

1. **Definition:** The Progressive Era emerged in this country as a result of and was led by The movement addressed issues such as

2. **Identification of the issue: Child Labor**

a. **Description of the issue:**

The era after the Civil War experienced a rapid expansion of industry due to technological innovations, the availability of vast natural resources from the west and the availability of cheap labor from new immigrants. Most of these new immigrants moved to the cities in search of jobs in factories. Due to the low wages of most industrial jobs, many families depended on wages of both the parents and the children in order to survive. This resulted in the exploitation of thousands of children who worked in factories and mines. These places were often very dangerous, especially for small children who were often required to crawl into machines and other small spaces because of their size. Child laborers were also appealing to employers because they could be paid less than an adult. Child labor became a major social problem because many children were injured, deformed or even killed in their jobs. Since they were working, they were also deprived of any chance at getting an education.

b. **Explanation of the resulting reform(s):**

Since families were reluctant to do without the wages of their children, only a law passed by the government could force them to give that up. Also, since employers were concerned with profit, they would continue to use child laborers since they could pay them less. In 1904 Progressives formed the National Child Labor Committee. This organization called attention to the abuse and exploitation of child laborers and promoted boycotts of businesses that employed children. In 1916 Congress passed, and President Wilson signed the Keating-Owens Child Labor Act. This law made it illegal for children under the age of 16 to work more than 8 hours a day and forbade the sale of goods produced by children. While it was eventually found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the same provisions were made part of the Fair Labor Standards Act passed in 1938 and are still in effect today. Also, states increasingly required all children to obtain a primary school education. As more children were required to be in schools there were less chances of exploitation in industry.

3. **Political cartoon and interpretation:**

This cartoon is representing child labor as a form of slavery. The men bidding on the children are represented as being wealthy and influential due to their large size and pockets of money. However, the children are wearing tattered clothing and looking very forlorn, indicating that they are not well cared for and do not share in the wealth of their employers.



BoondocksNet.com