

COPY OF SECTION 6 OF CANAL BOATS ACT, 1877.

A child in a canal boat registered in pursuance of this Act, and his parent, shall, for the purposes of the Elementary Education Acts, 1870, 1873, and 1876, be deemed, subject as herein-after mentioned, to be resident in the place to which the boat is registered as belonging, and shall be subject accordingly to any byelaw in force under the said Acts in that place.

Provided that if the parent satisfies the School Board or School Attendance Committee having authority in that place that the child is actually attending school, or is under efficient instruction in accordance with the said Acts in some other school district, the said Board or Committee shall grant him without charge a certificate to that effect, and thereupon he and his child shall be deemed for the purposes aforesaid to be resident in the school district in which the child is so attending school, or under efficient instruction, and shall be subject to any byelaw in force therein.

The said certificate may, on application by the parent, be rescinded or varied by the School Board or School Attendance Committee for the place to which the boat is registered as belonging, and may be rescinded without application by any such Board or Committee, if they are satisfied, after due notice to the parent, that his child is not properly attending school or under efficient instruction in the school district mentioned in the certificate.

April 12 1879

THE CANAL BOATS ACT

Mr George Smith writes to the *Times* : "This Act has been in operation fifteen months, and except a few little alterations in three of their own boats, the Paddington registration authority has, it would seem, done next to nothing towards registering the many hundred boats and barges within the district. The boats are not painted and ventilated, the education of the poor children is neglected, and the overcrowding in the cabins of both sexes and of all ages continues, notwithstanding the passing of this act to remedy this state of things. It was stated to me a day or two ago that one boatowner renting one of the wharves in the parish of Paddington had told his boatman to bid defiance to the law and to "go on with his work till he told him different". The winking at this kind of procedure by some of the registration authorities is producing no good results. Boats are to be seen, some of which are registered in Birmingham, working between London and Birmingham, and upon which are huge families of children of school age, and sorry to say, these are allowed to pass muster on their way at such places as Birmingham, Warwick, Leamington and Tring. A friend writes me to say that a similar state of affairs exists at Liverpool. Canal-boatowners and registration authorities cannot now plead the severity of the weather as an excuse for their indifference to the cries of the children and lack of loyalty in carrying out this Act.

May 22 1885 WORCESTER

SCHOOL BOARD – A monthly meeting was held yesterday, Mr T R Hill, M P , presiding. A letter had been received from Mr E H Brodie, one of her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, enquiring what steps the Board had taken to enforce the regular attendance at school of children whose parents are employed in canal boats, and how far their efforts have been successful. The Finance Committee recommended that a reply be sent to Mr Brodie, stating that since 1881 the Board had made constant efforts to ensure the regular attendance of these children. They found that in that year there were 77 canal boats registered in Worcester, but that in three of them only did children live. These attended the Boatman's School, Birmingham. Since then every means had been taken to secure the regular attendance of children living under these conditions ; but little had been accomplished, partly because of the frequent movements of the boats and their occupants, and partly in consequence of the changes constantly being made in the registrations of the boats.

December 17 1890 BIRMINGHAM

In his report to the Committee of Council on Education on the working of the scheme for the education of children under the Canal Boats Act, Mr Brydone says that the authorities are evincing a growing interest with regard to the education of the children of canal boat people. There is a good deal of grumbling among the boat people that fees are charged to them by every school at which any of the children may attend during the week, and where a man is anxious to do his duty in respect of sending his children to school, this certainly does seem a great hardship. The Birmingham canal boat inspector, who is an officer of the School Board also, says that there are many causes which operate to spoil the efficiency of the School Board work in connection with canal boat children; the principal one, he thinks, being a want of compulsory co-operation on the part of inspectors of other districts. He can take action only in his own district, and as soon as the boats leave the city limits he is powerless with regard to them. He thinks the work can only be done properly by making every inspector responsible for every boat that is tied up all day or half day in his district. The question of fees, he says, is a constant complaint. Canal boat people, and the mothers more especially, are becoming more and more interested in trying to get their children sent to school, and as the tone of their own life and surroundings is being raised so they in their turn are becoming more and more solicitous on behalf of their young ones, for whom they, as a class, evince quite as tender a regard in their own way as do parents of other classes.