

question. Maybe I am wrong in thinking so much of my children, but they are all I have. My neighbor on the left has lost three of his children. They

gave their lives for the country. I want my children to be worthy of the country for which these boys died. Am I wrong?

AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A very live problem has been discussed by Miss Ruth McIntire, of the National Child Labor Committee, in the *Elementary School Journal*. Any who read the article will approve the wisdom of the legislation in this province making attendance at school compulsory. Miss McIntire's words are a comfort and a warning. The *Journal* can print only a part of the paper.

The average rural-school term for children in the United States as a whole is 140 days, while the city term is 180 days. The short term is in itself a handicap for country children, but the irregular attendance prevailing almost everywhere is even more serious in its effect upon the pupils. These are the figures for the average attendance throughout the country: of every 100 children enrolled in city schools the daily attendance is 80; of every 100 enrolled in rural schools only 68 are in attendance daily. Thus for every 100 days of schooling per year received by the city child, the average rural child receives only 65. An investigation conducted by the National Child Labor Committee in Oklahoma in 1917 showed that in rural districts the compulsory-attendance law is commonly ignored. To begin with, the law applies to only 66 per cent. of the local school term, but in addition to this it was found that in the preceding school year the attendance was only 59.8 per cent. The insufficiency of the law was surpassed by the meagerness of the attendance. The children go to school but little more than half the short period during which the schools are in session. The taxpayers' money is wasted on the equipment of school buildings and teachers' salaries, but the most deplorable waste is in the moral and educational loss to the children. The causes for absence are many. In the totals, farm work comes first, the number of days missed

on this account by both boys and girls out of 6,389 records examined being 73,121; second comes illness, which caused 44,148 days of absence; the third cause is indifference, synonymous with parental indifference, which was responsible for 26,382 days; fourth comes housework, with 17,862; and fifth the combination of bad weather and distance from the school, which kept children away for 16,997 days. The absences for unknown causes total only 2,791 days. Farm work and housework together were responsible for nearly half the absences. Furthermore, retardation in school work was found, as might be expected, coincident with non-attendance. A study based on 5,656 known cases shows that 95.9 per cent. of the number of daily attendants passed to higher grades. Only 56.6 per cent. of the migrants and 63.5 per cent. of the farm workers were promoted. The effect of migration and of children's work in the house and in the fields could not be better illustrated.

The use of child labor in the sugar-beet fields of Colorado is seen to produce the same results. The work is done chiefly by foreign immigrants, the so-called "Russians" predominating. The workers generally live in settlements entirely apart from the American life of the town, in poorly constructed temporary shanties. The only possible contact with American life is through the association of their children with American boys and girls in the public schools. But their insistence that the children shall help with the work in the fields makes school attendance extremely scanty—at best irregular.

In the rural districts of Kentucky the only restrictions that apply to children working on farms are those governing school attendance. But these, as well as the child-labor law which forbids