cash earnings of the families for the year preceding the date of interview were only \$340 per family, although the families had on an average nearly four workers. In half the families, all the earnings came from agricultural employment, and the median earnings in these families were only \$315, compared with \$375 among families who had had in addition to agricultural work other types of employment, such as work in packing-sheds and domestic service. For the most part, earnings from agricultural employment represented earnings from field labor, although a few families had had members engaged in share-cropping or labor contracting in addition to field labor for hire.

The families who had migrated to follow the crops earned more than those who remained at home; the median total earnings for the year among migratory families were \$365 as compared with \$305 among nonmigrants. This difference was apparently due both to the fact that the migrant families tended on the average to have a larger number of working members than the nonmigrant families and to the fact that migration provided greater employment opportunities. The families who remained at home during the slack months between harvests naturally suffered more from underemployment than those who followed the crops north.

Since most of the families in the study had at least one member under eighteen years and more than three-fourths had at least one child under sixteen years of age employed at some time during the year, the family earnings typically included the earnings of at least one child worker.

INCOME BELOW THE LEVEL OF HEALTH AND DECENCY

Eighty-five per cent of the families were entirely dependent upon their small earnings for maintenance. During the year less than a sixth of the families had had any cash income in addition to earnings. Such income included returns from sales of possessions, gifts, cash relief grants, and wages from employment on W.P.A., N.Y.A.,

or C.C.C. The median income among the families with such supplementary income was \$395, as compared with \$345 for those entirely dependent on earnings exclusive of those from a federal work program.

Including income from all sources, the families had a median total cash income⁸ for the year of only \$350 to provide for their large families, averaging 6.6 persons. This is considerably less than the amount of income per family that the Texas Social Welfare Association has estimated as necessary for relief families averaging only 4.2 persons⁹ to live at a level of health and decency.

The Texas Social Welfare Association in its 1940 report on social needs stated: "Any reasonable measure we may use in Texas to compute minimum adequate requirements for relief families, permitting such families to live at a level of health and decency, will reveal the need for an average income of at least \$40 per month per family."¹⁰ This represents an annual income standard of \$480 for families averaging 4.2 persons in size, as compared with a median income of \$350 received by families, averaging 6.6 persons, included in the present study.

According to the standard recommended by the association, a great many of the families in this study did not have sufficient income to maintain health and decency. Almost two-thirds of the families reported an income less than \$400, and more than three-fourths reported less than \$500. More than one-third of the families had less than \$300 to live on during the entire year.

More than one-fifth of the families had an income of as much as \$500, but even this income did not approximate the standard recommended by the Social Welfare Association, because of difference in

⁸ Total cash income includes all cash income received from any source during the year preceding the date of interview, with the exception of income from boarders. In most of the fourteen families having boarders, the amount received from this source, although indeterminate, was known to be nominal.

Figures represent only cash income and earnings and exclude income in kind. Non-money income, however, is believed to have been very limited; it included such items as a rent-free dwelling-place, food stuffs produced for home use, or vegetables which workers were allowed to eat in the fields or to take home.

⁹ *Need* (published by Texas Social Welfare Association, Austin), I, No. 1 (November, 1940), 7, 29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

size of family. Seven-tenths of these families with higher incomes were above the average size of families in the Children's Bureau study and had as many as seven to fifteen members.

LITTLE AID FROM PUBLIC RELIEF AND WORK PROGRAMS

In spite of the low incomes of these families and their frequent inability to maintain themselves without the work of all members of the family, including that of the children, they seldom had aid from any type of public relief or work program. This was due to the limited extent to which provision had been made in Texas and in Hidalgo County for assistance to needy families. At the time the study was made the state of Texas provided no state funds for general relief and had not made appropriations for aid to dependent children or aid to the blind under the Social Security Act,¹¹ although it had provided funds for old age assistance.

Some of the counties, including Hidalgo County, provided local relief funds, but such funds were generally used only for families with no employable members. Direct relief for families of agricultural laborers, such as those included in this study, was, therefore, limited for the most part to the distribution of surplus commodities.

The food-stamp plan, providing for the distribution of \$3.00 worth of free food stamps with the purchase of \$6.00 worth of stamps, had been put into operation in Hidalgo County in November, 1940. The requirement of \$6.00 in cash for the purchase of stamps had made it impossible for those with very little income to take advantage of the plan.¹² Several of the families reported that they had received surplus commodities prior to November but had not had sufficient money to purchase stamps since the food-stamp plan had been put into effect. During the work week selected for study in the winter of 1941 only 8 of the 342 families were being assisted through any relief or work program. Three families had a

¹¹ In 1941, after this study was made, appropriations were made by the Texas legislature to provide aid to dependent children and aid to the blind, which had been authorized by the Public Welfare Act of 1939, although no appropriations for these purposes had been made. State plans for aid to dependent children and aid to the blind were approved by the Social Security Board in September, 1941.

¹² A new plan was to go into effect on March 1, 1941, whereby families who could not purchase stamps might be provided with stamps free.

member employed on W.P.A., C.C.C., or N.Y.A. and 5 families were receiving surplus commodities through purchase of food stamps.

During the year for which family income was reported only 45 of the 342 families in the study reported that they had received aid from any relief or work program or from any other type of organized program. Twenty of these low-income families reported that they had had members employed some time during the year on a federal works program. Among these families there were 8 with members who had been employed on W.P.A., 3 with boys who had been at C.C.C. camps, and 3 with young members who had been on N.Y.A. projects. One family had had members on both N.Y.A. and W.P.A., and 1 had had members on N.Y.A. and C.C.C. Two other families who had had members on W.P.A., and 2 who had had members on N.Y.A. also received surplus commodities. Another 16 families, in which there had been no members employed on federal works programs, reported that they had received some form of public assistance. One family had had a member receiving old age assistance, 13 families received surplus commodities, while 1 received both surplus commodities and Farm Security aid. One of the few families among those studied who had been outside Texas received public relief in another state as well as surplus commodities in Texas.

The remaining 9 families received benefits or aid from a variety of sources. Two had received crop-control payments, 1 had received both crop-control payments and unemployment compensation, and 3 had received unemployment compensation only. One family reported having received workmen's compensation. There was one instance of a payment from a mutual benefit society. There was also a single instance of a family who received some assistance from the American Legion, the only case of aid from a private organization.

The limited character of aid available to supplement the meager earnings of these families was a factor that contributed to the common practice of keeping the children out of school to work.

The Sanchez family, for example, had applied for relief in several communities in Texas to which they had migrated in search of work before the parents took the children out of school. Aid was refused, and the parents reported that they were told that they must estab-

lish residence for six months to become eligible for relief. In telling their story, the mother commented, "In six months we can die."

The Sanchez family had been forced to give up share-cropping and had taken to the road to work in the cotton and vegetable harvests. During the two years preceding the interview the family had worked from January to September in the Rio Grande Valley in the harvesting of spinach, carrots, and beets in the winter, tomatoes and corn in the spring and cotton during the summer months. In September the family had followed the cotton crop to northern Texas and had returned again in December to the vegetable harvest in the valley.

Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez reported that they greatly regretted that there was "no way out except to put the children to work" but "if the children did not work, the family could not eat." As a consequence the four children were receiving little education. Paulita, fifteen years of age and in the fifth grade, and Margarita, thirteen years of age and in the third grade, "loved going to school" but did not enrol in the 1940-41 school year.

Pedro, the eleven-year-old boy, enrolled in school in the local school district in Hidalgo County on December 7 after the family's return from cotton-picking. He attended fifty-two days out of a possible sixty-five. Pedro explained his absence from school on one of the days during the selected work week by saying the family's grocery bill was so large that they needed his earnings "to pay it even partly up." The little seven-year-old girl, who had not yet begun to work in the fields, attended school for the full number of days the family was in the school district. Each afternoon after school she "just waited" for the family to return home at night.

The family's maximum earnings in the vegetable season were \$8.00 a week, but a great deal of the time, owing to bad weather, the five workers, including both the parents and the three older children, earned only about \$4.00. The mother said that if she and her husband could "earn just \$2.00 more a week," they would be able to keep the children in school.

The Gonzalez family, consisting of a widowed mother and three sons, seventeen, sixteen, and eleven years of age, have maintained themselves through picking vegetables and cotton during the har-

vesting seasons in Texas. The older boys reported they had had work during forty-nine weeks of the year preceding the date of interview, while the younger boy had worked in twenty-five weeks. The total earnings of the family for the year amounted to approximately \$356, the largest part of which was earned in picking cotton. During the week preceding the interview the mother and the eleven-year-old boy had had four days' work picking and crating dandelions, while the two older boys had been engaged in gathering, bunching, and crating radishes. The combined earnings of the mother and sons totaled \$6.00 for the week.

The pressure of making a living had largely crowded school out of the lives of these boys. The two older boys had worked since they were seven years of age and had attended school only intermittently during one year. The eleven-year-old boy had been enrolled in school two years. During the last school year he had enrolled December 8, 1940, after returning from cotton-picking and dropped out again on February 4, 1941, after attending school only twenty-five days. His irregular attendance was reported by the school as being "due to work in the fields." During the course of the interview, the mother said: "I'm sorry my children have so little education but what can I do? I have asked for relief but have been refused because I was born in Mexico although my children were born in this country."

INADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE

Resources for medical care were also for the most part not available to the families included in this study. At the time the study was made the Hidalgo County Health Unit conducted "well-baby clinics," venereal disease clinics, and a crippled children's service. In addition, only a few indigent adults referred by the county for urgent medical care were given this care. The "morbidity service" of the County Health Unit reported in 1940 the admission to this service of only forty-three persons. There was, therefore, no organized free or low-cost medical or dental care available to all the people of the county. The low incomes of the families in most instances precluded payment for care from private physicians except in the most urgent cases.

Information was obtained from the families interviewed in the

study as to whether the children in these families had received any medical care during the six months preceding the date of interview. Of 339 families who reported on medical care, approximately 84 per cent had had no medical care for any of the children during the preceding six months. Only 55 families, or about 16 per cent, reported that the children had been attended by a physician during this period. There is no way of knowing exactly to what extent these findings represent lack of care because of the absence of clinics for free care and inability of the families to pay private physicians, but there was abundant evidence that many needs for medical care were not being met.

A more extensive study of health and medical care was made by a physician from the Children's Bureau of a group of 55 families, selected at random from the total study. These interviews by the physician disclosed that 56, or 23 per cent, of the 240 children in the 55 families for whom information was obtained had had some type of illness during the month preceding the day of interview but that of these, only 2 had had a physician attend that illness. Only 1 of these 240 children had been seen by a dentist or had any dental care during the preceding year.

Information on the number of children born alive in each family and the number who had died under eighteen years of age with the ages at death and whether there was a physician in attendance at the terminal illness of the child was obtained from 278 of the 343 families included in the entire study. In these families, 1,927 children were born alive, of whom 445, or 23 per cent, died under eighteen years of age. Of these deaths, 290 were those of infants who died under one year of age. Reports on the attendance of a physician in the terminal illness or at the time of death were obtained for 280 of these infant deaths. A physician was reported to have attended the child in only 160, or 57 per cent, of the cases.

In the 339 families for whom information on medical care was obtained, there were 86 children under two years of age who were eligible to attend "well-baby clinics" and 270 children between two and five years of age who might have been accepted for examination at a few of the county child health conferences. Only 2 families re-

ported attendance at any "well-baby clinic" or child health conference during the preceding six months.

There was no organized maternity service or prenatal clinic in the county, although cases for prenatal or postpartum care were occasionally located by the county public health nurses during the course of their work. Consequently, most of the mothers of the families had had no prenatal care and were not attended by a physician at the time of delivery. Among the 343 families included in the study, 62 women reported that they had either been delivered during the preceding year or were pregnant at the time of interview. Only 5 of these 62 women reported having had any prenatal care. Among this group there had been 36 deliveries on which a report was obtained as to whether delivery had been attended by a physician. According to these reports 14 of the 36 deliveries had been attended by a physician, 20 by a midwife, and 2 were unattended.

CROWDED AND INSANITARY HOMES

Most of the families included in this study were living at the time of interview in one- or two-room frame houses, often with dirt floors, sometimes with thatched roofs, either in the segregated Mexican section of the towns or in scattered settlements along the irrigation ditches outside of town. Almost all the few families covered in the study who were not Mexican lived in shacks, tents, or trailers in temporary, makeshift settlements along the railroad tracks.

The typical home of the Spanish-speaking families was a one-room frame shack in which all members of the family slept, with a second structure in the rear, frequently thatched and of cruder construction, which served as the family kitchen.

These small quarters were usually seriously overcrowded. In nearly two-thirds of the families there were three or more persons per room, and in almost one-tenth there were as many as seven or more persons per room. Even these figures do not fully indicate the extent of overcrowding found among these families because one of the rooms, the kitchen, usually could not be used for sleeping purposes. A family of six, for example, living in a typical home of one main room and kitchen, although averaging only three persons per room would average six sleeping in the same room. It was common for the

younger children to sleep on blankets on the floor, which was frequently made only of dirt, and for the parents and older children to sleep in one or two double beds in the same room.

Although most of the families lived in town, none of them lived in a section supplied with paved streets, sidewalks, or sewers. Adequate sanitary facilities were lacking. The families used outdoor open-pit privies, often of an extremely crude type. These facilities were frequently used in common by several families.

The families who lived in town obtained city water from an outdoor spigot for the use of which they paid a monthly fee. Those who lived in the settlements outside of town obtained their water from sources that were frequently polluted, either from an irrigation ditch or canal or from a well that drew upon canal water.

The findings of this study show that the children of families who harvest the crops in this important agricultural area in Texas are growing up without the opportunities that are usually considered essential for normal development. Many of them are deprived of adequate economic support, family security and stability, adequate health protection and medical care, and a normal amount of education. The irregular and seasonal character of the work and low wage rates available to the adult members of the families make it impossible for them to support their families adequately without help. There has been no way open to these families of supplementing their small earnings except through the work of the children, even though it means sacrificing their education. These children are in effect unprotected by labor legislation and to a large extent unaided by social programs.

The conditions under which these children are growing up emphasize the great need for the full protection of labor legislation over children in industrialized agriculture and the urgency of developing programs that will not only protect the children of agricultural laborers but will permit them to share in the opportunities that should be afforded to all children of a democracy.

U.S. CHILDREN'S BUREAU
WASHINGTON, D.C.

CHILD LABOR IN SOUTHERN DEFENSE AREAS¹

MYRON FALK

IN WAR or in peace violation or relaxation of laws regulating the employment of child labor rests fundamentally with parents and employers. Child labor in defense areas has proved to be no exception to this rule. Business in these areas has experienced mushroom growth, and living costs have jumped beyond control. In some cases parents are saying that the increased cost of living has made it necessary for one of the children to seek the high wages to supplement family income. Others have used the patriotic motive. In these defense areas, where all activity is in some way related to the war effort, some parents have convinced themselves that, if little Johnny sells papers, peanuts, or candy to soldiers on the streets or in the camps, this may be considered the family's contribution to the war. Another group of parents, when asked why they were willing to let their children work, reported that schools in the area were badly overcrowded, that there were insufficient teachers and classroom facilities, and that it was better for the child to learn in the school of experience.

From the point of view of some employers in defense areas, child labor is a boon. Workers are scarce; they have been inducted into the army or have gone to jobs paying bigger salaries. Business is good, and, while salaries have been increased in certain jobs, they are still not high enough to attract a worker who must support his family on his income. In one defense area drug-store delivery boys are now making \$12.00 a week, when less than eighteen months ago the salary was \$3.00. In another area it was reported that employers were attempting to convince parents and children that it was patriotic for the child to work because, if he did not, the soldiers could not get ice-cream sodas and hot dogs or play billiards and bowl in the evenings. And parents and children are being convinced. This

¹ An address delivered at the National Conference of Social Work in New Orleans on May 12, 1942, at a meeting of the National Child Labor Committee.

patriotic appeal was carried further in one defense area by an employer who furnished a combination Uncle Sam-American flag costume to all the girl carhops.

SITUATION IN LOUISIANA

Louisiana has six military areas in the state, and the effects of the war activities have been directly felt by fifteen of the sixty-four parishes. The other forty-nine parishes have in one way or another experienced some of the impact, since the war projects in the state cover everything from military concentrations to industrial activities.

A typical area in this state is Alexandria in Rapides Parish. The 1940 census population was 27,000; today it is about 65,000 (estimated on the basis of water consumption today as compared with the period when the census was taken). Alexandria has grown into a city overnight. There are three large camps and a military airport on the outskirts of this city, whose population had been even greater during the period of construction, when thousands of workers were employed, than it is today. Prosperity had come to Alexandria but not without bringing problems. Rents soared, and occupants of houses which had rented for \$5.00 a month were evicted to make room for those who could pay ten times that much. In one case the rent was advanced from \$12.00 in March, 1941, to \$20.00 in December of the same year. The family could not pay the increase but were unable to find another home because of the great influx of workers and the scarcity of houses. The result was that a child in this family was taken from school to obtain employment to supplement the family income.

Food prices advanced 40 per cent and have increased to such a point that meat, fruit, and some canned products are luxuries of the past for many families.

Other items—clothing, medicine and patent medicines, and incidentals—also rose. A few examples of these increases follow: Shirts formerly selling for \$1.00 are now \$1.50; \$1.79 shirts are now \$2.19. Dresses, shoes, hats, stockings, have all gone up in price. Toothpaste and cosmetics have advanced almost 100 per cent in price.

In addition to all this, Alexandria experienced a new type of

recreational center—the honky-tonk. During 1941, licenses for 66 liquor dispensaries and 186 beer dealers were issued by the city and parish. The records also show that 95 pinball machines and 156 “juke boxes” were licensed.

The rapid development of the honky-tonk or “juke joints” brought increased employment of children, particularly girls. In order to evade child labor laws and regulations governing the employment of women, many of the honky-tonk owners allowed young girls, preferably sixteen years old, to perform certain services for customers. These services included waiting on customers in cars or at a counter. Actually none of the girls was on a pay roll. For legal purposes they were not employed, and therefore the age-and-hours provisions of the law could not be enforced. The girls worked entirely for tips and were privileged to leave whenever they wished. For this reason the owners had to maintain a large supply of young girls so that adequate service to customers could be maintained on a twenty-four-hour basis.

Reports from many other defense areas indicate that the employment of young girls as waitresses and carhops in honky-tonks is No. 1 on the list of the types of employment which children in war-activity areas are obtaining.

School enrolment in the parish has increased by 1,198 pupils, necessitating the employment of twenty-six additional teachers. This is the net increase, and there is evidence that many resident children are dropping out of school. As children were crowded into rooms too small and too poorly ventilated and lighted to be conducive to good health or good scholarship, this physical discomfort caused a loss of interest, and in some instances it resulted in irregular attendance of boys and girls, which eventually led to their complete dropping-out of school. Their next step was to seek employment.

Children were found in Alexandria to be employed as cashiers, salesmen and salesgirls, waitresses, carhops, delivery boys, elevator operators, newsboys, messengers, laundry workers, and in various street trades.

Among cases of child labor reported was one of a fourteen-year-old girl hired by an itinerant photographer to attract soldiers as customers. As an inducement for having his picture made, the soldier

would be offered the opportunity to pose with his arm around the girl or with her on his lap. When business lagged, it was the girl's job to find soldiers and bring them in on a commission basis.

Another case was that of a twelve-year-old boy who was selling small American flag emblems to pin on coat lapels. The flag bore the inscription, "I Believe in America."

A fourteen-year-old boy was employed to answer the telephone for a taxicab company; a fifteen-year-old boy found employment as a service-station attendant; a fifteen-year-old girl took a job in the bindery department of a printing-shop; and a fourteen-year-old Negro left the second grade to become a porter in an office building.

In a recent sample review of the permits issued to minors to work in Alexandria, it was found that 95.7 per cent were for white children and 4.3 per cent for colored children. Of the white children, 30.1 per cent were fourteen years old, 17 per cent were fifteen, 44.8 per cent were sixteen, and 8.1 per cent were seventeen and over. Of those issued permits, 82.4 per cent were born in Rapides Parish or in a parish adjacent to it, and 8.8 per cent in other parishes in the state, making a total of 91.2 per cent born in the state. This leaves only a small percentage (8.8) born outside Louisiana. Despite the large increase in population in the parish, a very small number of the children seeking employment were from migrant families.

Over 99 per cent of the young workers had never been issued a certificate before. The permits for children under sixteen contained information to show whether the child was to work after school hours, during vacation, or as a regular worker. Those issued for vacation work were 16.6 per cent, 45.2 per cent were for work after school hours, and 38.2 per cent for full-time employment.

About one-third of the permits were issued to boys to become messengers. None of these boys was younger than sixteen, although it was noted that in some cases the permits were issued a few days after they reached that age. One-tenth were to become delivery boys for drug stores or restaurants; and about the same number were starting their "careers" as clerks in groceries, drug stores, or general merchandising stores.

In some few instances it was noted that some of these young workers were not staying on the original job but were leaving with

amazing rapidity for other jobs. Particularly noted was a fifteen-year-old boy who was first issued a permit to work as a utility worker in a hat shop. A few weeks later another permit was issued so that he could work in a general store, and a little later a third permit was issued so that he could be a utility worker for one of the large stores in the city.

Greater laxity in establishing the ages of young employees has been noted in this area. The local offices of several national companies, which previously had rigidly adhered to procedures for employing children, now are not always requiring age verification and are overlooking some of the details that had served as safeguards against child labor. This has increased the burden of responsibility on labor law enforcement officers, who are not prepared to meet this additional need. Enforcement, even in normal times, was handicapped by weak child labor² and school attendance laws and by inadequate enforcement staffs.

Related to the problem of child labor in defense areas is the increasing number of women employed in war activities. There are instances where both the father and the mother are working and are out of the home for a considerable part of the day or night. In several cases an older child has been taken out of school so that she can keep house and watch the other children while the mother works in defense industries. In other cases children have sought employment because their parents are absent most of the time working in defense industries. As one child said when he applied for a work permit: "There was nothing for me to do around the house, and I got lonesome since Mama found a job and is gone most of the time. There was nothing else for me to do but to try to find a job."

Closely allied to the increase in child labor is the increase in delinquency noted in defense areas. Again using Alexandria as an example, we find that delinquency has increased during the past year. Much of this can be traced to the number of young girls, many of them sixteen, who have come to Alexandria so that they can be close to their soldier-sweethearts and in some cases to marry soldiers. Some of the girls have run away from home, some have come

² A new child labor law, approved July 17, 1942, raises standards and strengthens administrative provisions.

to Alexandria with their parents' consent, and some have come seeking work. Regardless of the motive for coming to Alexandria, most of them have eventually sought employment. It appears that, in general, the type of employment they obtain is either as waitresses or as carhops. Income is usually insufficient for the girls to live on, and delinquency inevitably follows. Frequently the girls get married, but in most cases they cannot live on the soldier's pay and are forced to find employment.

It has been noted that a large number of young girls have come from practically all sections of the United States and from many places in Louisiana because there is the mistaken belief that employment is easy to find in a defense area. In some cases adequate case-work plans can be made, and the girls can be returned to their homes. But some of the jails are filled with young girls who have been picked up by the police because they were on the streets after a certain hour.

CONDITIONS IN OTHER SOUTHERN STATES

Reports from other southern states where a number of defense areas are located indicate that the conditions found in Alexandria are typical, and similar conditions prevail in defense areas in other states.

Tennessee reported that there has been a 20 per cent decrease in school attendance in the Camp Forrest area. Because of a shortage of labor, a factory in the area lowered the age limit to employees from eighteen to sixteen years for boys but still required the eighteen-year-age limit for girls. The number of young girls from fourteen to eighteen who are seeking employment in honky-tonks is not definitely known, but it is believed to be high. The county beer-licensing board is attempting to restrict this type of employment for younger girls by withdrawing the licenses of those taverns and dance halls employing young persons.

From Florida word has come from the state labor inspector that the employment of minors has increased during the past year, particularly in areas adjacent to military training bases. Girls apparently prefer work about the honky-tonks, and the boys seem inclined to seek mechanical work, much of which is classed as hazardous for minors. It was reported that in the Tampa area mothers in

aid-to-dependent-children cases were concerned over the fact that teen-age children are restless and are leaving school to take employment. National Youth Administration has curtailed its employment program, in that all projects must be related to the war program. This means that many youths, particularly the girls, are idle, in many instances with no one to direct their leisure time.

The West Florida area reports that the transient problem is acute and that one group of transients is composed of young girls usually from fifteen to eighteen who come to the area following their sweet-hearts who probably in the meantime have been transferred to another camp. These girls come with little or no money and often are far from home. They are forced to ask for jobs in cafés and honky-tonks, and eventually many of them become delinquent. The school board placed an attendance officer on its staff, hoping that this might help. Any girl unescorted on the streets of Pensacola after a certain hour is taken into custody by the authorities and is placed in jail. At one time as many as eighty girls were kept in a jail which has facilities for caring for twelve.

South Carolina reports that the employment of adolescents has increased in defense and military areas and that school attendance has decreased in the highest grades in the schools. Young boys and girls are finding employment in cafés, restaurants, drug stores, dry-goods stores, and ten-cent stores, in addition to working in filling stations and honky-tonks. There is also an increase in the number of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds in the textile industries in the state.

Mississippi reported that child labor in Hattiesburg, where Camp Shelby is located, was quite a problem. Children were found out of school indulging in street trades, especially selling newspapers, candies, peanuts, etc. Mississippi does not have adequate child labor legislation, and the Child Welfare Division of the State Department of Public Welfare was unable to handle the problem through legal provisions. The schools and some business concerns co-operated and reduced the number of children employed to a minimum.

In Alabama the child labor inspectors of the Division of Labor have reported increased employment of young boys and girls in the various war-activity areas in the state. In addition, repeated requests

have been received from managers of grocery and drug stores and from merchants of Mobile, Anniston, and Birmingham, asking permission for fourteen- and fifteen-year-old boys to work later than 7:00 P.M. as provided for under the law in that state. In Mobile child labor was increasing at such a rate that the superintendent of schools wrote an editorial addressed to the parents calling their attention to the fact that many high-school boys were leaving school to work on defense projects in Mobile. He urged the parents to convince the boys that this employment is temporary and that education is permanent. In a recent article in *Alabama Social Welfare* the situation in Anniston has been described:

We found last winter that children in the county had become imbued with the desire to make money which was in the atmosphere. Children were begging on the streets, selling candy, chewing gum, and other small articles, and working in small hole-in-the-wall eating places, ice cream parlors, and so forth. At one time a group of about fifteen boys stopped school and went into the business of selling candy to soldiers and construction workers at Fort McClellan. This was so remunerative that it took court action in co-operation with the military police at Fort McClellan to stop it. Although we were able to control through the school attendance officers the situation of children stopping school and going to work while school was in session, we knew that when school stopped many children would engage in street trades, employment in amusement houses, grocery stores, and almost every other form of business. Since boys over sixteen are already employed, merchants who had formerly refused to consider younger boys have been forced to employ them. We felt that if the bars were let down and the Child Labor Laws of the State ignored, it would be years before we could enforce them again. An appeal to the State Child Labor Inspector for help in this situation got splendid results and a survey is now being made of all the places of employment in the county to determine what children are working illegally and to inform employers of the law.

In North Carolina data were obtained from the issuance of child labor certificates to minors between the ages of twelve to eighteen for the last three months of 1939, 1940, and 1941. These figures indicate that almost twice as many were issued in 1941 as were issued in 1939. In 1939, 3,156 certificates were issued; in 1940 the number jumped to 4,882; and in 1941 it reached the total of 5,399. The majority of permits were issued for employment in nonmanufacturing jobs, but about one-fifth were for manufacturing jobs. Approximately one-third of the certificates were issued for the first time and

were for regular employment. The percentage of minors twelve to fifteen given certificates for work outside of school hours increased from 11 in 1939 to 15 in 1940, and to 19 in 1941.

SUGGESTED REMEDIES

In meeting the problems of child labor in defense areas, greater use of the United States Employment Service is recommended. When a recent survey was made in the city of New Orleans to determine whether additional day-nursery care was needed, it was disclosed that the availability of adult workers is sufficient to meet all employment requirements in New Orleans for the next six months. The study established the fact that there was no reason to employ women with young children since there was an adequate reservoir of man-power available. We can assume similarly that there is no reason for the employment of children.

Employers should be urged to make greater use of the Employment Service offices. There has been much discussion as to shortage of certain types of workers, particularly in agricultural areas, but, generally speaking, these shortages have not materialized. In Louisiana there was considerable agitation about closing schools to allow children to pick strawberries because there was a predicted shortage of pickers. This shortage did not develop, and an ample supply of pickers was obtained without the closing of schools.

Many child labor laws have loopholes which allow for various types of evasion. These loopholes should be plugged by legislative action so that the employment of children in defense areas and in all other areas can be kept at an absolute minimum; similarly school attendance laws should be strengthened.

Enforcement of child labor laws is often difficult because of weak legislation and inadequate appropriations for enforcement. It may be difficult for southern states to find funds to allow for the expansion of the enforcement staff. With the exception of Florida, all the southern states are among the ten having the lowest per capita income in the United States. In addition, the income from taxes in all these states will be reduced because of the curtailed use of automobiles. Many depend to a considerable degree on gasoline taxes. Louisiana will probably lose seven million dollars this year from that

tax source. Also affecting the tax income in these states is the loss of income from property tax on the land which has been taken over by the government for camps, airports, or munition plants.

The city of Alexandria and the parish in which it is located estimate a tax loss of nearly fifty-thousand dollars annually from the land taken over for camp and airport sites. This loss will upset the entire tax structure of the city and parish, and some attempt to offset it must be made, if the local governmental operations are not to be hampered.

Southern states have one-third of the children of America but have only 16 per cent of the funds available for the education of these children. It would take almost 99 per cent of Mississippi's budget for all governmental operations to match the funds appropriated by New York State for education of its children alone. Federal assistance to the southern states is necessary, and in these instances where states are not able to expand their enforcement or school attendance staffs federal funds should come to the rescue.

In addition to the effective interpretation of child labor problems already being done by various groups, there should be an intensive informational campaign, designed to reach not only those who regulate and legislate in child labor but also the parents and the children themselves.

It has been often said that "you can win a battle but lose a war." The battle for the present child labor regulations has been long and hard. The battle to keep them will be even harder. We must win this battle and win the war.

LOUISIANA CIVILIAN DEFENSE COUNCIL