

FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN YEAR OLD CHILDREN IN INDUSTRY

SCOPE AND METHOD

The continuation school offers the best possible source for a study of 14 and 15-year-old employed children. With one exception all 14 and 15-year-old children who have been duly certificated to leave full-time school to go to work are enrolled in continuation schools. Continuation schools are not required to be established in districts where less than 20 minors under 16 are employed. A group of employed children, largely performing agricultural work, therefore, are not in continuation school. This group, while worthy of special study as composed of employed children not coming under the protection of the Child Labor Law, is probably not excessive numerically. Therefore, the number of children in continuation schools can be said very closely to approximate the number of 14 and 15-year-old children certificated to go to work.

The continuation school can not include that possibly inevitable but certainly narrowing margin of 14 and 15-year-old children who, under claim of being 16, are illegally employed without work certificates.

Every child in the Commonwealth attending continuation school the last week in September or the first week in October, 1926, is included in this survey. The findings of the report are based upon the statements of the continuation school children themselves, who under the supervision of their teachers, answered the questions given in the schedule printed in the Appendix. Through the Department of Public Instruction these schedules were sent to the supervising principals in each school district in the Commonwealth where continuation schools were located.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. In October, 1926, there were twenty-five thousand working children enrolled in Pennsylvania continuation schools.
2. Of every six 14 and 15-year-old children in school districts where there were continuation schools, one had left full-time school to become a wage earner.
3. Practically all these children were native born and more than one-half had fathers who were born in this country.
4. More than one-half, 56 per cent, of these working children were girls.