



The Recommendations of the Shanghai Child Labour Commission

by

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In the December number of the International Labour Review¹ an account was given in the article on "Labour Conditions and Labour Regulation in China" of: (a) the position of China as a member of the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation in relation to problems of factory law and its administration within the Republic; (b) the significance of the Provisional Factory Regulations promulgated at Peking on 23 March 1923 for the Foreign Settlements in China and particularly for Shanghai — one of the most important industrial areas in China; and (c) the Report and Recommendations of the Child Labour Commission appointed by the Municipal Council of the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai.

The following article, by a co-opted member of the Child Labour Commission, who was first a member of the Industrial Committee of the National Christian Council of China and thus travelled to many industrial centres for local study of conditions of labour and for conferences with central and provincial authorities, manufacturers, and others, attempts to make clearer the present position and prospects of the movement for reform. Especially the writer aims at further elucidating the relation to each other of: (a) the proposal to regulate child labour within the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai, (b) the Peking Provisional Regulations for Factories, and (c) the attitude of provincial authorities to the problem of securing some protection for child labour under the factory system. The views expressed are purely those of the writer, the Commissions named being in no way responsible for them, except inasmuch as they gave the writer the valued access to opportunities for forming them.

THIS article is to be read in the light of the fact that careful examination of the origins and attendant circumstances of the appointment of the Child Labour Commission of Shanghai

¹ *International Labour Review*, Vol. X, No. 6, Dec. 1924, pp. 1005-1028.

lightens considerably the very real difficulty of understanding the present position and prospects of legislative regulation of factories in China. It attempts in the first place to illustrate the exceptional conditions which exist in China and the peculiar difficulties which stand in the way of their improvement ; to sketch the growth of the movement both in Shanghai and the rest of China to reform the conditions of the industrial workers ; to explain the important results which were achieved from 1922 to 1924 in Shanghai and in China ; to indicate the extent to which helpful signs of a desire for progress were found in China, apart from and alongside of the Shanghai Child Labour Commission ; and finally, to explain not only the responsibility which lies upon Shanghai with regard to initiating the improvement of conditions for industrial workers, but also the response which has been made by Shanghai to the appeal of those who have been supporting the movement for reform.

In spite of the abundant and material information given in the article in the December issue of the *International Labour Review*, I think that something additional is necessary to enable non-residents in China to learn why, in face of the great need of protection of labour in the modern factories, the legislative and administrative beginnings of reform have been so hard to come at. After all, they are not as yet actually slower of attainment than they were where the system first began, in England in the nineteenth century. Yet the nearly complete admission, in widely varying countries, of the " principle " of governmental regulation of human conditions within the factory system tends to make one overlook or misjudge the obstacles to the carrying into practice of this principle in a country of ancient, slowly changing civilisation such as China.

THE INFLUENCE OF NEW CONDITIONS

In this country, of the size, in area and population, of Europe, by far the greater part of the immense business of employing manual labour, by way of trade or for purposes of gain, in the making, altering, repairing, ornamenting, etc. of any article or part of an article, and kindred occupations, is still carried on as it has been no doubt for thousands of years, in small semi-domestic ways and workshops of ancient or mediaeval character, with much ancillary help from children. In places where transport is reasonably available, and therefore to a considerable extent in or near districts where treaty

ports lie, there, by an apparently inevitable development, the modern industrialised system of production has been growing up, in parts on a great scale, within twenty to twenty-five years.

Twelve years ago (says Mr. V. K. Ting, organiser of the Geological Survey of China) there were barely half a million spindles owned and operated by Chinese companies. These were practically confined to treaty ports. At present there are about two and a half million spindles in operation in 180 Chinese mills scattered through 50 cities, many of which are right in the interior. . . . The silk filatures have a similar story. . . . These represent only one phase of the general tendency of industrialisation. There are for example more than 100 flour mills and 70 oil mills in operation. The Yungli Alkali Works represents the beginning of a chemical industry with promising possibilities. We now refine our own sugar and salt, wash with home-made soap, light our cigarettes with home-made matches, saw our wood and hull our rice with steam power¹.

The writer of the above passage goes on to show the great significance of the recent development of more than a dozen prosperous Chinese owned and operated coal mines in affording a fresh training ground for mining students. And he points to the striking event of the rapid translation by Chinese university professors of Professor J. A. Thompson's *Outline of Science* on its reaching China, and its publication with all the original illustrations within a few months by the Shanghai Commercial Press (a purely Chinese printing-press), the entire edition being sold out immediately.

The extensive influence of the new system is seen in numerous semi-industrialised workplaces, where rough devices carry power to parts of the processes. All three stages of production are flourishing together in many places, e.g. Ningpo and Wuchang. In the latter old, walled city, across the Yangtze from Hankow, one can pass down the streets of the chopstick hand-workers or umbrella makers to a big Chinese cotton-spinning mill, fully equipped with machinery and motor plant dated 1922 that bears the name of a well-known British firm. And in Tientsin, in quarters near large factory industries, the rug-making trade, employing young boy labour, is changing — although as yet mechanical power is not employed — from a small and domestic to a large-scale industry for foreign markets, with tragic health results for the boys.

Outside the big urban centres, the modern forms of road and modern transport are largely lacking, as are organs of public health administration; and modern medical practitioners are nearly as

¹ Cf. the article on "Science and Progress in China", in the Sixtieth Anniversary Number of the *North China Daily News*, 14 July 1924.

scarce as ways and means for primary education, the indispensable accompaniment of an industrialised production which is displacing handicraft. In fact, any government regulation of labour conditions in factories is yet lacking in every part of China — except in British Hong-Kong. "Among the so-called civilised nations of the world China stands practically alone in the position of being without labour legislation that is actually under enforcement", says Miss May Ling Soong¹. And soon after the incoming of the new system of industry, which hitherto in all other countries has transformed social as well as economic relationships, there began the political revolution which dissolved the ancient, centralised Imperial Government with its Civil Service. The wonderful thing is that in so short a time as barely fourteen years not so little but so much, educationally and industrially, has been accomplished as one sees in this vast country of custom rooted in antiquity, where a peaceable, industrious people, over 80 per cent. of whom are absorbed in agriculture, quietly rule themselves under their elders.

Where in reality could a new starting-point and the means be got for practical beginning of regulation of human conditions under so portentous a change in methods of production? And where in fact did any public demand begin for anything of the kind within the confines of China?

THE MOVEMENT FOR REFORM

The Child Labour Commission was appointed in June 1923 by the Executive or Municipal Council of the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai:

To enquire into the conditions of Child Labour in Shanghai and the vicinity and to make recommendations to the Council as to what regulations, if any, should be applied to child labour in the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai, having regard to practical considerations and to local conditions generally.

What circumstances or movement led to the taking of the important step which the setting up of this Commission represents?

For two years or more before this date an agitation, centred in Shanghai, had been carried on by various persons and associations for reform of the conditions of labour, and especially of child

¹ Cf. article on "Industrialism and the Chinese Woman", in the Sixtieth Anniversary Number of the *North China Daily News*, 14 July 1924.

workers in both foreign and Chinese sections of this leading industrial centre. It was principally to textile industries (the cotton spinning mills and silk filatures) that the attention of outside observers had been increasingly turned by reason of the magnitude of their growth and the passing of streams of young and adult workers, which could be watched morning and evening at the change of shifts. Through public health administration and fire brigade work in the foreign city, and the development of mission and other hospitals, came increased scientific knowledge of accidents and their consequences and of the increase of tubercular disease. Difficulties and defects of the housing and transport of such numerous bodies of workers had become striking, even to casual observers.

In May 1922 the National Christian Council in China, at a great meeting in Shanghai of over a thousand members, under joint Chinese and foreign leadership, considered the situation, formed a special industrial section to carry on study of the conditions, drafted a programme and plan of action and endorsed the international labour standards contained in the Washington Conventions of 1919. They took as their immediate objective the securing of the following three fundamental and practical safeguards of labour in industry : (1) no industrial employment of children under 12 years of age ; (2) observance of one day's rest in the seven ; (3) safeguarding the health of workers by shortening hours, improving sanitary conditions, and installation of safety devices.

Among members of the Council were Chinese employers of labour (e.g. Mr. Fong Sec, a director of the Shanghai Commercial Press) who are convinced supporters of welfare conditions in their own works.

By numerous meetings and addresses in many places, and publications in various ways, including full use of the vernacular Press, these ideas were carried out from Shanghai and disseminated all over China, from Hong-Kong and Canton to Hankow, and Chefoo to Peking, even beyond these into Korea. The National Young Women's Christian Association (in which an Industrial Secretaryship had been first provided for in the winter of 1920 to 1921, to consider and deal with the social problems set by the growth of factory employment of women and girls) and the National Young Men's Christian Association joined their activities in this field with the National Christian Council of China. They were represented on the Industrial Commission of the National Christian Council by Miss Agatha Harrison, the first Industrial Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, Miss Zung Wei-

Tsung, and Mr. M. T. Tehou, all of wide experience in industrial questions and international work. Local branches of the National Christian Council brought the whole problem of national legislation for factories steadily before Chinese employers and a wider public in many cities. At Hong-Kong and Canton in 1923, before my arrival in Shanghai, I met Chinese members of local branches of the National Christian Council; a strong impression was there received of a widely diffused movement to secure both legislative and voluntary reforms in conditions of labour.

The influence in Shanghai and more widely in China of the publicity given to the need for factory reform by the meetings and joint activities of these societies is seen in several events, the third of which is due at least equally to the International Conventions and Labour Organisation.

First, in the correspondence, which began on 23 November 1922 with a letter from the Secretary and Commissioner General of the Municipal Council, between that governing body and the leading representatives of foreign and Chinese employers of Shanghai, which is given in a footnote to the article on "Labour Conditions in China" in the December 1924 number of this *Review*¹. Both groups of nationals expressed their conviction that legislation on the part of the Chinese Government was necessary, in order to have uniform regulations binding on all employers in China. And it appears in that letter of 23 November 1922 of the Secretary and Commissioner General (published in the *Municipal Gazette* of 25 January 1923 "for general information") that the question was brought to a point by a visit from Miss Agatha Harrison to the Chairman of the Municipal Council. While pointing out to Miss Harrison "some of the difficulties with which this question is beset", the Chairman expressed the view that the Council should give a lead, "by adopting a sympathetic attitude towards action to limit some of the abuses with which the employment of child labour is fraught. The other members concurred, but indicated that in their opinion no good result could be achieved except by bringing together foreign and Chinese mill and factory owners inside and outside the Settlement, and securing unanimity amongst them as to the action to be taken."

Secondly, during that winter, 1922-1923, an international group of women residents of Shanghai came together for the purpose of studying industrial conditions. A Joint Committee of the Amer-

¹ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 1010-1013.

ican, British, and Chinese Women's Clubs and the Young Women's Christian Association was set up, and on 1 March 1923 a letter was addressed by them to the Chairman of the Municipal Council, Mr. H. E. Simms, signed by, among others, Mrs. Gull, Chairman of the British Women's Association, Dr. Fearn, President of the American Women's Club, Mrs. Siao, President of the Shanghai Women's Club, and Mrs. H. C. Mei, Chairman of the National Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association. Miss May Ling Soong, afterwards a member of the Child Labour Commission, was Secretary to this Joint Committee. This letter, "while fully recognising the many practical difficulties which bar the way to any change of the present conditions", urged the Council to consider taking such steps as might be necessary to ensure the abolition of night work for children under twelve years of age, to bring to the consideration of the Municipal Education Commission, then sitting, the provision of part-time schools, whereby the number of working hours for children would be automatically regulated, and to extend the powers of the Health Department to include the supervision of factories in matters of ventilation, sanitation and safety. A few weeks later the Municipal Council addressed a letter to Miss Soong, signed by the Secretary and Commissioner General, announcing their intention of appointing the Commission on Child Labour to go into the whole question of employment of children in mills and factories.

Thirdly, on 29 March 1923 the Government at Peking, urged thereto by the Chinese reform movement as well as enquiries from the International Labour Organisation, promulgated the Provisional Factory Regulations which had been earlier introduced into, but not passed by, the House of Representatives. These still remain without legal force anywhere in China. They simply define certain standards which the Administrative Department holds to be desirable, and contain no effective provision for enforcement by penalties, nor even for their commendation to employers of labour in factories by an inspectorate. And yet they were by no means without good effect. They have proved a most valuable introduction to conferences and discussions with central and local officials as well as manufacturers, and, most important of all, were taken as the foundation of the work and recommendations of the Child Labour Commission. The Chairman of the Municipal Council, in his opening speech at the inaugural session of this Commission, recalled the facts that the Council had endorsed the view that it should "take a lead in bringing about certain reforms in con-

ditions applying to child labour in factories and mills in the Settlement", and that since then "the Chinese Government had shown a desire to improve conditions in mills and factories under its jurisdiction". He considered it an opportune moment to work with the Chinese Government and that it was advisable to take those Provisional Factory Regulations as a basis to work on, with a view to "securing uniform legislation both in and out of the Settlement".

Leaving for a moment certain indications in the Report of the Commission, and particularly in Part II, of the whole-hearted way in which this lead was adopted, it is necessary to revert to the steady action of the reform movement outside.

It was in June 1923, while I was on a tour of the British Dominions for study of industrial conditions, that I received by cable, in Cape Town, an urgent invitation from the National Christian Council of China to come and help their Industrial Commission in their studies and programme. To this I was able to respond by curtailing a visit to Australia and New Zealand, and arrived in China by 23 November. After brief studies in Hong-Kong and Canton I joined the Sessions of the Industrial Commission of the National Christian Council and of the Child Labour Commission of Shanghai, to which I had been co-opted and which had then been sitting five months. In the intervals of their meetings I visited many factories, addressed many meetings in widely scattered cities, and gave lectures on factory law and administration at Peking University.

One of the first things to which my attention was drawn by the Industrial Commission was their realisation of the need of trained Chinese social welfare and public health workers, from whose ranks eventually might be drawn the inspectors of factories who would be absolutely essential for any real and effectual application of future factory regulations. University professors in Peking, Nanking, and Shanghai joined with the Industrial Commissioners of the National Christian Council in consideration of the problem of establishing training courses for public and civil services, on some such lines as those with practical as well as theoretical sides that are established in British universities and settlements, which are greatly needed in China to meet the new conditions of economic and social life. Early in 1923 a Chinese woman graduate of Hong-Kong University was chosen and sent to England for a year's course of that kind at the London School of Economics, and she has since returned to the work of an Industrial Secretary of the Young

Women's Christian Association. There and in the service of the Young Men's Christian Association are found fields of work for, and contact with real needs of, industrial workers.

The absence in China of statistical records in many fundamental departments differentiates the line of approach from that of the West. Straw has to be gathered even while the bricks are being moulded. In other words, social and economic survey work must precede or accompany administrative work in order to enable the administrators to see the facts and the factors they have to deal with. From a perception of this need sprang a movement towards the foundation of an institute or bureau for sociological and economic research; discussions began within the National Christian Council towards the close of 1923, and in 1924 the work of reconnaissance was passed over to a special Commission, of which Professor J. B. Tayler of Yenching University is Chairman.

In view of all the difficulties of making a good beginning, factory regulation should be of the simplest kind to have actuality. It would be futile to begin with large and complex demands in a factory law where the indispensable inspector is not at hand, and try to apply them over wide and varying provinces containing vast and extremely poor peoples, inured to long hours and convinced as to their economic dependance on subsidiary use of children's labour in all their old industries. Only gradually can parents learn the total unsuitability, and the risks, of employment in power-driven industry for young children. The general absence of modern trade union organisation prevents their learning quickly the truth that steady pushing up of the age of entry for children into the factories can make for higher family earnings. Many others than parents need information as to the wide difference between the steady strain and risk in factories and the ordinary conditions in handicraft industry.

A great and well-governed foreign settlement, with a modern public health service in being, is in a special position of advantage for coping with the early administrative problems and for making illustrative examples of method, by calling in the experienced and western-trained official to organise a staff for the work of inspection. It would be very far wide of the realities of the situation to believe that the presence on Chinese soil of organised foreign settlements can hinder development of a good regulation of factories once the facts are known. On the contrary, having regard to the fact that the factory system, with all its inherent new problems and need for expert regulation as regards conditions, has passed far beyond

the limited area of treaty ports, settlements, and concessions into a country not fully cognisant of the dangers and the safeguards needed, it is the chief opportunity for making a good practical beginning and foundation on which to rear effective inspection adapted to the problems.

While awaiting results from the movement towards legislative action we (i.e. the Industrial Commission of the National Christian Council of China) initiated discussion with members of employers' associations on the ways of improving conditions of labour through their voluntary action in matters of welfare of the workers, e.g. in the chambers of commerce in Shanghai, Ningpo, and Nanking in January and February 1924, and in Wusih and other growing centres of industry later in the spring. The manufacturers generally invited us warmly to inspect their factories.

In Nanking, capital of Kiangsu Province, early in February I was introduced by Chinese members of the National Christian Council to His Excellency the Civil Governor, who gave his close and appreciative attention to the problem of protection for children in factories with special reference to the Peking Provisional Regulations. He asked me for a memorandum on British factory law and administration, which I gladly prepared and took to him in May¹. At the first interview he put a question on the difficulty that would arise for China if the regulations were observed in Kiangsu and not in Shanghai Settlement, but apparently accepted my view that such failure would be impossible in face of the International Labour Organisation and the acceptance of the Conventions by Great Britain and other western nations. Very shortly after my second visit His Excellency's Ordinance preparing for a Child Labour Commission for his Province was published. In it he noted that the Peking Provisional Regulations were "perhaps not perfect since there is no careful inspection. This would tend to make them exist in name only. . . . A Child Labour Commission has already been appointed by the Municipal Council in Shanghai to investigate factory conditions. China should also organise a Commission of the same nature, to sit in Shanghai, so that regulations in regard to children in both the Chinese and the foreign factories will be similar." Besides writing to Commissioner Hsu Yuan of Foreign Affairs in Shanghai, asking him to see me about

¹ In May also I was introduced by the Hon. S. T. Wen to a group of members of the Provincial Assembly. They promised their hearty support to any measures for the improvement of conditions of child labour and asked me for a memorandum, which I supplied, on factory law administration.

the matter, the Commissioner of the Industrial Bureau was also notified. My conference with Commissioner Hsu Yuan followed quickly and steps were being taken for setting up that Commission just as the Shanghai Municipal Commission was about completing its work. Civil war, however, between Kiangsu and Chekiang Provinces intervened before preparations were complete.

The consequent delay need not prevent effective action when peace comes, especially if the Municipal Council obtains the necessary powers to carry out the minimum recommendations in Part III of its own Commission's Report.

Mention must not be omitted here of the interview when I was in Peking, in March 1924, with the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry, Dr. W. W. Yen, to whom I was introduced by Professor J. B. Tayler of Yenching, who accompanied me, Dr. Hawking Yen, Chief of the Labour Department of the Ministry, being also present. This afforded me an opportunity for giving my impressions after some months' experience of the conditions, and to the Ministry for explaining their plans and activities.

The following semi-official account of the discussion appeared in the *Far Eastern Times* of 22 March 1924:

Dame Adelaide Anderson was able to report an awakening interest on the part of officials and employers in the subject of industrial welfare, so that although the conditions, notwithstanding some notable exceptions, are generally speaking very terrible, the outlook is hopeful. The great difficulty is the securing of co-ordinated action, and the great desideratum a wider appreciation of the issues involved. Emphasis was placed upon the need for regulation of child labour, its exclusion from night work and the provision of education; and upon the shortening of hours of labour in view of the greater strain of work in factories using power-driven machinery.

Among the subjects discussed were the need for more accurate statistics for the study of health and safety, for means whereby the labourers could voice their own needs; the question of trained travelling inspectors, and the preparations for sending a Chinese delegation to the International Labour Conference to be held in Geneva in 1924.

Dr. W. W. Yen took special interest in the information given him of the great aid afforded in administration of factory law in Great Britain by the legislative provision in 1895 for statistical records.

Within two months of this official interview, some of the Industrial Commissioners of the National Christian Council, Miss Mary Dingman, Industrial Secretary of the Advisory Committee of the World's Young Women's Christian Association (who succeeded Miss Harrison on the Child Labour Commission, on the departure

in March 1924 of Miss Harrison for England), Miss Zung Wei-Tsung, Mr. Gideon Chen, and myself, had the pleasure of meeting in Shanghai a travelling inspector from Peking, Mr. Tant, mining engineer, with long experience in France, who was charged with the duty of gathering records of factories and their conditions for the Ministry. We inspected with him factories within the Settlement to which he had introductions from the British Consulate-General, and we introduced him to those who could further, or throw light on, his enquiries, including the Chairman of the Child Labour Commission. We discussed problems of future application of standards provided in the Peking Regulations and showed him the address of the Chairman of the Municipal Council at the opening session of the Child Labour Commission putting in the forefront the principle of co-operation with the Chinese Government and taking the Peking Regulations as the basis of the work of the Commission.

During the whole of our work we made contacts wherever possible with factory workers, who indeed opened the way to this themselves. One group wrote to me on 13 December, "twelfth year of the Republic", a letter of appeal which strongly recalled the keynote of the British workers when they strove for a 10-hour day in the early nineteenth century, a protest against invasion of human rights and capacity by the unlimited hours of factory work. Here are excerpts from the translation made by Miss Zung :

We saw in the newspapers that you came to our country to investigate conditions concerning . . . Chinese workers, so we wish to say a few words to you with frankness. . . . Among us are coppersmiths, machinists, electricians, stokers and others . . . totalling over one thousand people. . . . Ever since we came to work here we have never enjoyed the happiness of having holidays on Sundays, National Anniversary Day, Dragon Boat Festival Day, Harvest Moon Festival, or Labour Day. . . . We work 12-hour shifts, day and night. But including the time coming and going from the factory we spend 14 hours a day in work, . . . when we change over from day to night shift, sixteen hours. . . . Because of earning a poor mouthful of rice we are unable to observe the holy commands ; neither are we able to enjoy those rights which are inherent to human beings. . . . We have not any time to do anything that is beneficial to the public. . . . During the night shift, especially during the hours between two and half-past five, we feel extremely tired. . . . In fine, we are treated as prisoners, animals and machines. . . . We are peaceful workers, we do not wish to do anything that is beyond us. But we are pressed by circumstances, so we plead you, Dame, to say a word of justice for us. Ah, when shall we be treated as the European workers ! . . . We wish that you fulfil God's will. We wish you peace. God be with you. . . . If you wish to investigate our conditions you may come to see our workers' leader.

We visited the factory and later had a long talk at our office with a group of these men, who supplied in advance a list of twenty-nine questions which they arranged under various heads: legislation, civilisation, combination, personal, miscellaneous. On these our discussion — of over three hours — was based. The native vigour and capacity of mind is most remarkable, and there is evidently here a wonderful field for both adult education and practical training in sane methods of trade union organisation. The former was offered to them, but what can be done with such hours of work? It appeared to me that the contract system of recruitment of labour was responsible for much of the men's grounds for complaint.

Later came a deputation from women silk workers on behalf of the child workers in filatures, a very touching interview showing their remarkable moderation and desire of being rightly led. The conditions, which in many filatures are inexpressibly bad, are sufficiently shown in the evidence, given in full in the December number of this *Review*, from the Report of the Child Labour Commission.

These and other groups were met also at a large May Day meeting of over two thousand, assembled under police sanction in the Court of the Heavenly Queen Temple, in Chinese Shanghai, where we were invited for the hearing and giving of addresses. There they passed a resolution that there should be no employment of children under fourteen years of age and that they should work for an 8-hour day.

In the end of June 1924, in Wuchang, I had an interview with His Excellency the Military and Civil Governor, or *Tuchun*, of Hupeh Province. He promised his support for reform of child labour conditions, on lines in conformity with those of the Civil Governor of Kiangsu, and at his request I sent him the Chinese versions of the memorandum prepared for that Governor on factory law and administration, and of his Ordinance for the setting up of a Child Labour Commission for Kiangsu Province.

PART II OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION

I do not think that the article in the December issue of the *International Labour Review* did full justice to Part II of the Report of the Child Labour Commission. The first part, as is there stated, contains a carefully worded and logically presented summary of

the evidence, and Part III is devoted to a detailed formulation of the Recommendations which the Commission thought to be immediately applicable. But Part II, both in position and in meaning, is the centre of the whole Report, taking precedence in this sense over the minimum recommendations in Part III, which at present alone seem practicable, and this view needs emphasis. It constitutes a statement of the standard which should be recognised throughout China as desirable and ultimately as realisable.

It must never be forgotten that the fundamental position of the Commission is that the labour standard to be aimed at, whether in the Foreign Settlement or any part of China, and "to be adopted at the earliest practicable moment, is that set up by the Washington Conference" of 1919. The Commission recommends that any regulations to this end which are really enforced nationally in Chinese factories should at once be provided and enforced within the Settlement; this involves disappearance, in that event, of the injurious night work and excessively long hours, exclusion of child labour under twelve years, and other real gains for industrial welfare and efficiency. If even one Chinese Province adjoining the Settlement should strictly enforce the Peking Regulations (after alterations in form that will make them practically enforceable), it is strongly recommended that the Settlement should do the same.

There is, however, "at the present moment no regulation of labour in any part of China", and "the fact that there is in China at present no system of education for children of the working classes must not be lost sight of" — for such education is an essential condition precedent to securing the raising of the age of entry for children to a level suitable for the factory system of industry.

In a special relatively small district, in Nantunghow, Kiangsu, there is exceptional provision for primary education. There His Excellency Chang Chien and his brother administer their great agricultural and industrial estate, where cotton is grown and manufactured in spinning mills, cotton-seed oil and oil cakes made from the same growth of the soil, and other industries based on agriculture are also carried on. In the varied educational schemes that are carried out here it is possible that models may be found for other parts of the Province.

The fundamental obstacle to Chinese national action, as things are, is the indisputable fact that there is not "a Chinese Government with power to enforce its decrees throughout the country". The account given in the preceding section of the steps initiated by the Civil Governor Han of Kiangsu Province affords ground for

hope that the Municipal Council may yet be in a position to begin, before long, to raise its standards of regulation from those recommended in Part III to the level in the Peking Provisional Regulations of 29 March 1923, amended as proposed. Instead of ten years being the age of entry, then fourteen years would be the age within a few years; night work between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. for children would cease in factories employing more than ten workers; and a 9-hour day would be the maximum for children under fourteen years, with various other safeguards for health and safety.

The Provincial governments, equally with any central government having power to carry and enforce a factory law, might count on the loyal co-operation of the manufacturers' associations within the Settlement, and of the Municipal Council, in doing all that is in their power to carry out the aims set out in the Peking Regulations. The lesser provisions recommended in Part III of the Commission's Report simply register the strong desire of the Commissioners that a beginning should be made without delay by the Settlement. To go beyond them while there is no regulation outside the boundary would merely invite a shifting of both workers and manufacture across the boundary. The use of white phosphorus in lucifer match making is a distinct matter in my view, in face of the terrible nature of the industrial disease involved. Under all circumstances that ought to cease in the Settlement, as is in effect involved so far as children are concerned by the recommendations in Part III.

THE ATTITUDE OF SHANGHAI

Small though the requirements of Part III may seem if measured by standards attained in the West after a century of effort and experiment, or by the real need of the children, they are far from an insignificant beginning if measured by the present conditions revealed by the summary of evidence in the Report.

It is well to remember, and even dwell on, the last warning sentence of the Report:

Reform of present industrial conditions and the consequent amelioration of the lot of the Chinese child worker cannot be achieved unless it receives the moral and active support not only of the foreign residents, but of the vastly greater body of the Chinese public.

No law in any community, possibly least of all in China, can long be enforced against the wishes of the majority of the people. For satisfactory enforcement the willing support of a considerable

majority is really needed. And in this instance the first step in regulation has to be taken single-handed by the Settlement, in the hope that in due time China will endorse the movement for the benefit of her own children, and make further advance possible.

A moral obligation to make this venture is felt by many Westerners resident or centred in Shanghai to rest on the Settlement, for the reason that here was the gateway through which the factory system of industry, with all its upheavals and risks, entered China. The point — though incontrovertible — need not be pressed. There is undoubtedly a consent in large measure in China to extension of the factory system. The workers themselves have expressed to me their own reluctance for any step of control that might jeopardise the prosperity of their industry. The real ground of responsibility for the Settlement lies in the slowly and painfully acquired experience in western countries, especially England, that without factory law and skilled inspection there is no safety for any people in an industrialised system of production.

The members of the Commission have expressed in no uncertain terms their conviction that the first condition of success in the proposed regulation, obtainable only through a new by-law, is the provision and maintenance of a specially trained inspectorate armed with powers adequate for enforcement of the regulations on all employers alike.

There are various fine examples set by individual modern Chinese manufacturers of their solicitude and practical measures for the welfare of their workers — such as existed in Great Britain from the days of Robert Owen onwards. These show that there is every reason to hope for a large response to the spirit and aim of the International Labour Conventions as soon as means of administration can be organised nationally and provincially by the Republic of China. The spirit of co-operation between employers and workers is still alive and widely present in the old guild organisation and in the practice of sharing profits in the old type of handicraft workshops.

Whatever the origin of the settlement of foreign traders in concessions of defined limits on Chinese soil, carrying on mutual trade with China, the all-important matter now is that it should be turned to much-needed mutual help in matters of human welfare and international service. The Report of this Commission shows one of the greatest of needs — the welfare of children — and a very great opportunity for the best kind of international service.

Strong sympathy must be felt in western industrial countries

with the Council and ratepayers of the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai on account of the specially difficult surrounding conditions of warfare during which they are being moved to make this new legislative venture for protection of children in industry. They may be assured of the widespread thankfulness that will accompany their success, now or in the near future, in passing the necessary by-law¹ and sending it on for ratification by the consuls and magistrates of the various Treaty Powers concerned. Of the full concurrence and approval of these Powers, surely, no doubt need be entertained.

¹ As this article goes to press news comes that, owing to failure to secure a quorum, the necessary by-law mentioned above was not passed by the Council at its meeting in April 1925.