

SOCIAL LEGISLATION OF PROGRESSIVE MINNESOTA

Minnesota, with its spirit of progressivism in every field, has done its share of social legislation. Among the progressive measures advanced and passed at the last session of the Legislature are: Mothers' Pensions, the Restriction of Working Hours for Women, the establishment of a Minimum Wage Commission, the Injunction and Abatement Law and Workmen's Compensation Law.

The Mothers' Pension Law, while excellent in principle in that the State is guardian of its dependent children, is very crude and loosely drawn and fails to provide necessary machinery. It was opposed by social workers in that it was only a partial remedy. The details need not be given. The pension is administered by the Juvenile Court. In Minneapolis the judge has appointed an advisory committee of five, consisting of head officials and heads of charitable organizations, which passes on all cases coming within the law.

One of the most drastic measures aimed at the elimination of prostitution is the Injunction and Abatement Law. The bill allows any citizen to make a complaint against a disorderly house and prosecute through counsel. If the charges are proved, the court is to issue a warrant declaring the place a nuisance and closing it for one year, unless the owner files a bond guaranteeing that the nuisance will be abated immediately. A fine of \$300 is assessed, and all the personal property is to be confiscated and sold to pay the costs, and the owner filing the information is to receive 10 per cent. of the proceeds of the sale.

The bill limiting working hours for women applies to cities of 20,000 population and over. Hours of work are limited to eight a day for telephone girls, nine for factories and telegraph offices, and ten for stores, restaurants and hotels. One hour must be given for lunch.

Minnesota is one of the very few States that did practical work on the Minimum Wage question. The bill provides for a commission of three, the Labor Commissioner and two other citizens appointed by the Governor. The secretary, who is a woman, is salaried. On petition of 100 workers in the industry, the commission is

to make an investigation and determine what is a fair living wage in that industry. The figure placed by that commission is then to be the legal minimum for women employed in that line. It is significant that the bill was not seriously opposed by the employers, who are satisfied so long as others are made to toe the rule.

Perhaps the most important measure in the way of industrial justice is the Workmen's Compensation Law, allowing employees to recover regardless of negligence. While the bill is not entirely satisfactory to both sides, some progress has been made.

The bill is based on the New Jersey law, which gets around constitutional objections by the optional plans. If the employer refuses to come under the Acts, he must stand suit without the defense of contributory negligence or the fellow-servant rule. If the employee refuses to come in, the employer has the right to these defenses. If the accident causes total disability, the employer is to pay 50 per cent. of the wages, with a minimum of \$6 and a maximum of \$10 for 300 weeks. If there is a widow with no children, she is to receive only 35 per cent. of the wages; with one child, 40 per cent.; with two or three children, 50 per cent., and with four or more children, 60 per cent. Satisfactory arrangements have also been made in cases of temporary disability.

One measure introduced in the House, a bill to prohibit dancing in the public schools, is especially interesting as reflecting the strong religious Lutheran sentiment of Minnesota. We are just starting the social center movement in the public schools, and some over-enthusiastic social workers aimed to include dancing as a feature of the school social and recreational center. The result was that the indignation of all the Lutheran ministers and their followers was aroused. The matter was brought before the court, and as it could not be declared unconstitutional to use the buildings for other than educational purposes, the ministers sought to have a bill passed prohibiting dancing in the public schools. Through the persistent efforts of the opponents of this measure, the bill was killed.

It may be mentioned that the women's clubs and men's leagues for civic welfare were responsible for the agitation and advancement of all the social legislation at the last session. In spite of the comparative newness of our State, which means an absorbing interest in individual material advancement, there is a strong social and civic consciousness. Every organization, even the commercial, is imbued with a spirit of social betterment and with a desire to understand the community needs. With this strong spirit of social and industrial justice permeating every field of endeavor in Minnesota, many of the social ills can be prevented and a better State constructed.

In closing this brief review of Minnesota social legislation, it may be mentioned that the Associated Jewish Charities of Minneapolis has interested itself and participated in bringing about these constructive measures, not only through its own initiative, but at the request of influential organizations. Our organization from its inception has stood for communal betterment, and has reached an enviable standing in the State of Minnesota.

Anna L. Fox, Superintendent,
Associated Jewish Charities.

Hebrew Educational Society of Brooklyn

The Hebrew Educational Society, which has been conducting social and educational work in the district of Brownsville, Brooklyn, for the past sixteen years, is planning to erect a new building. The building which it has heretofore occupied is a rented structure on which the lease expires, and which is not well adapted to the purposes of the work. It is expected that the new building will be completed by May 1, 1914. It will contain an auditorium, a gymnasium, club rooms, a men's social room, two social rooms for young men and young women, a reading room for readers of Yiddish newspapers and books, a Hebrew classroom, music rooms, classrooms for millinery, dressmaking, cooking and manual training, and a roof garden.

The auditorium will be used for Yiddish lectures, lectures on Jewish subjects, discussions of public and neighborhood inter-

est, parents' meetings, dances and concerts. In the summer time the roof garden will be utilized similarly as far as possible, as well as for recreation for boys and girls and for women and children.

The clubrooms will be used as classrooms for the Sabbath School on Saturday mornings. Likewise the social rooms will be used in the daytime as study and game rooms for boys and girls.

The Hebrew Educational Society endeavors to promote the social needs of the Brownsville neighborhood for all elements of the population. The new building will therefore be put to a variety of uses.

Secretary of American Jewish Committee

On August 13, 1913, the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee regretfully accepted the resignation of Dr. Herbert Friedenwald as secretary. Dr. Friedenwald resigned on account of ill health.

Mr. Herman Bernstein, the author, was elected secretary of the American Jewish Committee.

A campaign to raise \$250,000 by dollar subscriptions has been started by the members of the Society of the Daughters of Jacob, to enable them to erect a home for the aged poor on a tract they have purchased at 167th street, between Findlay and Teller avenues, the Bronx, New York.

The Society already maintains a home at 301-303 East Broadway, which contains 185 inmates.

EXCHANGE BUREAU

POSITION WANTED—By an experienced social worker of twelve years' duration in charity, settlement and juvenile work. Is at present the superintendent of a federated charities, and juvenile court officer in one of the largest cities in the South. For reasons of Southern climate not agreeing with wife's health, would accept a position as superintendent in any city West, North or East. Will furnish the best of references. Address G. E., care of JEWISH CHARITIES.