



LAWS RELATIVE TO SCHOOL HOUSE CONSTRUCTION, IN EACH STATE, IN 1912

States having complete regulation in outline, those having moderate degree of regulation in diagonal, those having deficient regulation in cross-hatching, and those having no regulation in solid black.

School House Construction and Destruction

As a nation we spend nearly one dollar per inhabitant each year in the construction of new school houses. As a nation we let our public school houses burn down at the rate of more than one for every school day in the year.

What the Map Shows

The map on the opposite page presents data compiled by Frank Irving Cooper of Boston. It shows some of the reasons why our annual bill is so large and some of the results so poor. On that map 19 states appear in black. This means that they have no laws or regulations governing the construction of school houses. Thirteen are represented by crossed hatching. This means that they have deficient regulation. Fifteen have surfaces indicated by diagonal lines. This means that in these states there is a moderate degree of control. Only Ohio is represented by a clear surface, because it is the only state having a clear record.

Provisions of Existing Laws

Six states have legal provision for the protection of school houses against fire. Twelve states have laws providing for sanitary conditions in the school houses. The largest class of sedentary workers in America is composed of school children, but only five states have regulations concerning school seats and desks. Six states control school house construction through their Boards of Health, sixteen through their Boards of Education, and four through both Boards.

Where the State Compels, the State Must Conserve

We have only three types of institutions where attendance is compulsory—jails, asylums, and school houses. Fortunately, few of us have to stay long or frequently in our jails or asylums, but all of us spend many years in school houses. This is why their construction should be regulated so as to make safety and sanitation compulsory, instead of permitting danger and disease to be possible.

One-Sixth Done, Five-Sixths to Come

The laws of the different states cover 26 separate phases of the regulation of school house construction. The best law includes all but two of these. If the law of each of the 48 states covered all of the 26 points, the total points covered would be 1248. At present all the laws and regulations combined cover only 217 points. Our national accomplishment in this field of educational legislation amounts to about one-sixth of a rather low standard of desirable attainment.