

North Dakota and Minnesota. The movement is already well under way in Missouri and Oklahoma. Unless we get action soon, Kansas may be the last state in the Union to recognize worker rights for its own school employees.

So far America has concerned itself about old-age retirement on a business basis for wage earners only. Farmers and independent business men are not included. Whether or not they want retirement for which they have to pay as wage earners do, is a question. If they do, it seems probable that all they will need to do is to ask Congress for it. The farmer seems to prefer what he is already getting in many ways through government aid. He gets more and he gets it now instead of paying out and waiting until he is old, as the wage earner does with his retirement.

If all the workers of Kansas who are already protected under retirement provisions of the business type, and all the farmers who are being helped by the government, will favor giving the school employees retirement rights comparable to other workers, this movement will succeed quickly.

The teachers can sympathize with the other groups forgotten by the federal retirement laws, the farm hands and the hired girls, and other state employees, but they can hardly assume to plan or to speak for them.

The retirement system is one application of the modern American theory that the employer and the government both bear a responsibility for the welfare of employees. This theory is also taking form in vacations with pay, sick leave on pay, cooperative hospitalization, extra pay for overtime, compensation for injuries, tenure protection against discharge without adequate cause, unemployment insurance, minimum wages, maximum hours, etc. The United States Government and the "soulless corporations" have gone far on these lines. The state of Kansas as a big employer has so far practically ignored this movement. Most of its school employees have not been granted a single one of the worker welfare rights listed above.

This may be partly the fault of the teachers, because they have not pressed their case. So the teachers are now asking for just one item in this broad program, retirement. Inevitably, as other worker rights get generally established, the teachers will ask to be attached to the tail end of the procession again.

The State Has the Responsibility

It should be clear who is the employer of the teachers. Kansas has a state school system. The local schools are merely local agents for the state, without authority to open a school, to levy a tax, to employ a teacher or to retire anyone on an annuity, or to do anything at all except as authorized and directed by the state which is the real authority. The local railroad shop or station does not put employees on retirement, nor the local post office or telephone office. Other states have generally learned to treat school retirement as a state and not a local function, to be managed and financed by the state directly. About three-fourths of the school employees of Kansas are in the rural schools and small towns, which have few employees per district and change them often. Outside the larger cities, only a state system seems capable of handling the situation. Seven of the larger cities now operate local systems and may wish to continue independently. Their systems are neither modern nor adequate. Just how they would