

The appointment by the Shanghai Municipal Council of its commission on child labour has thus already exercised a stimulating effect on Chinese authorities, which augurs hopefully for some practical development from its report.

I shall have the honour to submit further observations on this subject when copies of the council's report are available for transmission to the Foreign Office.

A copy of this despatch has been sent to His Majesty's Minister at Peking.

I have, &c.

S. BARTON.

No. 6.

Consul-General Barton to Mr. MacDonald.

Sir,

Shanghai, July 26, 1924.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 18th June last on the subject of child labour in Shanghai, I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Child Labour Commission* appointed by the Municipal Council of the International Settlement, which was published here on the 19th July.

The commission has reviewed such information as has been procurable locally on the subject, and was forced to the conclusion that, apart from the widespread and continuing activities of certain groups and committees interested in religious, social and industrial work, there was little general public interest in Shanghai in the question of child labour. It also found that it was agreed by all the medical witnesses that the existing industrial conditions in Shanghai are extremely adverse to the bodily and mental welfare of the Chinese child employee.

After reviewing the present international position with regard to the regulation of the employment of children and young persons, the commission broadly stated the special difficulties in the way of the regulation of child labour in the foreign settlement. The position thus stated is in general agreement with the observations made by me in my previous despatch on the subject. I then gave my opinion that before a reasonable solution of the problem could be found it was imperative that national factory legislation be introduced by the Chinese Government and enforced throughout the country, and that similar legislation be introduced at the same time in the foreign-controlled areas. The commission, in its comments on the Peking Provisional Regulations, decided to recommend that should Chinese Government regulations be enforced at any time outside the settlement, the council should seek power to enforce them within the settlement area so far as it thought they were reasonably practicable. They came, however, to the liberal conclusion that, rather than to insist on previous enforcement of Chinese legislation throughout the country, enforcement in the provinces of Kiangsu

* Copies have been placed in the libraries of the Houses of Parliament. See Appendix.