

## PREFACE.

It is appropriate that the first contribution to the University of Toronto Studies in Political Science from a lady graduate should concern itself with the labour of women and children in Ontario. It is to such careful examination by competent observers of the actual facts of industrial life, rather than to hasty and sentimental agitation, that we must look for permanent reform.

The existing ~~Factory~~ Acts of Ontario are in some respects more stringent, in others more lax, than those of England, the parent of factory legislation. Taking the two essential points, the *age* of permissible child labour and the *hours* of employment for women and children, the comparison may be stated as follows:—

1. In Ontario the age of legal employment is for boys twelve and for girls fourteen. In England it has hitherto been for both sexes as low as ten; but by the recent Act,—which will not, it is true, come into complete operation till the end of 1893,—the limit has been raised to eleven. The Berlin Labour Conference of 1890 recommended twelve. But while in Ontario boys over twelve are permitted to work as long hours as adult women, in England children between ten and thirteen (the age at which the school authority practically ceases) are only permitted to work “half-time,” (and that only on passing a certain school standard, which however the great majority of them have no difficulty in doing at about the age of ten). The English practice is in substantial agreement with the recommendation of the Berlin Conference, that children should not be employed for a longer period than six hours daily, with a minimum interval of half an hour, (though this recommendation applies to children under fourteen, while the English half-time rule only applies to those under thirteen).

An Ontario Statute of 1891 does, indeed, enact that all children between eight and fourteen years of age shall attend school; but until the local authorities make a serious attempt to enforce the Act, it cannot be regarded as substantially affecting the situation.

2. With regard to the hours of labour of women and young persons the general result of the English legislation is a working week of fifty-six and a half hours in textile factories, and sixty hours in non-textile factories and workshops, while in Ontario the limit of hours is sixty.

Two minor points of contrast are also of interest:

3. Night labour for women and children has for some years been expressly prohibited in England, and the Berlin Conference recommended that this example