ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF CHILD LABOR IN AGRICULTURE

CHIEH SUNG

The Economic Aspects of Child Labor in Agriculture,

by

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The Economic Aspects of Child Labor in Agriculture

Introduction

The extent of agricultural child labor is more widespread than any of the occupations in which children are engaged in the labor market of the United States, and yet it is the least known form of child employment. Industrial child labor has absorbed more of the thought and attention of social workers and legislators than has agricultural child labor. We live in an era predominantly industrial; large numbers of factory laborers have been more apparent because the children were congregated in groups which could be easily investigated. This grouping has also made easier the regulation of the work and the study of conditions among the children thus employed. But we must now direct our attention to the larger group of working children, a group concerning which there are reports of serious exploitation.

Agricultural child labor is not a new thing. It existed long ages ago, and it is existing today. For several decades the number of children engaged in

agricultural pursuits has been increasing. Between 1880 and 1900 the number nearly doubled, and between 1900 and 1910 increased by approximately one-half. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of agricultural child laborers suddenly showed a decrease. However, this decrease is rather doubtful because the Fourteenth Census was taken in January when many children who usually worked were idle.

Of the total number of children 10 to 15 years of age reported by the 1910 census as bread winners, 1,432,428 or 71.9 percent were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Of this number 260,195 were reported as farm laborers working out, that is, working away from home. The number of children of this age reported as engaged in other than agricultural pursuits was 558,971. From these figures it is seen that in 1910 there were almost three times as many in agricultural pursuits, and half as many working out, as there were in all other occupations. In 1920, 647,309 children were reported as farm workers. This amounts to 61 per cent of the total number of children 10 to 15 years of age engaged in all gainful occupations. In so far, then, as the number is an indication of the existence of a problem, here is a field worthy of study.

The majority of investigations of child labor which have been made deal with its educational, physical and social effects; the economic aspects are seldom mentioned. I believe that the economic cause- and effect relationships of child labor must be considered first. It has been found that nearly a third of the working children are living under conditions that might be termed economic necessity. On the other hand, child labor will result in the production of low wages, inefficiency, and poverty. It forms a vicious circle. Investigations must be made leading the w way to a solution of the whole question.

I am attempting, in this study, to explain the economic significance of agricultural child labor in this country. This thesis will be descriptive rather than statistical. It falls under six heads: 1. The economic causes of agricultural child labor. 2. The extent and distribution of agricultural child labor. 3. The types and conditions of farmwork in which children are engaged. 4. The wages of agricultural child labor. 5. The hours and duration of farmwork. 6. The economic waste of child labor in agriculture.

Chapter 1

Economic Causes of Agricultural Child Labor

The first purpose of this thesis is to investigate the causes which produce agricultural child labor. Economic necessity has been regarded as the most important factor by many of the students who are interested in this question. Each of the causes mentioned in this chapter, however, has its influence in producing agricultural child labor. Consideration must be taken of all of them.

1. Poverty

There are many children who are pushed to work because their financial aid seems necessary for the family support. Some light on the influence of poverty as a cause of child labor appears from the result of the federal investigation of child wage-earners. The statistics are presented in the following table.[1] (see table 1)

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1 Report by the Department of Commerce and Labor to U.S. 61st Senate and published as Vol. 92 of Senate Document or Woman and Child Wage-earners in the United States, p. 46.

This table shows that 177 children, or 29.3 per cent of the total number, work because their help is necessary at home. The group ranking next in order is that designated "help desired but not necessary". In this case children's aid financially is not necessary but desired by their parents for economic advantage. One hundred and sixty-one, or 26.6 per cent, go to work because they are dissatisfied with school. The fourth group of child labor may be due to the indifference of their parents and dissatisfaction with school. Sometimes children prefer to work with a desire of earning money to spend for themselves.

Some other findings warrant the same conclusion, that necessity of financial help is the first important factor in producing child labor.[1]

Poverty, moreover, is both a cause and an effect. It is such a sinister influence and is so interwoven with other causes that an estimate of its actual magnitude as a factor is most difficult. For example, the attitude of the parents or child often depends upon the poverty in the home. Employers often encourage child labor because they believe that

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1 Addresses and Proceedings of National Educational Association, 1917, p. 647.

poverty will be alleviated thereby; and state laws permit exemptions in order to allow children below the working age to be gainfully employed and to maintain dependent members of the family. Poverty is too often one segment of a vicious circle, for: poverty causes child labor; child labor prevents opportunity for individual training and results in low wages for the worker; low wages, in turn, mean poverty.[1]

Poverty requires an increase of income, whatever be the sources. Some children work to aid their widowed mothers, but, contrary to the popular belief, the proportion of such cases is remarkably small. Others are expected to aid the family income in making higher standards possible, especially if the family lives on the subsistence level, and every increase in income is so much gain. If parents have low ideals, poverty acts more easily as an apparent cause and a good excuse than otherwise.[2,3] In proof of the necessity of child labor in agriculture a brief state-

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1 Survey - Vol. 30, p. 60-62, April, 1913.
2 National Child Labor Committee- Child Labor Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 1, p.27-34.
3 Mangold, George B.- Problems on Child Welfare, Part 2, Chap. 1.

ment of farm labor income may be given here.

The wage data of farm laborers may be secured from the latest census which was taken in 1920. The following table presents the facts on wages paid in the United States to regular farm laborers. (see table 2)

It is seen that there was a gradual increase in the two kinds of farm laborers, with and without board., from 1875 down to 1910; then by 1920, wages had more than doubled. The latter extraordinary increase was of course due to war influence. Although the increase of wages by 1920 was more than 100 per cent, the cost of living had increased correspondingly. Let us analyze the situation.

A farm laborer of 1920 earned a monthly wage of $64.95, without board, and lived on the farm with his family which supposedly consisted of the husband, wife, and three children. If we divide his monthly wages into five parts, then each of the members in the family would receive $12.99 respectively. Let us suppose two of the children to be of school age, and the third an infant. The said amount of money would be sufficient for the five members of the family to live on, and two of the children might be sent to school instead

Table 1

Causes of Child Labor
(1)

Causes	Number	Per cent
Ncessity.....	177	29.3
Help desired but not necessary.....	172	28.4
Dissatisfaction with school.....	161	26.6
Child prefers to work.....	60	9.9
Other causds.....	35	5.8
Total...	605	100.0

(1) Woman and Child Wage-Earners in the United States, Vol. 7, p. 46

Table 2

Average Monthly Wage of Regular Farm Laborer, in Dollars, in the United States. (1) (2)

Section	Without board			With board		
	1875	1910	1920	1875	1910	1920
N. Atlantic	$28.31	$33.19	$75.54	$18.25	$21.65	$51.92
S. Atlantic	14.42	19.75	50.56	9.94	13.77	35.75
E. N. Central and W. N. Central	24.07	31.81 25.45	70.09 79.49	16.75	22.94 25.10	51.49 50.63
S. Central	16.92	21.90	51.94	11.98	15.28	36.53
Western	40.68	46.48	99.43	23.10	32.19	73.21
United States	18.60	27.50	64.95	13.53	19.21	46.89

(1) Abstract of the Census, 1920, p. 304-5.

(2) Vogt, Paul L____Introduction to Rural Sociology, p. 104-118.

of to work. But it must be understood that this family cannot possess more than a bare living, even though a farm laborer might secure some vegetables and rooms without charge. In some regions a piece of land is provided the farm laborer for raising vegetables.[1] In this case, children's help is frequently needed in farming the garden. If this man has more than three children, as many of the farmers do, he will have to put the older ones to work because of the increase of mouths. If he desires something better than a bare living, and many of the farm laborers endeavor to become tenants or landowners, he would like to send his children to work to secure a little more income. In the former case, the children who go to work are under the influence of necessity. In the latter, children's help is desired if not necessary. If we still go a step further in this matter, we may see that in some sections the wages earned by the farm workers are lower than the above mentioned amount. In the divisions of the South Atlantic and South Central states, the monthly wages, without board, are about one-sixth less than the amount given above for the United States as a whole. The lower paid workmen us-

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1 Taylor, Henry Charles- Agricultural Economics, p. 170-176.

ually compel more children to work. Farm laborers in these two divisions are more induced to send their children to work than those of the Western division because in the latter section higher wages are paid. If we compare the numbers of farm child workers of these three divisions in 1920 as an evidence, this point is perfectly obvious.[1] (see table 3)

In the Western division where the higher wages are paid, the number of working children is far less than those of the South Atlantic and South Central divisions in which the low wages prevail. So far as the farm laborers' incomes are concerned, children's help seemingly cannot be done away with.[2]

2. Greed of Parents

The greed of parents is often an important cause of the employment of children in rural districts. Evem today many parents still consider their children as capital or economic assets on which they hope to declare dividends at the first opportunity. Formerly, when education was not compulsory, the large family was regarded as an economic advantage because the cost of maintenance was comparatively low, and children could be employed at very early ages. Among

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1 Fourteenth Census of U.S. Bulletin, Occupations of Children.
2 Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 98, p. 152

Table 3

A Comparison of the Wages of Farm Laborers
With the Numberof Working Children

Division	Number of working Children	Wages paid to the farm laborers
South Atlantic	214,906	50.56
South Central	354,709	51.94
Western	12,474	99.43

the farming population thousands of children are at present engaged in gainful occupation. Using the child in farm labor as soon as he is physically able is a very natural condition. If the parents have low ideals children are exploited and overworked, but usually they attend school during most of the school year, and are still able to give considerable assistance at home. By performing certain light tasks, the country child inculcates a habit of industry which is without doubt a valuable asset in itself. But when it degenerates into drudgery, and prevents education and reasonable leisure time, it becomes harmful. It often happens that the farmer's son is deprived of a sufficient education to become efficient in any occupation other than that of farming. The small boy compelled to hire out to another farmer is usually exploited, and represents a most unhappy form of child labor.

Children are exploited for two reasons: first, in order to increase the family income; second, to enable parents to withdraw from work and live upon the earnings which the children provide. Investigations have shown that parents often send their children to work at the earliest age possible, and expect them to become wholly or partially self-supporting regardless

of possible harm which may result to the children.[1]

The second cause of exploitation finds less common expression but is by no means absent. The child labor problem in New England before 1820 was somewhat intensified by the desire of parents to retire as soon as their children wer able to obtain sufficient wages to maintain the entire family. Many parents hold that since their children are dependent on them for so many years, it is entirely proper for the children to bear the burden of the family as soon as possible. They owe this to their parents, regardless of the handicap to themselves in later life. Indolent and shiftless parents especially rely upon such support.[2]

3. Economic Status of the Family

The low economic status of the family is an important factor in producing child labor in rural communities. Most of the children engaged in agricultural pursuits are sons or daughters of farm laborers or tenants. They own no land or homes. Their incomes are small in amount. They could not make a living if their children did not work in the field with them or work

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1 Mangold, George Benjamin; -Problems of Child Welfare, Part 4, Chap. 1.
2 National Child Labor Committee- Child Labor Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 1-6.

out with other farmers. For instance, over three-fourths of the child workers in Colorado and Michigan beet fields are laborers' children, one-seventh are tenants; while only one-tenth are owners'.

Sometimes, children of the small land-owners are compelled to go to work on the farms also because their fathers go away to seek better pay in other industries. This is manifestly unfair to the children because not only is the work of running the farm too heavy, but the responsibility is also too great. The condition is especially aggravated in the sand-mining communities in West Virginia where the men work all day in the mines, and the women and children do the farm work.[1]

In West Virginia, the children of tenants, of course, help with farm work while their parents are more frequently engaged in grain farming. Yet the children have a greater opportunity to work along with them. Thus, the greater responsibility placed upon owners' children corresponds to the greater amount of work tenants' children do. The children of laborers of the grain-farming communities may work with their parents

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1 National Child Labor Committee- Rural Child Welfare, p.23.

or hire out independently. In the communities where special crops are grown, there are ample opportunities for them to be employed. They are extensively used in the picking and packing of fruit.[1]

The Children's Bureau has offered some light on the influence of the economic status of the family as a cause of child labor in the beet fields of Colorado and Michigan.

"The great majority, over three-fourths, of the 542 families interviewed in the two counties(Weld and Larimer, Colorado) were those of contract laborers. Comparatively few were families owning or renting farms and cultivating their own beets; barely a tenth were farm owners, and thirteen per cent were tenant farmers. It will be remembered that no family was included in the study unless at least one child or the mother were in the beet fields....." [2]

In Michigan the Bureau found:

"Among the 511 families interviewed because either the mother or the children worked in the beet fields, 150, or 29 per cent, were renting farms, and 289, or 57 per cent, were the families of contract laborers. Of the children in these families, 1,005 were laborers' children; 245 were the children of tenants, and 560 were the children of men who owned farms." [3]

4. Demand for Agricultural Child Labor

Farm labor of today is more scarce than formerly. In 1910, 41,230,058 persons lived in the coun-

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1 Ibid., p. 24.
2 Publication of Children's Bureau, No. 113, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan. p.12-13.
3 Ibid., p. 80.

try, that is, out side of incorporated places. Of these, 12,258,579 or 29.7 per cent, were engaged in agricultural occupations of some kind. This excludes women in the home, children under 10 years of age, and children above that age who are not employed in farm work. Of the 6,143,799 persons who were reported as agricultural laborers, 3,310,534, or 54 per cent, were home laborers and 2,636,966 were hired workers. Besides these two classes, there were nearly 200,000 persons belonging to other classes of labor employed on farms. But in 1910 there were 6,361,502 farms in the United States, a farm consisting of any tract of land under the management of one man. Thus, there were about 41 per cent as many hired laborers as farms. Since many farms have more than one hired laborer, it would appear that by far the larger portion of farms are without such workers.

The farm labor situation of 1920 was about the same as that of 1910. In 1920, 51,406,017 persons lived in the country. Of these, 6,443,343 were farm operators, of whom 6, 186,624, or 95.9 per cent, were male, and 261,719, or 4.1 per cent, were female. Persons under 25 years of age of both sexes were included. The number of farms in 1920 was 6,448,343. If one man

must be hired to operate one farm, then, 5,000 farms must be abandoned simply because of shortage of labor. Moreover, if many farms have more than one hired operator, as is often the case, there would be more than 5,000 farms unable to procure such operation. Under this situation, farmers , of course, will get children to work for them if possible.[1]

The farmers always need two kinds of labor: the seasonal worker and the regular laborer. The seasonal worker wants regular employment and fares badly on account of short-time jobs and injurious conditions under which he is forced to work. The regular farm laborer complains of inadequate wages, poor housing, poor food, and bad treatment. Therefore, both types are always ready to go to the cities for better jobs. This condition, then, is an inducement for the farmers to get children to working for them because their help is necessary when it is impossible to obtain an adequate supply of efficient labor.

The demand for seasonal agricultural labor is pretty general throughout the United States. By this term is meant the hiring of persons to do farm work dur-

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1 Fourteenth Census of U.S. Agriculture, p. 30.

ing the time of producing a crop or for some portion of its production. A generation or more ago., farm workers were recruited from the boys of the neighborhood as needed. It was customary for boys to work out during plowing, seeding, harvesting, and threshing. The farmers depend upon the children as a source of seasonal labor.[1]

There are still other causes, such as dissatisfaction with school, and willingness to go to work, and so on, which are not mentioned here because they bear no economic relationship directly to the producing of agricultural child labor.

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1 Gillette, J.M.- Rural Sociology, Chap. 15.

Chapter 2

The Extent and Distribution of Agricultural Child Labor

1. The Extent of Agricultural Child Labor between 1870 and 1910.

So far as the censuses indicate, the numbers of agricultural child laborers has been growing since 1870. Roughly speaking, the increase was about two-sevenths from 1870 to 1880, about three-tenths from 1880 to 1900, and about four-tenths from 1900 to 1910.

In 1870 the total number of children engaged in agriculture in the United States was, as reported by the Ninth Census, 499,599. This is less than the number of agricultural child workers in the divisions of South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central states in 1920.[1]

According to the Tenth Census, taken in 1880, there was a total number of 716,167 children 10 to 15 years of age reported as farm workers.[2] The occupational data of children engaged in agriculture in 1890

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1 Ninth Census of U.S. Population and Social Statistics, p. 699.
2 Tenth Census of U.S. Volume of Population, p. 724

cannot be obtained because agricultural statistics were placed under the same item with mining and fisheries statistics. [1] in the Eleventh Census.

During the two decades between 1880 and 1900, the number of agricultural child laborers has increased, as the Twelfth Census reported, to 1,061,971. It showed a very notable increase in the proportion of child labor in agriculture. [2]

From 1900 to 1910 the number of agricultural child laborers further increased. According to the 1910 Census, there was a total number of 1,990,225 children 10 to 15 years of age reported as wage-earners. Of this number, 1,432,428 , or 71.9 per cent, were engaged in agricultural pursuits.

From the above mentioned censuses we may see that the numbers of agricultural child laborers has increased every decade in the last forty years. The increase of 1910 is unusually excessive. (see Chart 1 and Table 1)

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1 Eleventh Census of U.S. Part 2, Population, p. CXXI.
2 Twelfth Census of U.S. Special Reports, Occupation, p. 724.

Table 1

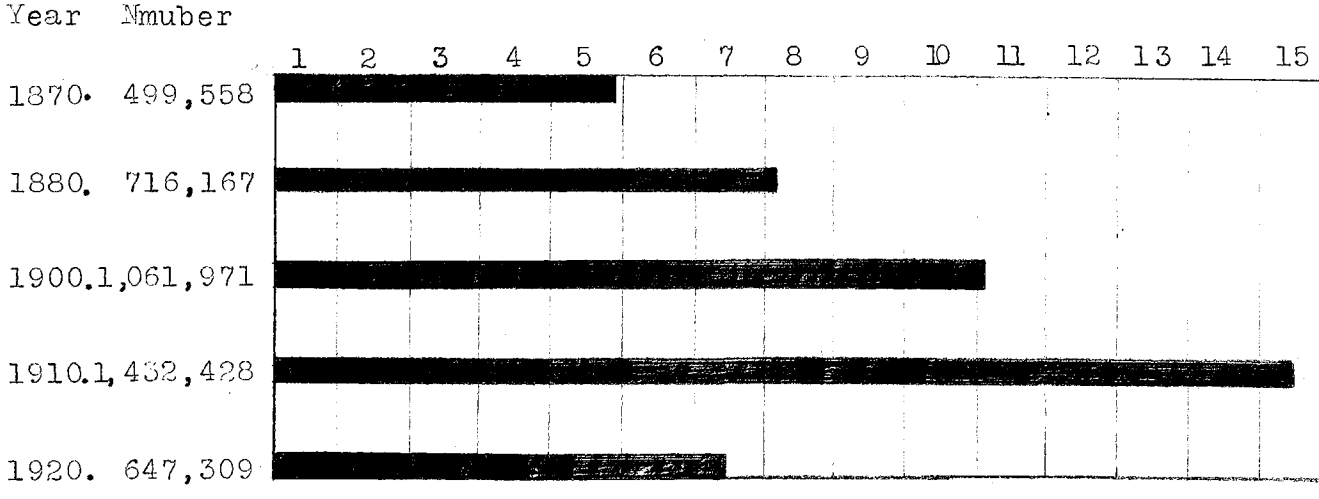
Children 10 to 15 Years of Age Engaged in Agriculture, by Sex, at Different Censuses

	Children 10 to 15 engaged in agriculture		
Year	Total	Boys	Girls
1870	499,558	426,381	73,177
1880	716,167	580,576	135,591
1900	1,061,971	854,690	207,281
1910	1,432,428	1,022,251	410,177
1920	647,309	459,238	188,071

Chart 1

Numbers of Children 10 to 15 Years of Age Engaged In the United States at Different Censuses

Per 100,000



2. The Decrease of Agricultural Child Labor between 1910 and 1920. (see Chart 1, Table 1 and Map 1)

After the Thirteenth Census reported a very notable increase between 1900 and 1910, agricultural child labor suddenly showed a tendency to decrease between 1910 and 1920. The number of 1920 given in the Fourteenth Census is 647,309. This is a decrease of more than a half in comparison with the number of agricultural child laborers in 1910. The returns of the Fourteenth Census regarding agricultural child labor have been questioned by some authors and also by the Bureau of Census itself.

In 1920 the number of children engaged in all gainful occupations was 1,060,858, of whom only 647, 309 were reported as farm workers. This shows that the group of farm children represents the largest numerical reduction, 785,119, while the decreases for all other occupations amounted to only 144,248.[1]

Whether this decrease is real or not is still a question. Some declared that this decrease is unbelievable. A statement may be given to show this kind

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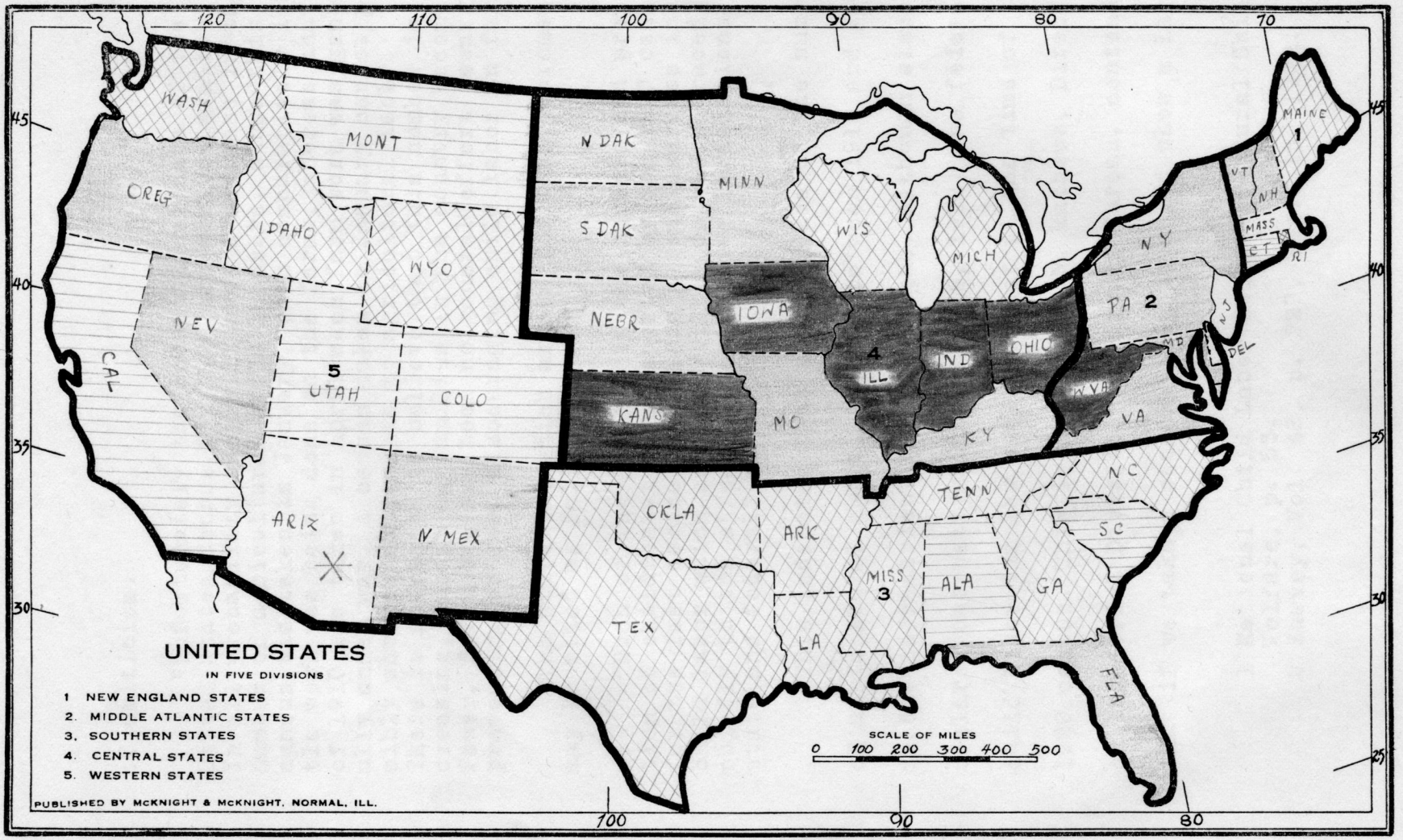
1 Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 15, p.105-6.

Map I

Per Cent of Decrease, 1910 to 1920, in Number of Children 10 to 15 Engaged in Agriculture, by States.



73 to 82 Per Cent

60 to 72 Per Cent

45 to 58 Per Cent

32 to 44 Per Cent

* Increasing

of criticism.

"Unfortunately the occupational data of the United States Census for 1920 are not yet available. In all probability they will show a decrease in the number of agricultural child laborers, since this census was taken in January, when comparatively little work was being done on the farms, whereas that of 1910 was taken in April when farm work was generally under way. A census taken in January cannot possibly show conditions as to agricultural labor. There is no reason to believe that this number is decreasing, except as families in the country become fewer, for there has been no general effort toward preventing or even discouraging child labor on farms." [1]

The statement which argues for this decrease may be cited as follows:

"Much of the decline in the numbers and proportion of children at work reported by the 1920 census for the last decade represents a real decrease in child labor which can with little doubt be traced chiefly to the effect of restrictive legislations, state and federal." [2]

This indicates that the decrease of the number of agricultural child laborers between 1910 and 1920 is due to restrictive legislations. Although since declared unconstitutional(May 15, 1922) the federal child labor tax law was in effect at the time of the 1920 census. This is why Mr. E. N. Mathews, Director of Industrial Division, Children's Bureau, contends that if we take a census today it would show a larger

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1 National Child Labor Committee- Rural Child Welfare, p. 53.
2 Survey, Vol. 48, p. 729, Sept. 15, 1922.

number.

So far as I can see, this decrease was partly due to the dull farming season in which the Fourteenth Census was taken, and partly due to the effect of restrictive legislations.[1]

3. Agricultural Child Labor in the Fourteenth Census[2]

This census is the most recent enumeration. The number of agricultural child laborers in 1920, according to this census, was 647,309, or 61 per cent of the total number of children 10 to 15 years of age engaged in all gainful occupations. Of these over one-half, 328,958, were under 14 years of age. The greater number of these children worked on the home farms, but 63,990 children between 10 and 16 were reported as working out as laborers. Undoubtedly a much larger number of children are regularly employed in this occupation than were reported when this census was taken, which was in January at a time when many children usually employed as farm laborers were not at work. (see Map 2)

Children engaged in non-agricultural pursuits numbered 413,549, or 39 per cent of the total number

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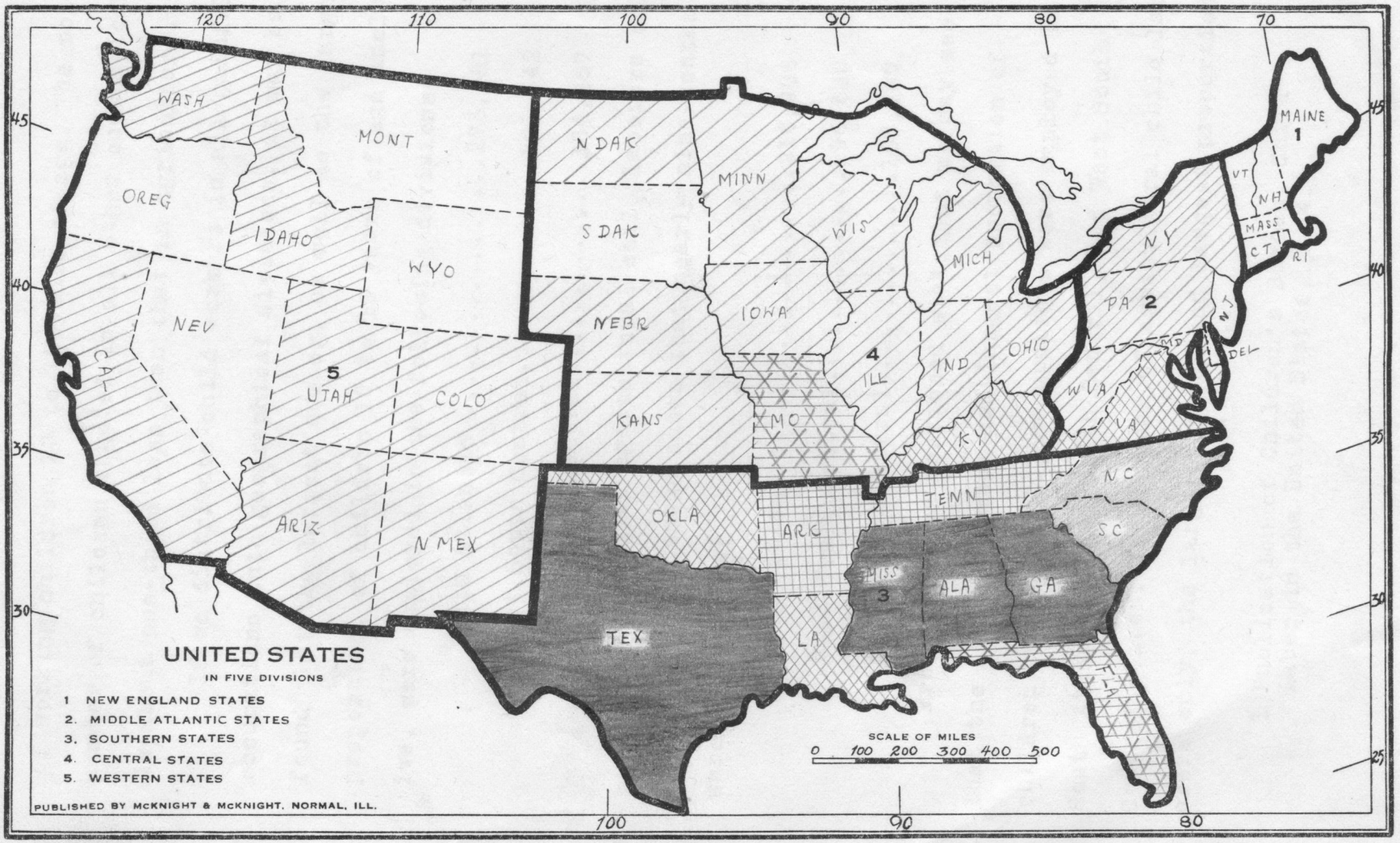
1 Publication of Children's Bureau, Child Labor in the United States, p. 10.
2 Fourteenth Census of U.S. Occupations of Children, p. 12.

Map II

Number of Children 10 to 15 Engaged in Agriculture, by States, in 1920.
(Fourteenth Census of the United States, Population: 1920)



65,000 To 77,000

50,000 To 56,000

32,000 To 45,000

15,000 To 23,000

7,000 To 9,000

1,000 To 5,000

of working children 10 to 15 years of age. The total number of children engaged in all other occupations is about one-third less than that in agriculture.[1]

If we distribute child workers in all gainful occupations into geographical divisions, it may be found that the largest number, as well as the largest proportion, of children 10 to 15 years of age inclusive, were employed in the following divisions:

South Atlantic.....273,981

East South Central.....221,342

West South Central.....184,267

In speaking of agricultural child laborers only, the Fourteenth Census shows that nearly nine-tenths were employed in:

South Atlantic.....214,906

East South Central.....196,620

West South Central.....158,187

From the above mentioned statement we may see that the largest number and largest proportion of children in all gainful occupations were employed in South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central states. If we speak of agricultural child laborers only, the largest number and largest proportion

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau, Child Labor in the United States, p. 4.

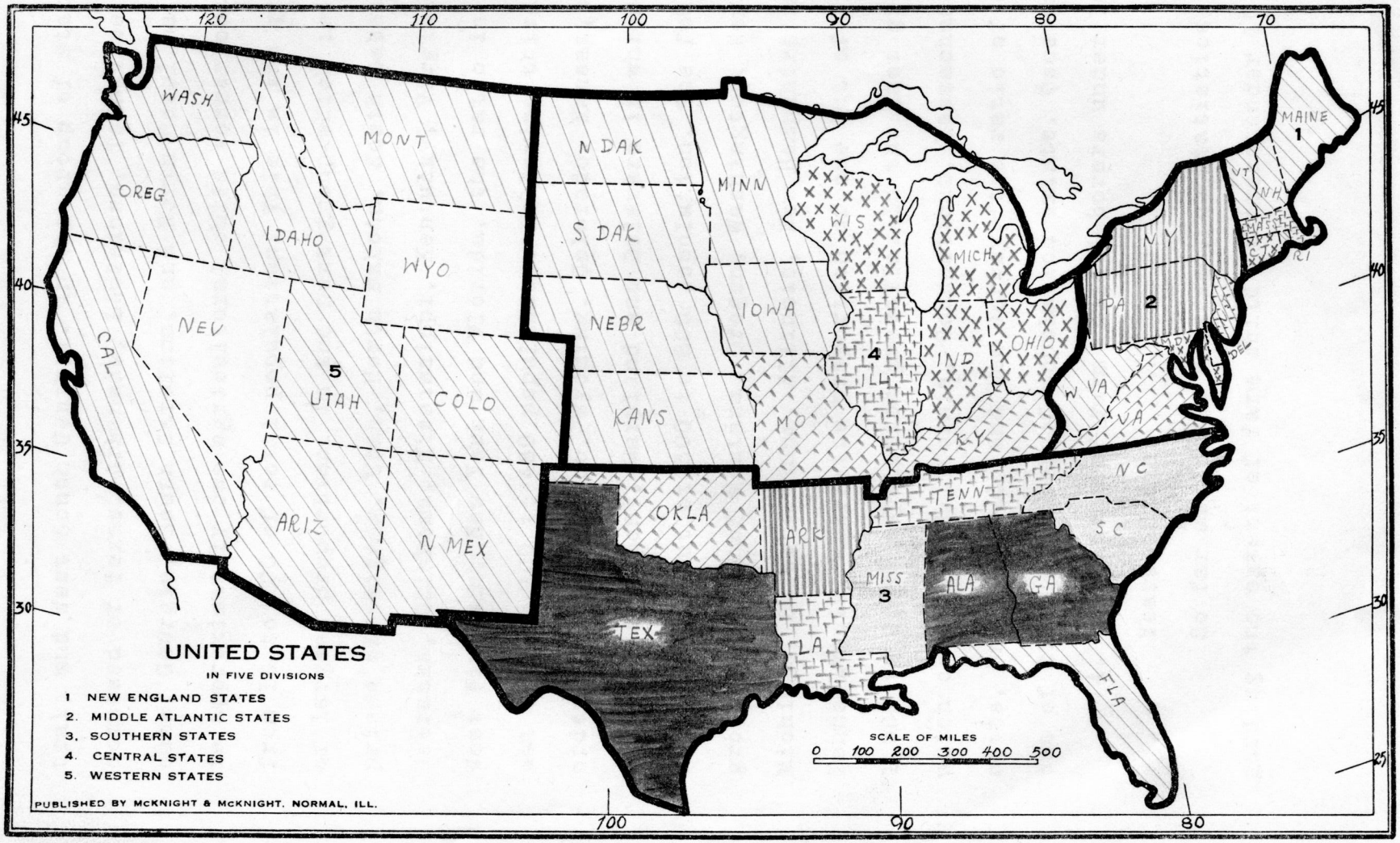
were also employed in these three divisions. About nine-tenths of the former group and seven-tenths of the latter are found there. The South Atlantic division is the greatest center for both groups of child laborers. The remaining divisions rank as follows in this respect: Second, East South Central; third, West South Central. (see Map 3)

The same situation is found in the individual states. Those in which the largest number and largest proportion of children in all gainful occupations have been employed show as well the largest number and largest proportion of agricultural child workers. In Georgia, for example, there was a total number of 88,134 children 10 to 15 years of age engaged in all gainful occupations, the largest number of any in its group. Georgia also had the greatest number of agricultural child workers, 77,105, which was equaled only by Alabama. States like North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Mississippi had the next largest number for both of these two groups of child workers. (see Map 2)

If the number of children engaged in agriculture may be roughly estimated in proportion to the total population of each state, one will still find that with the exception of Maine, the greatest centers remain in the same divisions: South Atlantic, East South Cen-

Map III

Number of Children 10 to 15 Engaged in all Gainful Occupations, by States, in 1920.



80,000 and over

60,000 to 70,000

45,000 to 55,000

30,000 to 40,000

22,000 to 26,000

10,000 to 20,000

1,000 to 10,000

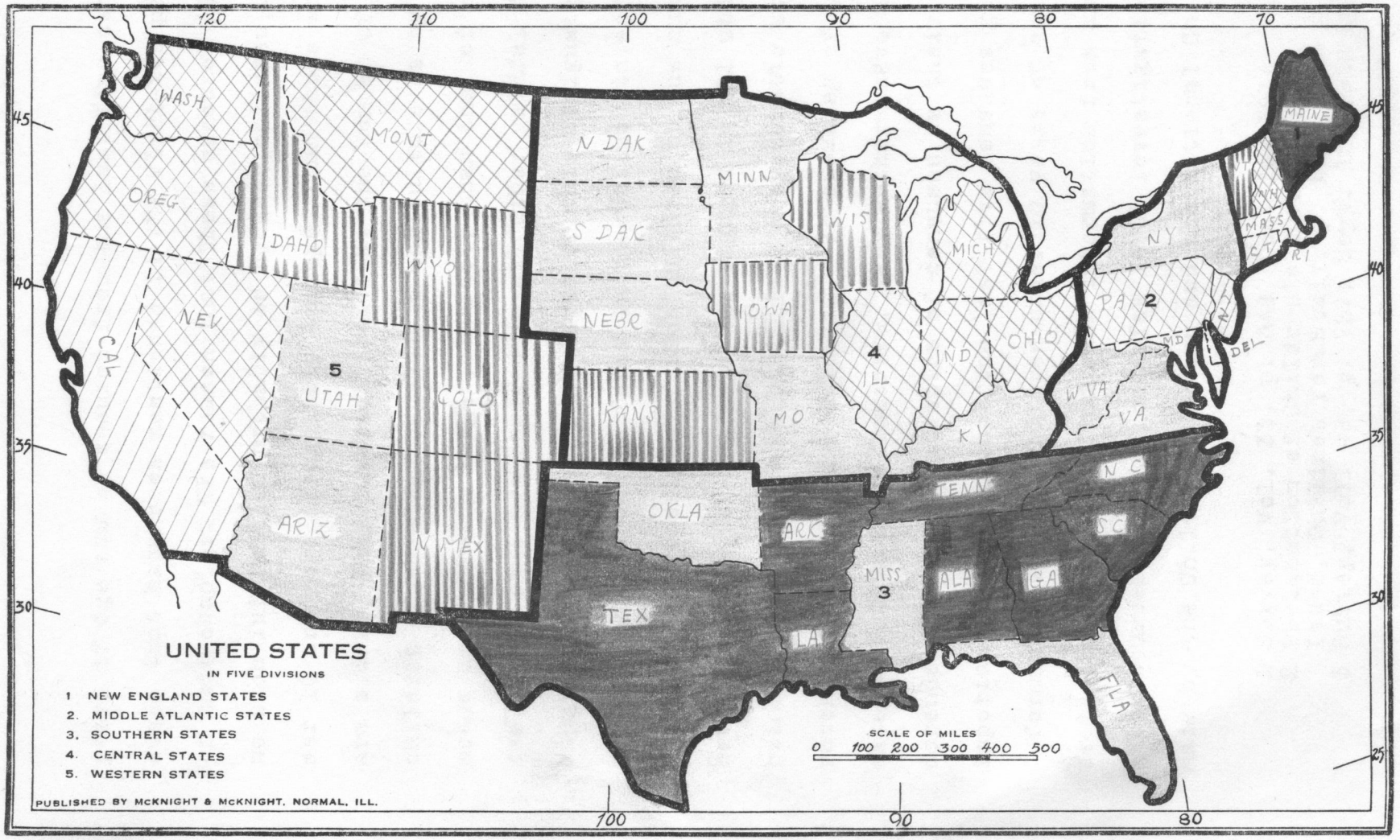
tral, and West South Central. In the group of states composed of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, there is approximately one agricultural child worker out of from 10 to 100 of total population. This is the group of largest proportion. In the next group which is comprised of Arizona, Utah, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, New York and Florida, the ratio is one out of from 100 to 450 population. Following third in order come New Mexico, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Vermont, Maryland and Delaware in which the ratio is one out ot 500 to 800 population. The fourth group consists of Montana, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania, where the proportion of one out of from 1,000 to 2,000 population prevails. In the last group which comprises California, Connecticut, Massachussetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey, the ratio of one out of 2,000 and over of population exists. (see Map 4)

4. The Extent of Farm Child Laborers under 10 Years of Age.

So far as I have observed, no statistics regarding the extent of farm child laborers under 10

Map IV

Proportion of Children 10 to 15 Engaged in Agriculture to the Total Population, by States, in 1920.



One farm child worker out of 10 to 100 population

One farm child worker out of 100 to 450 population

One farm child worker out of 500 to 800 population

One farm child worker out of 1,000 to 2,000 population

One farm child worker out of 2,000 and over

years of age can be secured from the last five censuses that have been mentioned in the first two parts of this chapter. The reason that these censuses give no such information probably is because children under 10 are more irregularly employed than those who are older.[1] Many have declared that the number of children of this age engaged in agriculture is by no means small, being larger, in fact, than that of children of the same age engaged in all other gainful occupations. But how many children of this designated age have worked on the farms in the United States? What is the proportion of such children to the number of children of the same age engaged in all other gainful occupations? We still lack a systematic study which indicates this relation.[2,3] In speaking of the extent of farm child laborers, many authors have always depended upon the statistics of censuses as their most important sources. Since the last five censuses give no information on farm children under 10 years of age, it seems that we cannot find such information from any other sources except from a few local investigations made by the Children's Bureau and the National Child

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1 Survey, Vol. 33, p. 342, Dec. 26, 1914.
2 Publication of Children's Bureau, Child Labor, Outlines for Study, p. 13.
3 Survey, Vol. 48, p. 729, Sept. 15, 1922

Labor Committee.

Some of the local investigations which mentioned the number and per cent of farm child laborers under 10 years of age are very helpful for the present purpose. Unfortunately, most of them showed nothing about the number and per cent, but only stated that there were some children who were employed at that age.

In the beet fields of Colorado, according to an investigation made by the Children's Bureau, 1,073 children between 6 and 16 had worked during the season of 1920. Of this number, over one-fourth were less than 10 years of age. The child labor law of Colorado, like that of most states, exempts agricultural work from its minimum-age provision, and children may be put to work at any age. Four children even younger than 6 years had worked a part of each day for from one to eight weeks.[1] (see the following table)

Children under 10 years of age working in the beet fields of Colorado

Age of child	Number	Per cent
Under 6.....	4	------
6 years, under 7.....	15	1.4
7 year, under 8.....	56	5.2
8 year, under 9.....	91	8.5
9 year, under 10.....	127	11.8
Total	293	26.9

1 Publications of Children's Bureau, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 18-19.

It is seen that 293, or over 26.9 per cent, of 1,073 children who had worked in the beet fields were not over 10 years of age. The percentage of children at the stated age in the beet fields of Michigan was about the same. It has been found that 763 children between 6 and 16 years of age were employed in the beet fields of that state. About one in four was less than 10 years of age.[1]

Children under 10 years of age working in the beet fields of Michigan

Age of child	Number	Per cent
6 years, under 7	16	2.1
7 years, under 8	38	5.0
8 years, under 9	52	6.8
9 years, under 10	91	11.9
Total	197	25.8

Another investigation, made by the Children's Bureau in Maryland in 1923, may be given here to show the difference in the extent of farm child laborers under 10 years of age. There were 218 white and 322 negro children who had worked on the truck farms of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, in the season of 1923. Of these children, 8.3 per cent had not reached their eighth, and 28.5 per cent their tenth birthday. The article shows that 36.8 per cent of the total working

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 85-86.

children were under 10 years of age. The number of child workers on Eastern Shore truck farms of Maryland was 790. Of these children, 33 per cent were under 10 years of age. Migratory laborers' children are excluded. The investigation indicates that the percentages of these two sections are larger than those of Colorado and Michigan.[1]

From some other findings we may see that children as young as 5 picked cotton in Oklahoma,[2] and, in the Imperial Valley of California and in Texas, children at an even younger age than 5 were employed in the cotton fields.[3,4] Many children under 10 years of age have been found in the tobacco fields of Kentucky. If statistics on the number of children of this age who have worked on the farms in the United States were available this phase of the subject might be more adequately treated, but it seems impossible to secure such information at the present time.

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms, p.7, 38.
2 Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 98, p. 149.
3 Ibid., Vol. 32, Supplements, p. 4.
4 Current History, New York Times, Vol. 16 p. 618, July 1922

Chapter 3

The Types and Conditions of Farmwork in Which Children Are Engaged

When we speak of the children working in agriculture, no definite idea of the work they are doing is conveyed. It is necessary to indicate the types and conditions of the work in which children are engaged.

1. General Tyes of Farmwork

There are three types:

(a) that which children perform for their parents on the home farms.

(b) that which children perform for wages, i. e., those who are working out.

(c) that which children perform for their parents, but under contract, as, for example, in the beet fields and the asparagus fields.[1]

The first is the most common of these three types. It results because the parents customarily have the right to keep their children working at home, and their

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1 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 270,271.

help is necessary. This type of children may be liberally termed as home workers. On the other hand, the child who is employed for wages has been usually regarded as a regular farm laborer because he is engaged in a gainful agricultural occupation. The third type of agricultural child labor is difficult to classify. The child is working with his parents but not for them; he is employed for profit and yet enters into no direct contract with his employer. He is employed as a member of a family rather than as an individual.

"Various arrangements are made in different industries. In describing the method by which children are secured to work in the asparagus fields, for instance, the Sacramento Star states:

The grower notifies an Oakland or San Francisco agency that he desires a certain number of cutters. The agent goes to the poorer sections of the cities, usually picking districts filled with Mexican, Italian, or Portuguese families.

The agent ascertains that a certain family has, for instance, six children old enough to work. He contracts with their father for eight asparagus cutters, the children and their parents. No mention is made in the contract of the fact that six of the cutters are children." 1

In the beet industry, the method is different. Families are imported in the spring, apportioned a tract of land, the acreage depending upon the number of workers, and paid a specified amount per acre

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1 National Child Labor Committee-The American Child, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 271.

for the cultivation and harvesting of the crop.

There are many variations in the arrangements in the different agricultural industries, ranging from that of the tenant family who keep half the crop, to that of the day laborer's family who go out each day during the spring season. The line between the children of these families and those o who are hired out is not sharp.

2. Specified Types of Farmwork

The work which children are doing on the farms is different in kind as well as in nature. An investigation made in West Virginia by the National Child Labor Committee shows us an excellent classification of the types of farmwork which is applicable to most any state.[1] A simple diagram may be drawn in accordance with this method of investigation to show the types of farmwork.

Diagram

1. General farming — general grain farming; general live stock farming
2. Dairy farming — all kinds of dairy products
3. Truck and market-garden farming — raising of vegetables

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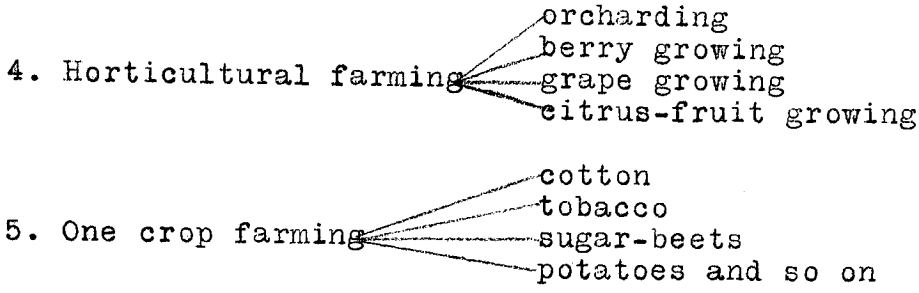
1 National Child Labor Committee, Rural Child Welfare, p. 56-57.



The first type is called general farming, its crops consisting of corn, small grain, hay, and truck for home consumption. It is divided into two sub-types according to the method of disposing of the crops; if the grain and hay are marketed as such, the sub-type is called general grain farming, but if sufficient live stock is kept so that the major portion of the crops is consumed, it is called general live stock farming.

Dairy farming, while similar in many respects to live stock farming has some distinct features. A dairy herd must receive better care than butcher animals, the milking must be done, and the marketing of the dairy products requires work of a kind quite different from that required for the disposal of other farm products.

The truck and market-garden type of farming, found especially near the centers of population, is the intensive cultivation of vegetables for immediate consumption. The acreage devoted to individual farms of this type is comparatively small, and a great amount of hand work is

required.

Horticultural farming may be divided into four main types: orcharding, berry-growing, grape-growing, and citrus-fruit growing.

These types in a general way cover the field of agriculture. Each offers a distinct kind of work at which children may be engaged, in addition to the tasks common to all.

In the one crop farming, the major operations center around one cultivable crop. The kind of crop depends on the section of the country, the soil and the climate. Chief among such crops are cotton, tobacco, potatoes, sugar-beets and so on.

On the general grain farm, only the children, usually those from 14 years upwards, can be used to any advantage in preparing the soil for the spring planting. Young children can be used everywhere for thinning and hoeing. A child of from 10 years upwards can cultivate corn with a single plow, but it takes an adult or a stronger child to operate a two horse, or single row cultivator. On this type of farm, harvesting of small grain is the next major operation. When bundles are hauled to the barn or thresher, small children can pack on the wagon, or even pitch bundles upon the wagon or

into the thresher. The hay harvest offers greater opportunity for the employment of children. A small child can drive a mowing machine, a rake, or a horse to the hay fork, can fork hay into a cock, can pitch it on the wagon, can pack it on the wagon or in the hay mow or stack. Where corn is cut and shocked in the field, small children can be employed also.

The general live stock farm offers the same opportunities for employing children, and, in addition, feeding, watering, and bedding the stock and handling the manure.

The dairy farm offers all the work found on a live stock farm, and, in addition, milking, cleaning utensils, caring for and marketing the dairy products.

The work on a one crop farm depends somewhat on the kind of crop grown. The work which children are doing in the cotton and sugar-beet fields will be mentioned later, and at this point potato and onion farming will be discussed.

The method of raising potatoes depends to a great extent on the acreage devoted to the crop. Where there is a large acreage the potatoes are planted, cultivated, and harvested with machinery, but where the acreage is small, most of the work is done by hand and with simple

tools. In the former case, a child would ordinarily find no employment, but in the latter, a child from 10 years of age and upwards can be used at dropping seed, covering with a hoe, cutting weeds, and hoeing the crop, When the crop is plowed out with a single plow, children who are very young can pick up the potatoes, placing them in baskets.

Onion farming requires work of a similar nature to sugar-beet farming, and in the same operations of thinning, hoeing, and pulling, children can be used.

In market gardening most of the work must also be done by hand. The plants must be set out, weeds pulled and cut with a hoe, and vegetables and truck harvested and prepared for market. Children can be used for all the hand operations.

Aside from piling brush after pruning, a child cannot be used in orcharding before picking time. The picking must be done by hand, and a child under 10 years of age cannot do much of this. The pickers can also pack the fruit.

While citrus-fruit growing is different in many respects, the work at which children can be used is similar, in the main, to that in orcharding.

The principal work which children are doing in the berry fields is picking the berries. Besides this,

the plants must be weeded and cultivated as are other farm crops.

Aside from the cutting of weedd and the cultivation of the vines, vineyarding offers two distinct types of work for children. In the spring they can tie the vines to the wires, and in the late summer they can pick the grapes. The bunches are cut off with a sharp knife, placed in a large basket, and carried to barrels or boxes.

3. Specified Farmwork in Different Regions

The farmwork in which children are engaged generally varies in different regions. For example, most of the agricultural child workers in Texas and in the Imperial Valley of California are engaged in the cotton fields, in New Jersey in the cranberry fields, in Maryland on the truck farms, and in Colorado and Michigan in the sugar-beet fields.

Cotton picking in Texas and Imperial Valley

Most of the child workers on the farms of Texas are cotton pickers. Cotton picking itself is not hard work. The slightest pulling of the cotton separates it from the stalk, and children do not have to bend over. It is very hot, however, in Texas and Imperial Valley; the sun beats down with great intensity, and

there is considerable glare. The cotton pickers usually have a long, loose strap of material at the opening of their bags. This is slipped over the child's head, and he straddles the big bag. The opening is about his waist, and he simply reaches out, picks the cotton, and puts it in the bag which drags behind him.[1] The work is from sun-up to sun-down; the days are long; the work is deadly monotonous.[2]

Cotton fields are everywhere in the Imperial Valley. They are crowded with pickers, and among them the "children are thick as bees", as they say. All kinds of children pick, even those as young as three years. Five-year-old children pick steadily all day.[3]

Child workers in the cranberry fields of New Jersey

Children were drafted from the Philadelphia tenements to work in the cranberry bogs of Atlantic, Burlington, and Ocean Counties from which the bulk of the New Jersey berries come. They toil in a soggy soil under a burning sun, stung to desperation by swarms of mosquitoes and flies, and are kept at work during nine

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1 Survey, Vol. 31, p. 589-92, Feb. 1914.
2 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 236, 249.
3 Ibid., Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 66.

hours or more, in some cases seven days a week.[1]

From the day that the work begins, it is driven at top speed, for early frosts are imminent, and frost spells loss. The workers are set at the poorer bearing sections first, the "fat" picking being left until later on the theory that they will rush their work faster if they see the fruitful vines beyond. Children who are too small to keep abreast of the advancing line are set to carrying or dragging the "peck" measures across the bog and up the row to the bushelman. On the average, these measures weigh about 15 pounds, filled.

Children employed on the truck farms of Maryland

Children in this area work on almost all the crops that are raised there. The most important crops are green beans, green peas, tomatoes, strawberries, cantaloupes, and sweet potatoes, but sweet corn, cabbage, squash, green peppers, and eggplant are also grown.[2,3] White children do a greater variety of work than negro children. The latter are usually hired only for picking strawberries, beans, peas, and tomatoes,

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1 Good Housekeeping, Vol. 57, p. 669.
2 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor on the Maryland Truck Farms, No. 123, p. 7-11.
3 National Child Labor Committee- Child Labor Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 72-73.

though occasionally for transplanting, hoeing, and weeding. Children under 10 years of age are employed only at picking and at the easier kinds of planting and transplanting, but older girls, in addition to such work, also plow, cultivate, and harrow.

Children employed in the tobacco fields of Kentucky and Connecticut Valley

Kentucky leads the states in the production of tobacco which forms more than a quarter of its agricultural products. Children even 4 and 5 years of age are occasionally used for worming and suckering, and the older children's hours are commonly from sun-up to sun-down.[1] Children commonly work as many hours as do the other persons, that is, from sun-rise to sun-set, planting, hoeing, cultivating, worming, suckering, topping, cutting, spiking, housing, and stripping. Indeed, the only task in tobacco culture which children do not perform is firing, which is done in the barn where the crop is housed and requires the care a and judgement of an adult.[2]

In the tobacco fields of Connecticut Valley the task for boys is to pick the leaves from the stem and lay them on the ground, from which place they are brought

1 National Child Labor Committee- Pamphlet No. 284, Children in Agriculture, p. 7-8.
2 National Child Labor Committee- Pamphlet No. 274, Farmwork and Schools in Kentucky.

to the sheds. In the sheds the girls string the leaves on the laths. This process consists of taking a needle and a piece of twine and piercing the leaves near the stem. When about forty leaves ar pierced, the twine is fastened, leaving the leaves in a suspended position.

Child labor in the onion fields of Ohio

Conditions in the onion fields of this state are less favorable, a larger number of children being employed at a lower age, the average being about 11 years. Many boys and girls are working in the onion and celery farms under a speeding-up system. The work of onion weeding necessitates crawling on hands and knees through mucky soil, and children are completely exhausted by the work.[1]

Children employed in the beet fields of Michigan and Colorado

The largest sugar-beet fields of the country are situated in these two states. There are great numbers of children who are working on these farms. The types of work offered to the children in these two states are the same, namely, blocking, thinning, hoeing, pulling, and topping. The working conditions are not much

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1 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 269.

different in these states.

When the beet seedlings shoot a few inches above the ground about the first of June or a little earlier, the work of thinning and blocking begins. The blocker, usually an adult, works down the long rows of beets, chopping out the superfluous plants with a hoe. Close to his heels come the little children, both boys and girls, most of them clad in overalls. Straddling the beet row, they kneel, and crawl from plant to plant on hands and knees. They usually work at high speed, for thinning must be completed before the plants grow too large.

Hoeing requires more physical strength than the thinning process, and many of the small children who work at thinning, or at pulling, do not hoe. By thorough cultivation between the rows the farmer can make the work of hoeing much easier, but even when the land is clean hand hoeing between the plants involves considerable exertion.

When the word goes out from the factory to begin the harvest, the farmer with a horse-drawn machine loosens the beets and lifts them to the surface. They must be pulled from the loose soil, struck together in

order to knock off the dirt caked upon them, and thrown into the piles. The smaller children usually pull up the beets and throw them into the piles for the adults or larger children to top, but this division of the work depends on the working force, and occupations are shifted as the occasion demands.

Steady topping and lifting along the beet rows day in and day out for several weeks is heavy work, and it is probably this work of pulling and topping that requires the greatest amount of physical effort on the children's part.

Serious discomfort is experienced by the worker in that the thick, rank beet-tops are often heavy with frost, which comes early in the mountain regions, and the workers are soon soaked from the knees down unless, as is rarely the case, they wear high rubber boots. Often the clothing freezes stiff in the frosty air, and only by mid-day does the warm sun dry off the cotton skirts of the overalls. In wet years the workers say that they "get muddy to the skin" During the last weeks of the harvest, light snowfalls frequently add to the discomfort. The children's hands are chapped and bleeding from the cold. .....

1 Publication of Children's Bureau, No. 115, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p.26-30, 89-92

Chapter 4

Wages of Agricultural Child Labor

1. Agricultural Child Workers Who Are Paid No Wages

Most of the agricultural working children receive no regular wages with the exception of those who are working out as farm helpers.

The census of 1920 reported that 647,309 children 10 to 15 years of age were engaged in agricultural pursuits. Of this number, 63,990 were reported as farm laborers working out, that is, on a farm away from home. The other 583,319 children worked on the home farms. The children who are working out as farm laborers are paid in an amount of money. On the other hand, the youngsters who work on the home farms usually get no regular wages besides "board and keep". They are help hands of their parents who are either farm owners or tenants.

There is still another class of child workers who are working with their parents but not for them; they are employed for wages and yet enter into no direct contract with their employers. They are employed

as members of the family rather than as individuals. These youngsters are children of contract laborers. They work for their parents but receive no wages themselves.

2. The Disposition of Children's Wages

The 260,195 hired-out children, as reported by the 1920 census, might be classified in two groups: regular farm hands and irregular farm hands. Those who are employed by month or longer terms are regular farm hands, while those who are working out only a few days and are generally helping a neighbor during the harvest season might be called irregular farm hands. Both of them receive a sum of wages. It is interesting to know: where the wages are going. However, it is very difficult to know the disposition of the wages earned by all the children working out because we lack such statistical data. The following table is an illustration of what becomes of their earnings. This investigation covers 55 children working out in West Virginia.[1]

Disposition of Earnings

Number:	Number	Percent
Giving earnings to parents	22	40
Required to buy clothing with earnings	23	42
Not required to buy clothing or to give earnings to parents	10	18

1 National Child Labor Committee- Rural Child Welfare, p. 87-88.

Twenty-two, or 40 per cent, of the children who worked away from home were required to give their earnings to their parents; 42 per cent were required to buy clothing for themselves, which took all their earnings; and only 18 per cent had their money to use in other ways. Why do children give their earnings to their parents? Poverty, I believe, is the factor to be condemned for this condition.

It is seen that only 10 children out of 55 could have their own wages, while 45, or 82 per cent, seemingly were no better off than those who worked on the home farms.

3. The Cheap Laborers in Agriculture

Many have reported child labor as an industrial crime simply because the employers exploited the child in paying him a low wage.

The following statements lead me to believe that low wages are a cause of child labor rather than a result.

"I would be a fool to obey the child labor laws and pay the wages I should have to pay for adult help when all the adjoining ranches work children. I'd be at a disadvantage; I could not compete with them". 1

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1 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 248.

"The origin of child labor grew out of the sordid desires of employers to secure labor at the lowest possible cost, regardless of nature or the law of man, and the same selfish consideration would serve to exterminate child labor when it is no longer profitable to use it." 2

"There is a strong connection between child labor and low wages. There is not a doubt in my mind but that if the employer had to pay as much for the child labor as for the adult labor there would be no child labor problem. The child is thus brought into competition with adult labor and what is the result? Both child and adult get starvation wages. As long as the man and woman have to compete with children they cannot struggle effedtively for fairer wages. And as long as their own earnings are pitifully small, the children cannot expect to receive more than they now do." 3

From the foregoing statements we may see that children receive low wages because, if the employers had to pay them the wages which adults received, they would not hire children.

4. The Wages Paid to the Agricultural Child Laborers

The wages paid to the hired children on the farms differ from one region to another. Many of the investigations regarding the conditions of agricultural child laborers give no systematical records about their wages. However, a very brief statement may be made, in accordance with a few local studies, to give

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2 Good Housekeeping, Vol. 57, p. 171.
3 National Child Labor Committee, Child Labor Bulletin, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 55.

some idea of the wages which children have earned.

Children employed in the tobacco fields of Connecticut Valley are paid from $1.50 to $3.00 a day for 9½ to 10 hours of work.[1]

Children employed in general agriculture and truck-gardening of Ohio are paid on the average $1.00 per day for 10 working hours.[2]

The young cotton pickers in Imperial Valley are not paid a lower price rate than adults, but the price rate paid to the adults is no better than a child's wage. Strong, able-bodied men are seldom seen picking cotton. No one can judge cotton pickers' probable earnings by the rate per pound. The first picking is paid for at from $1.50 to $1.75 and sometimes $2.00 per hundred pounds. Later pickings require more labor and time to secure a given amount, and the same man, woman or child may pick fewer pounds and earn less at $3.00 per hundred pounds than he could make at the first picking at half that rate. Young boys of from 10 to 16 can sometimes pick more than adults. A boy of 12 picked as much as 186 pounds in one day at the rate of 2 cents a pound. The following are examples of earnings which

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1 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 269
2 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 268

the family secured. In one case a:

"Father and two children aged 12 and 8, $97.67 in a week or an average of $16.27 per person per week."

Another family of:

"Father, mother, and four children, $121.68 in two weeks, or average of $10.14 per person per week."

In another instance:

"Father, mother, and two children earned $126.91 in two weeks, or average of $15.86 per person per week." 1

In the case of children who work in the beet fields of Colorado and Michigan, the wages are paid to their families instead of to individuals because the families are regarded as units of employment in the contract.

Colorado: The company agents when recruiting labor promised $30.00 an acre including all processes.

"The largest group of families worked from 30 to 40 acres, and half of those had an acreage of less than 30. Among the 331 families in the present study (made by the Children's Bureau in Colorado and Michigan) that had worked all the season and that reported their earnings, the largest group was that whose earnings were between $800 and $1,000. Somewhat less than one-fifth of the families were in this group. They totaled 254 workers; two-fifths of them were children, the most usual working combination being two adults and two children. Three-tenths of the laborers' fami-

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1 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 250-251.

lies earned less than $800, 41, or one-eighth of them earning even less than $600. Nearly half of these 41 families had, however, but two workers. About one-half the families earned $1,000 or over. Over one-seventh received between $1,000 and $1,200 for their work on the beet crop, the combination of workers most often found being again two adults and two children. There were two families where one adult and two children had brought in this amount, and others where there had been seven workers. One-third earned from $1,200 to $2,000, including 34 families where there were but two adult workers over 16 years of age and 2 families with but one adult. The number of children in a family varied from one to six. Ten families, or 3 per cent, earned from $2,000 to $2,600, and there were in these families 71 workers, 37 of whom were children." 1

Since the employers paid their laborers regarding families as units, the children's wages are very difficult to estimate separately.

Michigan: "According to the average acreage cared for per child as based on reports of the families visited, the child who worked in all processes earned an average, including the bonus, of from $114 to $122, according to the distance between the rows. Although some families declared that the work was profitable because the children can help, others s seemed to realize the disadvantages of an income earned by the whole family. One father remarked, 'I can make as much in two weeks in the factory as all four and I make together in a month in the beets, and another who was a street cleaner in Bay City said, 'The whole family work and work hard, and we are no better off here than we were in the city where only the father worked." 2.

The wages paid to the child workers on the truck farms of Maryland may be seen from an investigation

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 61-62.
2 Ibid., p. 113.

which was made in 1923 by the Children's Bureau.

Children who were hired by farmers other than their parents were usually paid the prevailing rates for piece-work, by the basket or the row. The wages for a five-eighths bushel of beans were from 25 to 30 cents, for a bushel of peas, 30 to 35 cents, and for a five-eighths bushel of tomatoes, 4 cents. Some children who weeded and hoed were paid by the row; the rate, which varied with the length of the row and the amount of grass in it, was usually from 10 to 25 cents a row. When the children were paid for general farm work by time, the rates widely varied with each farmer and each child, the children usually receiving from 10 to 30 cents an hour. These rates sometimes varied with the age of the child and the kind of work. One child, for example, received 10 cents an hour for weeding tomatoes and 15 cents an hour for dropping sweet-potatoes. Another child received 15 cents for dropping and 20 cents for setting. One child of five years was given 10 cents a day for dropping sweet potatoes.[1]

A comparison between the wages of the adult farm

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau, Child Labor on the Maryland Truck Farms, p. 16-17.

laborers and the children may be roughly made as a conclusion to the foregoing statements, even though it covers only a few regions. Besides,the daily wages of the child workers in the beet fields of Colorado, in the cotton fields of California, and on the truck farms of Maryland cannot be well estimated. The rest may be compared as follows:

Children in the tobacco fields of Connecticut earned about $2.00 a day on the average in 1921. The monthly wage for a child would be $60.00. The average monthly wage for an adult was $75.54. The latter amount is nearly 26 per cent more than the former.

Children engaged in general agriculture and truck-gardening of Ohio are paid on the average $1.00 per day. This amounts to $30.00 per month. The average monthly wage for an adult was $70.09. The proportion of comparison would be that an adult earned about 133 per cent more than a child.

In the beet fields of Michigan, a child who worked for all the processes earned an average seasonal wage of about $120.00. The beet season lasts about three months. Then, the average monthly wage for a child would be $40.00, while an adult's was $70.09. The latter figure shows a relative value of

75 per cent more than the former.[1,2]

It is seen that the wages earned by the children are lower than those paid to the adults. These estimates given above may be considered as typical of the other great agricultural regions.

5. The Economic Evils of Low Wages and No-wages

The children who worked with their parents, for example, in the beet fields of Colorado and Michigan, are paid a low wage from which they cannot make a decent living. Those who worked on the home farms are paid nothing besides "board and keep". Since the children worked hard and obtained no wages, there arise some economic evils to cast a shadow over them. "If a child is a partner in the work of the farm, he should be a partner in the profits. If he has a personal interest in his affairs the drudgery is lightened. A fourteen-year- old boy, talking about the work on the farm and how he liked it, said, 'I arn't goin' to stay here much longer; I have to work myself to death and don't get nothing out of it; never get to nowhure. I don't like it and arn't goin' to stay!' With such treatment, he may economically become a social misfit, a person

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1 The wage figures for adults have been quoted in Chapter 1, p. 4.
2 The wage figures for both adults and children were taken in 1920 except that for the children in Connecticut which was taken in 1921/

disliking work of any kind, a drag on society. Many farm boys reach maturity owning nothing. All they have made has gone back to the farm. At maturity they must start with what their father gives them or nothing. They do not acquire the habit of saving, for they have nothing to save."[1] This condition will surely bring a bad influence into the future life of the children.

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1 National Child Labor Committee- Rural Child Welfare, p. 85-86.

Chapter 5

Hours and Duration of Farmwork

It is very difficult to obtain accurate data regarding the hours and the duration which children work because farmwork is somewhat irregular. The number of hours varies from day to day, and from one crop to another.

Children who work on the home farms are helping hands of their parents. So far as I have observed, there are no regular working hours fixed for them.

The children working out and the children of contract laborers are usually working from sun-up to sundown. Six o'clock may be regarded as the usual hour for beginning work, but on some farms children start as early as 4:30 or 5 o'clock.

1. The Exemption of Agricultural Child Labor from the Hour-limit of State Child Labor Laws

In states whose child labor laws have a blanket provision fixing the working hour limit for children under a certain age in all gainful occupations,

agricultural work is excepted generally. The exemptions are based upon a general assumption that the child on the farm is in every way more fortunate than the child employed in manufacturing, mining, and trade, and consequently has relatively little need of protection other than that afforded by his parents.[1]

There are twenty states out of forty-eight in the Union which have fixed the exemption of hour-limit in their child labor laws.[2] (see Table 1)

In the twenty mentioned states, the exemption of agricultural child labor from the hour-limit is exactly fixed in their child labor laws. In the other twenty-eight states, the hour-limits are applied only to the children who work in factories, manufacturing establishments, mills, mines, and any other gainful occupations, but say nothing about whether agricultural child labor is exempted or not. However, we may say that in these twenty-eight states the exemption of agricultural child labor from the hour-limit is tacitly recognized because of the fact that their child labor laws are not applied to agricultural child labor.

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1 National Child Labor Committee. Child Labor Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 176.
2 Ibid., Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 1-77.

Table 1

Examption of Agricultural Child Labor from the Hour-limit Fixed in State Child Labor Laws

State	Hour-limit	Examption
Arizona	8 hours a day	Farm work & domestic service
Alabama	60 hours a week	work carried on outdoors
California	8 hours a day, 48 a week.	agriculture, horiculture, viticulture, & domestic service.
Delawere	9 hours a day, 54 a week.	agriculture and domestic service
Florida	9 hours a ady 6 days a week.	household or agricultural work.
Indiana	8 hours a day, 48 a week.	domestic and agriculture.
Kenturky	10 hours a day, 60 a week.	agriculture and domestic service
Louisiana	10 hours a day, 60 a week.	domestic or agricultural industries
Minnesota	10 hours a day.	farm laborers, domestic servants, & those in care of live stock.
Missouri	8 hours a day, 48 a week.	domestic and agriculture
New Hamshire	11 hours a day, 58 a week.	domestic and agricultural service
Ohio	8 hours a day, 48 a week.	agriculture and domestic.
Oklahoma	8 hours a day, 48 a week.	agriculture and domestic
Pennsylvinia	10 hours a day, 58 a week.	domestic and farm labor.
Rhode Island	10 hours a day, 56 a week.	agriculture and domestic service.
South Dakota	10 hours a day.	stores, agriculture, or domestic service.
Utah	54 hours a week.	agriculture, canning, or domestic service.
Virginia	10 hours a day.	paking fruit and vegetables.
Washington	8 hours a day, no limit per week.	farm or house work.
Wisconsin	8 hours a day, 48 a week.	agriculture.

2. Difficulties in the Enforcement of Compulsory Attendance Law

Since the state child labor laws are only applied to children who work in the factories, mills, etc. the agricultural child workers are seemingly unprotected. The only hope would be in the enforcement of the compulsory attendance law. Under this law, children are not allowed to leave school to go to work when they are of school age. If this law is well enforced the farm children would not be exploited as they now are. Unfortunately, the enforcement has been handicapped in many of the rural communities. The difficulties may be mentioned in the following statement.

It has been reported that school principals are sometimes willing to violate the law by issuing certificates of employment to the children because they find that the children are not making progress in the work at school, or because they think that their earnings are needed at home.[1]

A very special difficulty is that presented by destitute families. The poor families cannot afford to have a well-grown boy above 10 years of age removed

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1 Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1918, p. 657.

from money-earning employment to be sent to school. For this reason, many of the children of those families are deprived of the privilege of free public school. The law usually cannot be efficiently enforced in the rural communities where school accomodations are inadequate, where population is heterogeneous or sparse and indifferent to educational interest, as in the mountain regions of the South.[2,3]

An investigation, made in West Virginia by the National Child Labor Committee, shows that the wholesale non-attendance of the rural school during the farm season is due to the failure to enforce the compulsory attendance law. In many cases, as the investigation re-

d, the attendance officer is bound to incur the
lity of the parents. No one is willing to "get in
" with his neighbors,and local officers will not
a case. Owing to this inefficient administration,
ggested a reform plan that the district system be
ced by a county administration.[4]

It is seen that the compulsory attendance law is
f the best law against child labor, but the trouble
in inefficient enforcement. Since the state legis-

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2 Ibid., 1905, p. 111-113.
3 Ibid., 1912, p. 403.
4 National Child Labor Committee, Rural Child Welfare, p. 103, 136.

latures have established no law for agricultural child labor, the protection of farm children is placed on the enforcement of this law. The difficulties given above must be removed. As soon as the difficulties are removed, this law would be efficiently enforced , and the means for protecting the farm children would be afforded thereby.

3. Working Hours in Certain Specified Agricultural Pursuits

Usually there are no fixed hours for the children who work on the farms as is true of those who are employed in the manufacturing, mechanical, and factory establishments. However, there are some investigations that have been made regarding the hours which children work in some agricultural pursuits, and these will throw some light upon the question of working hours for agricultural child laborers. The facts given in the following paragraphs may be regarded as examples of the same pursuits in other districts.

Cotton pickers in the Imperial Valley of California

"The hours are very taxing, for cotton is picked until dark...The families usually go to bed just as soon as this is finished. They are tired, and must be

ready for work at sun-up."[1]

In Kentucky a case has been found as follows:

"The father of 14 year-old Mary, who puts in a 12 hour day in dairy work: 'I couldn't a-got along this year without her help; she's been out of school since Christmas helping with the dairy and house work .....She milks ten cows night and morning and her brother milks seven." 2

Children employed in the tobacco fields of Connedticut Valley worked from 9½ to 10 hours a day.[3]

Child workers in California asparagus fields worked from 10 to 12 hours a day.[4]

Children who worked in the cranberry fields of New Jersey had to go to picking from early in the morning until far into the waning day.

"How long do you work? Poula was asked. 'Long time. Till there arn't no more sun,' she replied wearily." 5

It is seen that children worked all day long in picking cranberries.

In the beet fields of Colorado: The boss chases the children down to the field early in the morning, usually about 4 o'clock. After a hasty breakfast, work

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1 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 251-252.
2 National Child Labor Committee- Pamphlet 284, p. Children in Agriculture, p. 8.
3 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 268.
4 Ibid., p. 269.
5 Good Housekeeping, Vol. 57, p. 671.

was practically continuous until mid-day. There was not a general lay-off during the heat of the day. Only an hour was usually allowed for dinner. Work continued until 6 or 7 o'clock."The net working day, exclusive of meals and rest periods, was, according to the statements made by parents, 9 hours for 85 per cent of the children, both boys and girls, of whom 36 were children only 6 or 7 years of age. One-third of the children, however, reported 11 hours as constituting a regular working day, and about one-eighth of them reported 12 to 15 hours. Six children under 8 years of age worked 12 hours or more, and all except 6 of the 65 working children aged 6 or 7 years were reported as putting in a working day of at least 8 hours."[1]

The working hours prevailing in the beet fields of Michigan are about the same as those of Colorado.

For the laborers' families, work usually started at 6 A.M., though 5 or 5:30 was sometimes given as the hour of beginning, and even 4 o'clock was reported. The laborers' families usually worked until 6,7, and sometimes 8 P.M., or later. "Almost two-thirds of the children, only slightly fewer girls than boys in proportion

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 99.

to their numbers, were reported as working 9 hours or more a day. The largest group, both boys and girls, amounting to a little over one-fourth of the boys and one-fifth of the girls, reported 10 hours daily; 26 per cent of the boys and 29 per cent of the girls reported from 11 to 15 hours' daily work in the fields."[1]

The working hours prevailing on the truck farms of Maryland may be seen from a survey which has been made by the Children's Bureau.

On the truck farms of Anne Arundel County: "That the field work of the older boys was important and the work of the younger children relatively insignificant is indicated by the longer working day of the former, commonly 8 or more hours. Of 58 white and negro boys 12 and 13 years of age who reported the number of hours worked in the fields, 31 had worked 9 or more hours and 6 had worked 12 or more hours. Of 66 boys 14 and 15 years of age, 12 had worked 12 or more hours also. A few young children worked long hours; thus, 20 of the 81 negro children, though only 3 of the 46 white children, under 10 years of age, reporting hours, had worked 9 or more hours, an 8-year-old colored girl reporting

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 20.

on her last working day 13 hours in the fields."[1]

On the truck farms of Eastern Shore: On the truck farms of this region the negro children also worked longer hours than the white children.

"White children who worked on the home farm worked on the average shorter hours and less regularly than those who hired out. Forty-four per cent of the former reported that they worked less than 6 hours a day in the field, as compared with 33 per cent of the 70 children who worked out by the day. Six to 8 hours was the usual working day of the latter group .....White children usually worked a shorter day than negro races.....The considerable number of both races who worked long hours should be noted; over one-third (37.5 per cent) of the negro children reporting had worked in the fields 9 or more hours, and 14 per cent of the white children and 23.7 per cent of the negro children had worked as much as 10 hours or more..." [2]

4. Duration of Farmwork in Different Crops

Generally speaking, the duration varies in different crops as well as in different processes. The data of duration may be obtained from the investigations of rural school attendance and other studies which have been made by the Children's Bureau, educational agencies, and the National Child Labor Committee.

In many rural districts children enter school late in the fall and leave early in the spring; even during the winter months they are absent from time to

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1 Publication of the Children's Bureau- Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms, p. 14-15.
2 Ibid., p. 44-45.

time to help on the farm.

In the cotton fields of the Imperial Valley, California, children worked in June, July, and August.

In South Carolina: The State Superintent of Education of South Carolina reports that during March, April, and May attendance of the rural school is very irregular, and the same thing is true during the fall months. In many schools during October and the early part of November and during the months of April and May not half of the children enrolled will be found present any day. When inquiry is made by teachers and other officers as to the reason for the poor attendance in the early fall and late spring, the answer is almost invariably the necessity of gathering and planting the cotton.[1]

Wheat raising in North Dakota has the same effect upon school attendance as does cotton raising in the Carolinas.

"The last report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction stated that an average of at least 20,000 farm children stay out of school each year for a period of 60 days to help in raising wheat and other small grain products." 2

Child pickers in the cranberry fields of New

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1 Fifteenth Annual Report, Superintendent of Education, South Carolina, 1918. Quoted from the American Child, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 77.
2 Fifteenth Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, North Dakota, 1918,

Jersey worked from about September 15 until late in the fall.[1]

Children working on the truck farms of Maryland may be divided into two groups:

Anne Arundel County: "Most of the children under 10 or 12 years of age, as well as most of the older girls, were employed only intermittently during the rush seasons, when every available hand was needed to get the produce to market. The majority of the boys and some of the older girls worked from March to April, when the first plowing and planting was done, to September or October, when the last crop was harvested."[2]

Eastern Shore: "Of 269 children 10 years of age and older reported on this point, over three-fifths, or 61.7 per cent, had worked at least 30 days..... and nearly two-fifths, 37.2 per cent, had worked 60 or more days. Children under 10 years of age, on the other hand, usually worked less than a month, many of them less than two weeks, over four-fifths reporting that they had worked less than 30 days. Some children, especially those over 12 years of age, reported work-

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1 Good Housekeeping, Vol. 57. p. 15, 17.
2 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms, p. 15,17.

ing long periods such as 3 or 4 months....."[1,2]

In the beet fields of Colorado: The work is not continuous. Blocking and thinning begin at the first of June. Shortly after blocking and thinning are completed, hoeing is begun, and, if several hoeings are required, may extend into August. From the middle of August until the harvest, there is no hand-work in the beet fields. In the early days of October they go to the beet fields again, this time for the work of pulling and topping.

"Of the 1,073 working children, 571 had already spent more than 6 weeks in the beet fields during 1920 season, and 61 of them had worked from 12 to 17 weeks .....Five children under 8 years of age, 18 between 8 and 9, and 16 between 9 and 10, had worked 10 weeks or more..." [3]

In the beet fields of Michigan: The hand-work on the beet crop in Michigan as in Colorado spreads over a period of between five and six months, beginning about the last of May. "On only the first two processes, blocking and thinning, and hoeing, more than half the 763 working children had worked at least 4 weeks, 35 per cent from 6 to 13 weeks, and about one-

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1 Ibid., p. 46-47.
2 National Child Labor Committee- The American Child, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 78.
3 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 19-20.

tenth between 9 and 13 weeks. It would appear that the younger children were almost as likely as the older ones to be kept at the work for a number of weeks, since the proportions of those under 10 years of age working at least 4 weeks and working from 6 to 13 weeks were practically the same as for all the children."[1]

5. The Necessity of an Eight-hour Day Provision for Agricultural Child Laborers

The usual amount of hours which children worked on the farms is from sun-up to sun-down. This means about 14 hours a day. There are children who worked even more than 14 hours a day. I do not believe that, if we consider the significance of the health and education of the children, work on the farm for 14 hours a day is at all a good thing. There are some advantages on the farms which are not enjoyed by the children working in factories, such as fresh air and warm sunshine, but if the children are overworked these benefits may undoubtedly become a curse. Unfortunately, the public and the legislatures have ignored this fact. They believed the farm a good place for a child and so fixed no hour provision for agricultural child workers.

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 86-87.

And it seems strange that they especially exempted the agricultural child workers from the hour-limit fixed in state child labor laws for children engaged in any gainful occupation. Agriculture, itself, is a gainful occupation also.

Agricultural child workers have been unprotected from the age-limit fixed in the child labor laws,,and also exempted from the hour provision. Thus, of course, they will be exploited even worse than those children who work in factories. The employers or parents may work the youngest children on the farms, even at the age of four or five years, for even more than 14 hours a day simply because there is no law to prevent that. I believe that an eight-hour day provision should be put in the child labor laws for agricultural child workers as we have done for those children who are engaged in factories, mills, and mines.

Chapter 6

Economic Waste of Child Labor in Agriculture

There is no doubt that child labor in the long run must be an economic waste to the nation, even though it has been considered profitable by short sighted employers. Child labor is becoming a very important economic problem, and a feasible solution must be worked out as soon as possible. Unfortunately, the public has not been quite aware of the great loss caused by employing the children. They have been deceived, when we speak of agricultural child labor only, by the assumption that the farm is a good place for a child, and working on the farm does harm to no one. It seems that the first step in solving the child labor problem is to make people understand the economic loss caused by the child worker. However, to foster such an understanding is very difficult simply because the economic waste caused by child labor cannot be all measured in exact statistics, even though it is very serious.

The economic waste caused by child labor has been investigated by some of the students who are in-

terested in this problem, but it is only by indirect means. It seems to me that the large part of the waste is not measurable at all, by its very nature.

Child Labor Does Not Pay

Chapter 4 has shown that the origin of child labor chiefly grew out of the sordid desires of employers to secure labor at the lowest possible cost. The wages earned by the working children are usually low. This has been declared to be true by some local investigations, even though we still lack accurate wage data on agricultural child labor in the United States as a whole.[1] Children are paid a low wage but work for a long day.[2] It can be easily seen that child labor does not pay either socially or individually. Besides wages, if we consider the other waste which may evolve in the future, child labor is an immeasurable loss in every respect. The poor parents usually ignore the fact that the "future economic value" of a child is worth much more than he can earn in his childhood. Since a child is not fully developed physically or mentally, he can not do any work which is really

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1 See Chapter 4, Wages of Agricultural Child Labor

2 See Chapter 5, Hours and Duration of Farmwork

profitable to society. An investigation has been made by the Committee on Incentives of the Brooklyn Teachers Association which covers two groups of children that left school and went to work at 14 and 18 years of age respectively.[1] (see Chart 1)

This chart shows that at 25 years of age the better educated boys are receiving $900 per year more salary and have already, in 7 years, received $2250 more than the boys who left school and went to work at 14 years received for 11 years work. From this comparison anyone can see how great a loss child labor finally becomes.

Waste may be Measured by Farm Incomes

From the result of a selected investigation, made by the Department of Agriculture, it is apparent that the farm income of the better educated farmers is higher than that of the poor or non-educated. Many farmers with very little schooling succeed, but these men would do better if they had had the opportunity of further training when they were children. Children of today are farmers of tomorrow. (see Table 1)

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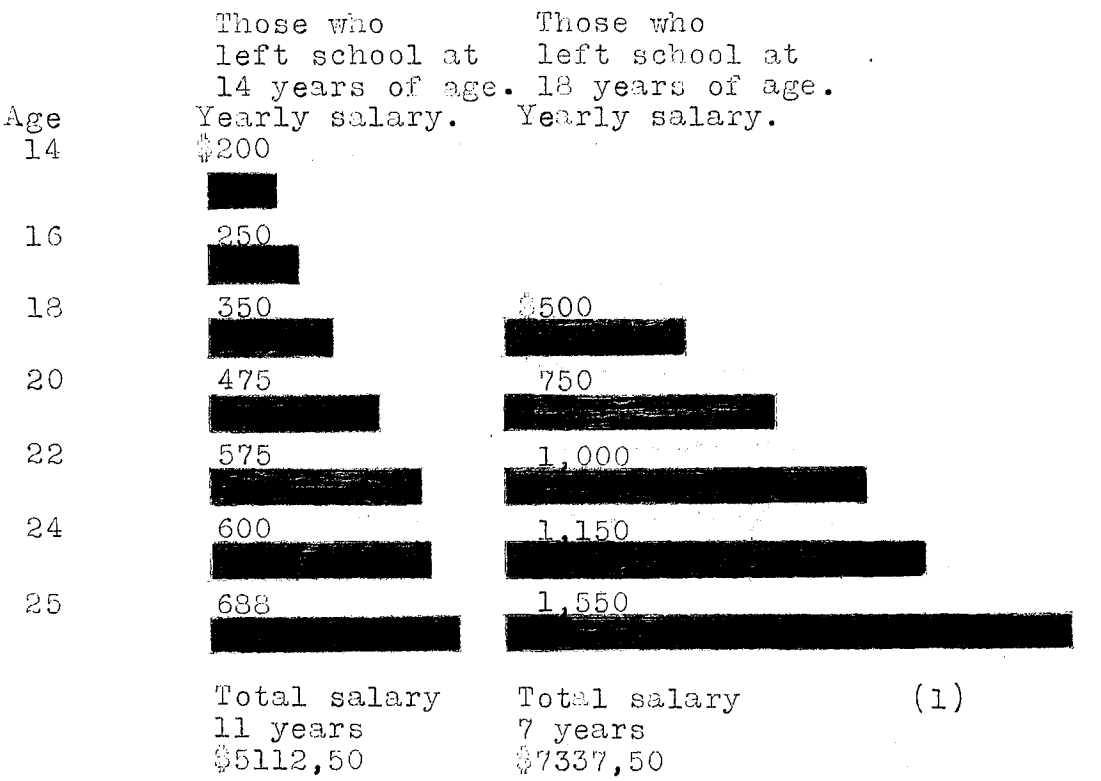
1 U.S. Bureau of Education Bulletin 22-
The Money Value of Education, p. 28.

Chart 1



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(1) U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin 22, The Money Value of Education, p. 28.

Table 1

Relation of the Owners' or Tenants' Education to Their Income on Farms in Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa. (1)

Education	Operated by owners (273) farms			Operated by tenats (247) farms		
	Number of farms	Average capital	Average labor income	Number of farms	Average capital	Average labor income
None at school	4	$15,039	$586	4	$1,650	$680
Common school	214	27,494	301	186	2,200	742
High school	46	37,725	651	51	3,203	1,268
College, etc.,	9	42,781	796	6	3,351	1,721

(1) U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 41, The Relation of Education of the Farmer to His Income, p. 38.

In this table, there were only 8 men, 4 owners and 4 tenants, who had not had a school training. Of the owners and tenants, 77 attended a common or district school. About 18 per cent attended a high school, and one out of every 35 went to college or to some institution of similar grade. On the whole, the tenants had received more education than owners, 23 per cent of them having more than a district school education, while only 20 per cent of the owners had such training. Those men having the best training made the largest incomes, although they were materially helped in doing this by much larger farms and greater capital. In the case of owners, a larger income was secured by those without education than those with a common school education.

Farmers will not receive the same profits, even with equal capital, if they have received different education when they were young. (see Table 2)

This table shows that the difference is in favor of the high school men, especially in the group of those having over $3,000 capital. In this case, they made nearly double the average income.[1]

1 U.S.Department of Agriculture- Bulletin 41, p. 39.

Table 2

Relation of Education to Profits of Tenants with Equal Capital (1)

Units of comparison	Capital and Education			
	$2,000 to $3,000		Over $3,000	
	Common school	High school	Common school	High school
Number of farms	54	12	40	23
Average size of acres	184	165	251	260
Average capital	$2,427	$2,513	$4,023	$5,095
Average labor income	$864	$866	$1,086	$2,087

(1) U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 41, The Relation of Education of the Farmer to His Income, p. 39.

The foregoing statements and tables lead us to believe that if children miss their education when they are of school age, as a natural result they will receive lower incomes because of lack of sufficient training. It would be wise for the farmers to send their children to school instead of work.

Weakening the Labor Force of the Future

Employers in every industry, not only in agriculture, need hands. Where are they to come from if children of today are prematurely exploited? The children of today are industrial supporters of tomorrow. The children of today ought to be fathers and mothers of tomorrow, but they cannot be if they are devitalized in their childhood. Such a condition only forms a vicious circle. The society will be short of an efficient and sufficient labor supply in the future if we do not stop the practice of working the children of today. The children of the youngsters who have been exploited will surely be growing weaker both physically and mentally because their fathers and mothers were overstrained in their childhood.[1,2]

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1 Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 25, p. 556-557; Vol. 27, p.282; Vol. 29, p. 19-25; Vol. 33, Supplements p. 124-30.

2 National Conference of Social Work, 1921. p. 82-84.

Working during childhood tends to be detrimental to normal physical development. Childhood is the period of great growth. The growing body is peculiarly liable to overstrain. Children engaged in agriculture are usually working on the most monotonous tasks, such as picking, hoeing, etc., for unrestricted hours. This is undoubtedly injurious to their health. They are usually exposed to the weather either by working under the hot sun or in the cold morning.[1] Sufficient play is a necessity for a child's development, but if he is employed he will have no time to play. Investigations made by different agencies have shown that the morbidity and mortality is higher among working than non-working children. Chronic maladies of nutrition and of the nervous system, especially, are common among them. For example, the sickness-insurance records show an extremely high rate of morbidity among youthful workers in Austria.[2] The studies of the causes of death among the young workers have shown that the death rate among the children employed is usually much higher than that of children

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1 See Chapter 3, Types and Conditions of Farmwork

2 Publication of Children's Bureau- Child Labor, Outlines for Study, p. 23-24.

not employed.[1] It is seen that child labor is a great menace to the labor forde of our future industry.

If the number of working children increases from one generation to another, the labor force will be weakened to a point where the modern industrial machine, vast as it is, cannot be kept moving.

Reducing the Economic Value of Adult Labor

In the poor families children's financial help seems necessary and desirable, but child labor is in competition with the labor of the parents. It necessarily tends to reduce the economic value of the latter. The family is not even economically profited by forcing the young prematurely into the fields. If the child is brought into competition with the adults, what is the result? Both child and adult get starvation wages. As long as the men and women have to compete with the children, they cannot struggle for a better wage. And as long as their own earnings are small, the children cannot expect to receive more than they now do.[1]

A report of Owen R. Lovejoy, general secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, published in

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1 See Chapter 4, Wages of Agricultural Child Labor

the New York Times may be quoted here to strengthen this point.

"The employer seeking to cut costs is inclined to hire children, perhaps enabling him to dispense with more expensive help thereby. In doing so he may not actually decrease the number of names on the pay-roll, but he may let another man go, and that man in turn may find himself up against the same necessity of calling on his children for help. Obviously the competition in the labor market is increased." 1

It is seen that child employment is not beneficial to the employers and the parents at all. Child labor reduces its own future economic value on the one hand and the economic value of the adults on the other simultaneously. Child labor is undoubtedly an economic loss.

Waste Produced by Child Nature

Mentally the child is incompetent to sustain the tension of interest on his work. The child mind cannot be attentative as long as that of the adult. It easily wearies; it is under constant temptation of distraction. Play is the child's natural privilege. One cannot expel nature. Forced out of one door, the child nature will re-enter by another. 2 The child workers

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1 Quoted from Literary Digest, Nov. 26, 1921, p. 32.
2 Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 25, p. 553

will play. To keep them regularly doing their work is a difficult talk. For example, a boy in the beet fields of Colorado has told us the following: "The old man chases us down to the field early in the morning(4 o'-clock), but we get even with him; whenever he leaves the field we stall."[1] It is simply the fact that the child's sense of responsibility has not well developed yet, and he is always playful.

Generally speaking, labor to be profitable must be intelligent, either in factories or on the farms. Intelligence will pay in the end, though the first pupchase price may be higher than is that for stupidity and inexperience. The child cannot be expected to be as intelligent as the adult. He allows something to go to waste which the adult laborer may save or turn to good account.[2]

Waste Produced by Accidents in Child Labor

There are accidents often resulting to children on the farms, even though they rarely handle any machinery. Farm children are usually exposed to the weather which is often injurious to their health. Fa-

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1 Publications of Children's Bureau- Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan, p. 27.
2 Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 25, p. 552.

tigue is always the worst danger to the children's health, and it always comes to them when they work for an unrestricted hour. When we speak of accidents we refer to children injured seriously or crippled for life. For example, in the beet fields of Colorado and Michigan the use of topping knives by children involves a certain amount of danger. Cuts on the legs or knees are rather common. A few cases may be quoted from some investigations made in North Dakota by the Children's Bureau and in West Virginia by the National Child Labor Committee. Accidents usually occur while handling animals or operating implements.

"Some of the work which children do on and about the farm is physically dangerous. Of the 845 children included in the study, 104, while engaged in farm work, had had an accident resulting in some injury. Twelve children stated that they had broken their arms or legs, or had broken bones in other parts of the body; 5 had had dislocations; 8, sprains; 7 had been crushed or badly bruised; 15 had had bad cuts or lacerations; the remainder could not tell specifically the nature of the injury. In this last group were children who could give only such accounts of their injuries as "kicked by cows, could not walk for six weeks;""fell from header box, wheel went over head, laid up one month;" "fell from plow, wheel ran over legs, took one month to recover;""fell from horse, unconscious five hours." 1

From the above quoted statement we may see that about 1 in 8 of the agricultural child workers included in this investigation had had some kind of in-

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1 Publication of Children's Bureau, Child Labor in North Dakota, p. 27, 65-67.

juries. This accident record was made in North Dakota last year.

Some other cases have been found in West Virginia.

"A 12-year-old boy, sent out by his father with a mowing-machine, was removing a stick caught in the sickle when the horses moved and two fingers of the boy's right hand fell to the ground."

"A father sent his 10-year-old boy to harrow a field with a section harrow. The boy lifted the harrow to clean some trash from under it; the harrow was too heavy for him to hold and he dropped it. One tooth went through his foot. A stiffened joint of the big toe and a boy lame for life." [1]

The foregoing statements are simply given as examples. The accidents occurring to the children on the farms are by no means too few to merit our attention, even though we still lack a statistical study on this subject.

In conclusion, the great economic waste of child labor may be summarized as follows:

Premature labor naturally results in a physically and mentally subnormal class of adult workers.

Lack of sufficient training among the child workers results in a great loss of potential industrial ability. [2]

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1 National Child Labor Committee, Rural Child Welfare, p. 78-81.
2 Survey, Vol. 49, p. 239, Nov. 15, 1922

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1 Ibid., 1912, 1905, and 1918.
2 Ibid., Vol. 25, 27, 29, 33, and 98.

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