

Another and surer sign of progress is the improved character of the work done, judged from a scientific standpoint. The earlier reports of many of the bureaus are rather crude. The value of material presented is not much greater than that of hearsay evidence in a court of law. In fact the interviewer rather than the statistician seems to be at the desk. This is not remarkable when one reflects that this kind of investigation is a comparatively new thing, and that many of the commissioners selected, though animated by the best intentions, had very little previous training to qualify them for the exercise of their functions. It can be said of those who have continued at their post that the quality of their work has improved as their official experience widened. Discursive and superficial treatment of a great variety of topics has given place to concentrated statistical effort upon one or two. Both sides of controversial subjects are more fully and impartially stated, and special pleading reduced to a minimum. The annual meetings of the Commissioners have promoted this educative process.

Up to date about one hundred and fifty separate reports emanating from the different bureaus have appeared. It would require too much space to enumerate the various subjects which have undergone treatment. At any rate it would be superfluous to attempt it, as the United States Department of Labour will shortly publish a complete topical analysis.

In round numbers one hundred and thirty thousand volumes of labour reports are annually printed in the United States. What becomes of all this literature? The question has been frequently asked me, and I have myself referred it to the different labour commissioners. The general trend of the response is, that about seventy per cent. go directly into the hands of working people, the remainder being absorbed by newspapers, public libraries, members of the legislature, college professors and teachers, lawyers, clergymen and manufacturers. It must be remembered that in the United States public documents are free and supplied upon demand. People who are interested enough to ask for them are pretty sure to read them. Quotations in legislative halls, in the press, in the pulpit, and from the proceedings of labour organizations show that their contents become more and more widely known.

The function of bureaus of labour statistics is mainly educative. It is, therefore, a difficult matter to estimate exactly the amount of influence they have exercised. A great deal of useful legislation stands as the direct result of their efforts. In Massachusetts, the establishment of a board of arbitration and conciliation, and laws relating to factory inspection, the length of the working day, the employment of children, employers' liability and accidents to labour; in Rhode Island, the weekly payment of wages and fire-escape laws; in Maine, the ballot reform and "labour day" enactments; in New York, the creation of a board of arbitration for industrial disputes; in New Jersey, the encouragement given to building associations; in Michigan, the ten-hour law, the prohibition of child labour, adequate provision against accidents, and a factory inspection Act; in Kansas, the establishment of industrial arbitration tribunals, payment of wages in cash, increased protection to miners, modification of the