

## Federal Child Labor Law Has Accomplished Good Says Owen R. Lovejoy

"Permanent gain has come to America from the federal child labor law which the United States Supreme Court has declared invalid," said Owen R. Lovejoy, general secretary of the national child labor committee, in a statement issued at the committee headquarters, 105 East Twenty-second street, New York City.

"The friends of America's children," he said, "are not to be disheartened by the Supreme Court decision. Remember that for three years the federal government has been giving its protection to children in factories, mines and quarries. The children who were fourteen when this law was enacted are seventeen years old now. This much is clear gain.

"It is also encouraging that many states in which modern industrial standards seemed extremely remote six years ago when the first federal child labor law was passed have actually reached these standards within this period. The example of an eight hour day and exclusion from dangerous occupations has been wholesome in many quarters. Six years ago there were ten states that had no prohibition of night work in factories for children under 16. Now there are only seven such states. Then there were twenty-five states which did not have the eight hour day for children under 16 in factories. Now there are only 16. Then there were 27 states that did not have the 16 year age limit for employment in mines and quarries. Now there are only 6 such states.

"We hope the American people, instead of fixing their attention on the Supreme Court, will fix it on the 300,000 children who have been enjoying federal protection during the past three years and from whom that protection is now stricken away.

"This decision means that in the states with lower standards than those provided by the federal law we may anticipate an immediate return to the employment of children for

the maximum hours and at the minimum age the state law permits.

"In Rhode Island and Delaware this will mean that the children of 14 who have become accustomed to the eight hour day must now adjust themselves to a 10 hour day and 54 hour week. In North Carolina they will again be employed an 11 hour day and 60 hour week; in New Hampshire a 10¼ hour day and 54 hour week. In Georgia they will work a 10 hour day and 60 hour week in cotton or woolen mills, while in other manufacturing establishments or machine shops they will legally be employed from sunrise to sunset. Our mines and quarries will again enjoy the privileges of employing child labor in Georgia, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, Florida and Missouri.

"Of course we respect the solicitude of the Supreme Court for the preservation of state's rights. But even political traditions are not an absolute guarantee of national security. Chief Justice Taft says ours have preserved us for 150 years. The political traditions of Babylon, we are told, preserved it for nearly 2000 years, and the political traditions of Egypt for a longer period. By comparison our own institutions are in their infancy and it might not be amiss for American statesmen to discover some way of avoiding the errors by which earlier governmental experiments have failed. It is not more important to maintain a sacred political tradition than to protect little children exposed to industrial exploitation.

"This court decision throws upon the membership of the national child labor committee the obligation to redouble its efforts to secure proper standards in the backward states, but we have by no means abandoned our hope that the federal government will find some way of protecting those of its citizens who are denied civilized standards by their own states."