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THE SOCIAL SERVICES

MANY a specialist has written a law-book on some one or other of Britain's public social services. Many a propagandist has beaten his own pet drum. Some few publicists have tried to find a niche for the social services in their own political philosophies. And one or two scissors-and-paste merchants have provided useful but unsatisfactory cram-books for expectant social workers.

But it remains unnecessarily difficult for the newcomer to this field of service to distinguish the wood from the trees; and we are all newcomers at one stage or another of our careers. No one has so far tried to provide the student of history—and that is what we all are in our more understanding moments—with a well-informed general narrative in which he can see the various social services developing side by side, reacting on one another, and creating as many problems as they solve.

In this book for the first time an attempt is made to look at these social services not as the unaccountable whims of good or bad political fairies, but as institutions that have grown under their own weight owing to the necessities of the age. And party politicians are shown as they really are, busily laying bricks on their opponents' foundations, and all co-operating—even though they forget it—in building up a vast structure of social rights and duties that is as characteristic of our own day as was the struggle for individual freedom a hundred years ago.

By the same Author

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 1819-1832

BARON D'HOLBACH: A PRELUDE TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE SOCIAL SERVICES

A Historical Survey

W. HARDY WICKWAR

with the collaboration of

K. MARGARET WICKWAR

LONDON

COBDEN-SANDERSON

ONE MONTAGUE STREET

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN FOR
R. COBDEN-SANDERSON LTD BY
JOHN BELLOWS, GLOUCESTER
1936

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PREFACE

THE public events of 1931 and various personal experiences about the same date made me look for a short book which would explain what the British social services were, describe how they had come into being, and suggest what part they played in moulding our state and society.

Instead of one book I found a whole library full, devoted to this service or that. But in this multiplicity of specialist studies it remained unnecessarily difficult for the newcomer to see the wood for the trees. And we are all newcomers at one time or another of our life of study and activity.

I have therefore attempted to bring together some of the facts most likely to strike the student of history—and that is what we all are—as significant for the understanding of the world in which we live. For I feel that, as a social animal with decided views on the sense or silliness of his own behaviour, man cannot avoid a certain fascination as he contemplates the way new institutions grow under their own weight owing to the necessities of the situation, especially when he is able to see them developing side by side, re-acting on one another and on their social environment, and creating as many problems as they solve.

My thesis, in so far as I have one, is that one of the outstanding developments of modern times is the re-entry into politics of the spirit that seeks the end and purpose of government in the life and happiness of the people no less than in the control and defence of the state, and that before our very eyes we can observe the upbuilding of a vast structure of social rights and duties that is as characteristic of our own age as was the struggle for individual freedom one hundred years ago.

W. H. W.

CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES

I. EXISTENCE

'IF there be with thee a poor man, one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from any poor brother. . . . For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thine hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land.'

Such was the moral code taught by the Hebrew prophets of the seventh century before Christ and embodied in our book of Deuteronomy.

And no doubt the social service of the more fortunate to the less fortunate members of a community is almost as old as civilisation itself.

In medieval England the lady of the manor might help the family of a bereaved or ailing tenant. The tenants themselves might plough or reap for one another in emergencies, or club together in a parish guild. And in the city the guild or livery company might relieve the poorer members of the craft from out of its common chest.

And it is the same to-day. Men have banded themselves together into societies for this very purpose, whether they call themselves freemasons or druids or buffaloes. No trade union that can afford it but has a provident section to its funds. The church of to-day sets aside its communion money and more besides for the aid of its members in distress. And no decent firm that is not on the rocks has ever refused all help to unlucky members of its staff.

The private social service which Christendom calls charity

and the eighteenth century called benevolence has found ways, moreover, of vesting itself with immortality. It has become a permanent endowment, a charitable foundation. It has asked the state for privilege and protection—the privilege of not dying and the protection that comes of legal recognition.

And in all these cases the voluntary aid that has been given has been the natural expression of feelings of social solidarity or neighbourliness, a debt that the luckier amongst us owe to fate or fortune, something that can be received without loss of self-respect and that does the recipient no more harm than the giver, just because it symbolizes his occupation of a well-recognised place in his own small community.

What, then, of the State itself, the biggest and the oldest of all organised communities, and the one with the greatest power of compulsion at its disposal? A king's touch might heal scrofula, or a king's soul be saved by washing the feet of beggars. But for any real and useful social service the State was too big and too impersonal until it evolved organs suited to this new purpose. Even when suitable organs were evolving, they were adapted to this new function only under the stress of imperative circumstances. In England it was not till the sixteenth century that this happened. One of the new organs called into use was the parish, which thus ceased at the Reformation to be almost uniquely ecclesiastical and began to assume secular functions, converting voluntary collections into compulsory rates. Another organ was the county with its county bench, commissioned to conserve the peace by any and by every lawful means and substituting the law of the land for the custom of the manor. And it was on this double foundation that the Elizabethan poor-law was gradually built, in the hope of supplementing the charitable endowment and the whipping-post as a means of checking the rise of a class of vagrant beggars who belonged nowhere now that guild and manor were slipping from under their feet.

The customary obligation that was second nature to all members of the same community—the moral duty of charity as it was called by the church—was thus transformed into a legal duty enforced by secular authority. And its ecclesiastical corollary, the moral right of the poor to beg, was converted into the legal right of the necessitous to be given work if they could do it or relief if they could not.

The tradition that links the English poor-law with the Anglican reformation has this then in its favour For these were two closely connected aspects of an age in which the State took over the institutions and customs of the church and adapted them to it own purposes. What the reformation did was to make possible an alternative to mendicity.

What it did not do was to cover England with beggars. Except for the monastic servants these seem to have originated much rather in the disbanding of private armies and the inclosure of legally insecure holdings for letting to woolgrowers. And beggary can only have been encouraged by the doles indiscriminately lavished by the lord abbot who built him a pretentious gate-house for the purpose and was copied by all the new rich, including the hammer of the monks, Thomas Cromwell.

The day on which the Tudor council first compelled a county bench to compel a parish to do the begging on behalf of its beggars was the day to which the social-service state can best trace back its origin.

II. IMPROVEMENT

To dole out a bare minimum of food and clothing and shelter to those who fell into destitution through no fault of their own required no great sophistication: it was as though the golden rule and Corinthians xiii had been watered down into the Anglican law of the land.

The eighteenth century, in becoming more sophisticated,

may or may not have grown in humanity. But it did at least witness the general adoption of a more or less scientific outlook. Decent relations between the various members of the body politic no longer seemed an adequate ideal. Man was no longer a God-moulded image of clay, in which the breath of life was to be kept quivering: he became part of nature, a product of his environment, made what he was by the many influences that impressed themselves upon him in the course of his little life. It was not enough to prolong a miserable existence: he must be provided with opportunities conducive to his bodily and mental improvement. The old rights and duties might linger on; but new ones now began to supplement them. Education for man's mind and health for his body began to take shape as new moral obligations on the rulers of Western Christendom.

The United Kingdom was no exception to this rule. It differed substantially from its continental neighbours in three respects only.

The one was that its effective sovereign was a ruling aristocracy which got things done much more quickly as individuals than as a state: the law of other countries might run ahead of ours: but, in ours, custom and convention were apt to run ahead of formal legislation. This apparent backwardness in keeping our island law abreast of the latest European opinion was accompanied by the preservation of a now ancient insular anomaly, the poor law. And between these two extremes of individual and state action, we strove in our prosperity to pursue our own middle course of voluntary co-operation.

Early nineteenth-century paternalism took a peculiar shape in the British Isles. Popular education, for instance, was developed by our rulers as a ruling class and not as a government, although they were gradually constrained to give and to accept a meagre assistance from the treasury, partly as a way of supplementing their non-voluntary efforts, and partly

as a concession to the radical plea that no system could be just unless it was universal or universal unless it was state-organised. And medical treatment at hospitals and dispensaries was left even more completely to the arbitrary benefactions of the old and the new rich. So long as the people had organisation and leadership, Coleridge and Shaftesbury and Carlyle and their fellow neo-feudal romantics did not mind in the least whether these advantages were conferred by an absolutist state or by philanthropic individuals. In the golden age of the charity dinner, paternalism and patronage thus tended to put on the robes of *laissez faire.**

This made it hard to justify the survival of parish relief. It survived only at the price of central limitation on local discretion. And in an early-Victorian Britain that was too apt to interpret respectability as dependence on the rich, the bureaucrats were able to justify their own activity only in so far as they too tried to make the poor respectable, though by the alternative method of bullying them into independence. An institution intended merely to keep living beings in existence, was transformed into a stimulus for urging them along the path of self-improvement. Political economy and philosophic radicalism thus found themselves on the side of the centrally-controlled poor-law. So long as men were educated to independence and self-support, the rational humanitarian did not mind whether this improvement came from the attractiveness of private gain or the deterrence of public relief. Nor did the new poor-law stop short at a mere attempt to deter from destitution : for it led in the hands of Kay to the development of Britain's first publicly-provided schools, while under the guidance of Chadwick it stimulated the evolution of public sanitary institutions. Nearly all the hard thinking about the ends and means of social legislation was the work of rationalist Benthamite utilitarians and not of the pious sentimentalists who were more at home in the

* Cf. G. M. Young's portrait of the age in *Early Victorian England.*

field of private philanthropy. It was, moreover, the middle class, which cried loudest for economic free trade, that was entrusted with the administration of both the new poor-law and the new sanitary improvements, although in both cases they were free to do very nearly as little as they liked and were forbidden to do more than what ought to have been a minimum. Not only so: it was this same section of society that tended to advocate state education for the peculiarly British reason that this was the easiest way of emancipating the nation from the influence of a predominantly aristocratic established church.

In early-Victorian Britain one is therefore bound to conclude that the culmination of *laissez-faire* in the field of economic activity was accompanied by only the most delusive and illusory of triumphs in the realms of social policy. Those for whom independence was the end, chose the state as an important means. And those who acted without the state, aimed at the dependence of man on man and class on class.

The desire for increased social action on the part of the state was limited, however, by the unparalleled prosperity of the quarter-century 1850–75, compared with which the previous age looked bleak and hungry. Prices were rising, and more rapidly in what was still the narrow British market for producing cotton and iron than in what was already becoming the world-wide market for supplying corn. Wages rose with prices and with profits. They not only rose: they went further. Trade unions enabled indispensable trained men, such as engineers, to lay by for the rainy day and to negotiate with captains of industry on something like terms of equality. Consumers' co-operatives enabled them to share the profits of mutual trading. Charity-organisation societies, such as the famous one of London of which Ruskin was vice-president and Sir Charles Trevelyan one of the promoters, thought it possible to rationalize philanthropy, so as to encourage self-respect and providence rather than mendicancy

and mendacity. It looked indeed as though the British were finding a way of harmonizing collective with voluntary action, and reason with freedom.

When one contemplates Goschen's poor-law policy and the housing acts and the educational policy of those years, one even feels tempted to say that the social policy of the United Kingdom was then that of a charity organization state and not that of a social-service state. It was gradually recognised that voluntary action needed co-ordinating and supplementing. As Forster said: 'The result of the state leaving the initiative to volunteers is that where state help has been most wanted, state help has been least given; and that where it was desirable that state power should be most felt, it was not felt at all. In helping those only who help themselves, or who can get others to help them, we have left unhelped those who most need help.'* But state help, like voluntary, aimed at little more than lowering the chief physical and mental obstacles that might otherwise have stood in the way of a general advance towards independence: economic obstacles were no concern of the state. The state might help fit a family for earning its own keep; it might fit it to improve its income and its standard of living; but the family's actual income and the use it made of it were its own affair.

This much then had been achieved by the eighteen-seventies. As Britain passed from the control of the landed aristocracy to that of the middle classes, it came more closely into line with continental tendencies, though in an atmosphere permeated with our island tradition of lavish benevolence, free co-operation, and a legal right to be kept from starvation. And, at Oxford, T. H. Green could teach the rising generation how much British liberalism and German Hegelianism now had in common, in expecting the state to play a significant part in human progress, however much they might differ as to the ideals which it ought to embody in its constitution.

* House of Commons, 17 February, 1870.

III. SECURITY

If one period more than another deserves to be elevated into the great divide that separated early-Victorian radicalism from modern collectivism, it is probably the twenty years of bad trade and falling prices (1875–95). This must presumably have effected a slowing-down of the rise in the standard of living, had it not been for the tendency to press into posts with better pay or greater security, and had the British people not begun voluntarily to limit the size of their families. The amelioration of man's physical and intellectual environment was no longer enough: the security and sufficiency of the family income became all-important.

Of these years, the most decisive of all, not in actual achievement, but in growing consciousness of change, were the dozen years of depression (1875–86). These left engineers wondering whether the burden of industrial unemployment was not too great for unions such as theirs to bear. Mine-workers lost all use for unions whose sliding-scales brought wage reductions when prices fell. Keir Hardie and the now enfranchised unemployed, especially in Scotland, began to lose faith in political liberalism. John Gorst and Randolph Churchill tried to give a new popular appeal to Tory paternalism. Radicals like Joseph Chamberlain admitted the duty of the state to relieve the unemployed. Social work broadened out to take on a community aspect: the family case-work of the charity-rationalizers was usefully supplemented by university settlements and school missions, people's palaces and brotherhoods, polytechnics and boys' brigades; and besides intervening to help restore deserving families to economic independence in the crises of their existence, rational philanthropy began to build up institutions for that continual operation of educative influences that springs of constant social contact. The churches and Booth's salvation army

tumbled over each other to give expression and benediction to this conversion of the social conscience.

During the next half-century it gradually became clear that in this modern world the most appropriate field for voluntary social service was local work of an educational, recreational or occupational nature, where personal contact is all-important: only the state could give universal and equitable assurance of security. The ancient spirit of voluntary social service, in which the signing of cheques was the least important element, was to spring again into vigorous life, shaking off the capitalist accretions of the age of charity-dinners and soup-kitchens: meanwhile, in this age of the cash nexus, the needful adjusting and supplementing of earnings and savings in the various natural and economic contingencies of working-class life was better left to be organized by the all-embracing state. No other institution was so well fitted to assure compulsion in contribution, equal and impartial justice in distribution, universality in scope, evenness in action, and the general observance of qualifying conditions such as should foster and not undermine the sense of responsibility without which there could be no improvement that was worth safeguarding.

The recovery of prices and the return to prosperity (1895–1914) brought little renewal of the rise in real wages. It merely confirmed the view that the contingencies of working-class life were such that a decent standard of living was often unattainable, and still more often unmaintainable, unless private effort were reinforced by public organization and public funds. An independent working-class in the material sense in which the middle-class still understand independence, looked more and more like an abstraction that was out of harmony with the facts of life. The older working-class ideal faded into a dim and distorted reflection of middle-class reality. The most that could be hoped for was a feeling of independence, bred of rights to state pensions and insurance

benefits, the services of national employment exchanges, and the public provision of increasingly costly hospitals and treatment-centres and dwelling-houses. Psychological considerations began to supplement economic. Bosanquet turned from charity organization to seek the real will of the people in the state that guaranteed their standard of living, unmoral and impersonal though it was. And the need for leadership and organization showed itself more than ever not only in increasing government action but in new forms of voluntary community service, among which the boy-scout movement stood out pre-eminent.

The war confirmed these tendencies. A government that assumed absolute control over the distribution of all goods and services could not avoid the responsibility of providing for the dependents of those whose life and labour it conscripted.

And, finally, the dislocation associated with the post-war fall in prices (1920–34) has increased the velocity of the movement generated during the depression of forty years earlier. The increased purchasing power of those engaged in sheltered trades has been offset by unemployment in the staple export industries on a larger scale than previously. It became more clear than ever before that a year's bad luck might easily wipe out the good management of a lifetime and reduce thrifty and unthrifty alike to dependence on public aid. Moreover, this second and greater depression did what the first had not done: it made a breach in the independence of a considerable section of the middle-classes, and led to the adoption of a new economic policy under which whole industries became dependent on government aid in one form or another. For industries and for families alike, for working class and middle class alike, it is now only within state-defined limits that the old principle now applies of 'paying one's way for one's self.' We still wash our own faces: but we expect the state to make sure that we have the wherewithal.

A hundred years ago, not even the most far-seeing of philosophic radicals had any clear idea what would be the outcome of universal enfranchisement or what was involved in encouraging members of all classes to be self-supporting. Still less did they guess how these two processes would react on one another during the next century or more. Like Christian, who could see the shining light but not the wicket gate, they had to be content with the vague conviction that the emancipation movements they were leading were pointing somehow towards the greater happiness of the greatest number. And it is to our and later generations that they had to leave the filling-in of the details of the picture.

They knew only that an old social order was being undermined and superseded. They gave expression to the new sense of unfreedom that men felt, placed as they were between unknown possibilities of man's control over his own destiny on the one hand, and on the other the repressive militancy of a time-honoured outlook driven suddenly out of its complacency and forced on to the defensive by the march of mind. They struggled for the freedom of the individual: and in that age there was no other cause for which they might so usefully have fought. Yet out of their struggles there is merging at the end of a hundred years a vast new network of social rights and duties.

This apparent paradox is only the logic of experience. In all times of change, and perhaps in other times too, men have longed to make certain and sure of their own and their children's place in the community. The fear that it might become worse and the hope that it might be bettered have both driven them towards the same demands. Opportunities to live healthy lives and acquire useful knowledge had barely brought general improvement within sight when a still more radical demand made itself felt. Nothing could be more natural than the desire to make of one's home a haven of security amid the uncertainties of this highly specialized and

interdependent modern world. And the greater the uncertainty, the greater has been the intensity with which men have demanded as an act of bare justice a decent measure of security in return for a reasonable contribution to the work of the community. To transform this natural right into a legal right would constitute a notable and momentous juridical revolution. Yet this is one of the cardinal processes in which the social-service state in its haphazard and piecemeal way is engaged.

CHAPTER II

POOR RELIEF

I. THE OLD POOR-LAW

FROM the day of its birth the English poor-law has been a two-headed monstrosity. It has always been and is still intended to serve two radically different purposes. At one and the same time it has had to find employment for those who could work, and relief for those who could not.

Had it been confined to the latter function, it might have become a richer version of the unofficial English charity organization societies or the official French *bureaux de bienfaisance*. In other words, it would simply have been supplementing charitable doles and almshouses when it raised 'competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them being poor and not able to work,' as commanded in the acts of 1598 and 1601 and as the city of London had been doing since 1547. Except in collecting compulsory rates, it would not have been doing anything that was not done by charity. And it was in fact to this and this alone that the old poor-law was limited in Scotland.

Yet at the same time the poor-law in England and Wales was intended: '*For setting to work the children of such whose parents shall not* by the said churchwardens and overseers or the greater part of them *be thought able to keep and maintain their children;*

'*And also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried* [as], *having no means to maintain them, use no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by;*

'And also to raise . . . a convenient stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other necessary ware and stuff, to set the poor on work;

'*And also* [competent sums of money] *for the putting out of children to be apprentices . . .;*

'And to do and execute all other things, as well for the disposing of the said stock as otherwise concerning the premisses as to them shall seem convenient.'

Here were tasks which far transcended the scope of parish charities, except in the one case of boarding-out apprentices. These duties of finding or making work were first imposed on urban corporations in 1575; by 1598 they were provisionally extended even to rural parishes; and by the famous act of 1601 they were made permanent. They constituted a new motive for the levying of compulsory poor-rates which had been enjoined on the whole country since 1572.

Here then was to be found a most original trait which was destined to give England and Wales a poor-law such as no other European people has ever known.

And here were legal obligations that were to survive ten generations of experiment, to be enumerated once again—so far at least as they are here printed in italics—in Mr Greenwood's poor-law act of 1930.

To carry out such duties was no easy task. Under the Cecils and Wentworth the king's council did its best to browbeat the county magistrates into browbeating the cloth-merchants to continue to put out wool for spinning and yarn for weaving even when trade was bad. Or, if this was not enough, they were to browbeat each parish into providing tools and material for making nails or for spinning and weaving flax and hemp and tow. The place where this stock was kept and this work done became the parish workhouse. And it mattered little that these textile manufactures were not likely to pay their way; for they were so many new

industries which the government wished to acclimatize in England regardless of cost.

For those who refused to work for their living in their own parish—as all could then be legally compelled to do—the magistrates often attached a house of correction to their county gaol. Thither the work-shy were conveyed, 'there to remain or be employed in work until he or she shall be placed in some service, and so to continue by the space of one whole year,' as was prescribed in a continuation of the original poor-law act of 1598.

What Elizabeth's council contemplated was the co-existence of two organizations in each parish. Material was to be put out for the workless to work up in their own homes, when it was to be collected and sold by the parish overseers in order to pay for a fresh supply. And in each county or corporate town there was also to be a house of correction near by the gaol for the compulsory detention and disciplinary treatment of those who failed to work at home.

But this double organization was not what was understood in all parts of the country. Many a place found it easier to keep its stock and supervise the work of its unemployed by providing a parish working-house. Thus the workhouse, as it was called by the time of the republican commonwealth, came into being. In a corporate town this was easily confused with the house of correction which was also a place of work; and at its origin the London bridewell had in fact fulfilled both functions.

This confusion between those who would work and those who would not seems to have been hastened by the breakdown of central guidance in the civil war. Left to themselves no local authorities wanted to spend local money on subsidizing uneconomic industries. So from this time onward they embarked on a vain search for some means of avoiding a loss on the work of those who could not be employed at a profit.

Local experiments in the provision of work culminated

in the act of 1722. This empowered parishes to farm out their workhouses to a contractor, who was then at liberty to make what profit he could out of the inmates' labour. Not only the thoroughly able-bodied were included, but also old people who were often quite capable of working though not of doing sufficient work to earn their living. And relief could be refused to all who refused to enter a workhouse.

This experiment led at first to a considerable reduction in the poor-rate. But it represented a big step in the development of the general mixed workhouse, that typical English institution, in which the adequate classification of inmates was soon found to be seldom possible and the herding together of all sorts and conditions of men and women and children was bound to lead to degradation and deterioration, thus converting the workhouse which had been intended as a measure of economy into a source of expense.

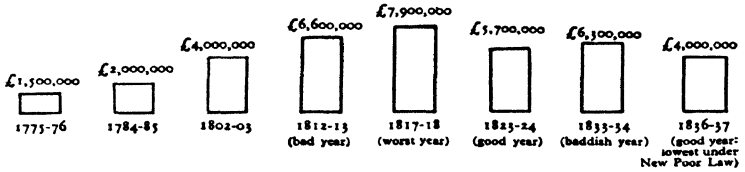
What first attracted attention was the inhumanity of farming-out all and sundry to the highest bidder and leaving him free to develop into a middleman who made a profit by subletting them in small batches. So Gilbert's act of 1782 encouraged the re-drawing of a line between those who were and those who were not able-bodied. For the latter the workhouse was to become a poorhouse, a house of idleness instead of a school of industry. And the former were to have work arranged for them direct with any of the local farmers or other employers who would consent to take them and pay the parish some small contribution towards their keep. These roundsmen or billet-men were often bad workers or men turned off from a depressed trade who might not have found employers in a trade they did not know if the parish had not been prepared to bring their meagre earnings up to a bare subsistence level. But this was not always so; and the way was opened for farmers to obtain labour at an inadequate wage—occasionally at first and permanently later—in the certainty that it would be made up by a parish allowance.

Another less widespread way of providing work, but one specially favoured in the home counties, was to exempt ratepayers from their rates if they accepted pauper labour. But this opened the door to the same abuse: a vicious circle was liable to be engendered, in which every farmer wanted cheap labour because every other farmer in the parish was getting it, and rural workers might be driven into dependence on the parish through difficulty in earning a real and sufficient wage.

Besides the problem of work for the workless and relief for the impotent, there was another of great importance in a predominantly rural society with ill-developed transport and a low standard of living. This was the price of bread. Elizabethan and Jacobean and Caroline magistrates had helped the poor to make both ends meet in times of dearth by forbidding the sale of corn out of the district and by dumping a corn reserve on the local market in order to check the rise in prices. This policy fell into abeyance after the guiding hand of the council was removed. In its place the new policy was evolved of temporarily making-up wages by means of a parish allowance so as to prevent starvation or bread-riots. With the war against the French republic and empire, the consequent curtailment of the Baltic grain trade, and the inflation of the currency, such temporary and urgent necessities became permanent. The Berkshire justices in session at Speenhamland had a bread-scale drawn up in 1795, to help them calculate what allowance each applicant's family needed, to enable it to buy a certain number of loaves per head per week; and in many other counties the bench followed their lead.

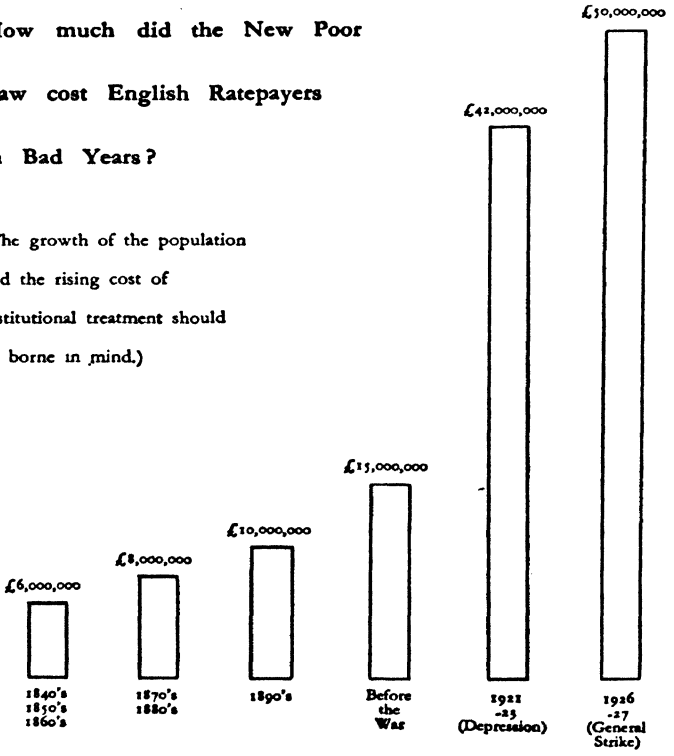
Here was another factor which contributed to the generalization of the allowance system. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the cost of subsidizing labour fluctuated therefore from year to year in harmony with fluctuations not only in trade and industry but also in the harvest.

How much did the Old Poor Law cost English Ratepayers?



How much did the New Poor Law cost English Ratepayers in Bad Years?

(The growth of the population and the rising cost of institutional treatment should be borne in mind.)



Another extra-legal development was to take the line of least resistance and avoid the bother of providing work for the workless by the simple process of granting them relief in lieu of work.

And widows established a customary right to a small parish pension, with an additional allowance for each child, especially if it was illegitimate, regardless of their ability to work.

There was room for doubting the legality of many of these well-established methods of granting monetary relief in their own homes to men and women who were capable of working for their living, without obliging them to work for the parish. So these customs were expressly legalized during William Pitt's ministry in 1796, but still with the intention that they should remain occasional, and little recognition that they were becoming permanent.

Pitt himself was at this time full of ambitions but ill-digested projects of poor-law reform, born partly of humane feeling, partly of economic principle, and partly no doubt of that political sense which urged the English governing class to leave no excuse for an English imitation of the French revolutions of 1789 and 1792.

So far as concerned those who were able to work, the central feature in his proposals was the general reorganization of workhouses under the new name of schools of industry. These were to be places where a trade was taught both to the unemployed and to the young, habits of industry inculcated, and food provided. Or, as we might say to-day, they were to be both unemployment centres and junior technical schools. Big families were to be rewarded for what Pitt called their contribution to the wealth of the country, less by relief in money in their own homes than by being allowed to send their children to these schools of industry, without having to become destitute in order to qualify for admission. But there were obvious difficulties on which this scheme was bound to

founder. One was the capital outlay which would be required in the middle of a war. Another was the lack of sufficient administrative experience. And the greatest was that the manufacturing processes pursued in the schools of industry were foredoomed to be carried on at an even greater loss than in Stuart days, now that the hand labour they were intended to provide was bound to be undersold by new mechanical contrivances.

The other side of Pitt's proposals was equally impracticable. He hoped that those who were temporarily or permanently unfit to work might be relieved less from rates than from a parish fund financed partly by their own insurance contributions and partly by charitable bequests. Yet this would hardly have been adequate unless all parish charities had been forced to enter a national pool.

With Pitt died the last dream of a poor-law system that might pay its way. The occasional expedient of making allowances to the able-bodied became a permanent custom. Its cost rose. It was demanded as a right by the insurgent farm-labourers of the home counties in 1830. And after this last agrarian rising was suppressed by the whig government with a thousand condemnations to death, exile, and prison, a royal commission was appointed in 1832 to enquire into the practical operation of the poor laws.

II. THE NEW POOR-LAW

The classical report which Nassau Senior penned for this royal commission in 1834 was concerned almost entirely with the problem of the able-bodied. 'The out-door relief to the impotent,' it said, 'is subject to less abuse. The great source of poor-law maladministration is the desire of many of those who regulate the distribution of the parochial fund to extract a profit to themselves. The out-door relief to the able-bodied, and all relief that is administered in the workhouse

afford ample opportunities for effecting this purpose; but no use can be made of the labour of the aged and sick, and there is little room for jobbing if their pensions are paid in money.'

Poverty, they reported, had been confused in England with indigence. The poor had been converted into paupers. Individual farmers and storekeepers and slum-owners might have profited by using allowances as an excuse for low wages and high rates as an argument for low farm rents, in which case the labourer and the ground-landlord lost to the advantage of the middleman. But on the whole no one stood to gain when the labourer owed his subsistence partly to the parish and not entirely to his own earnings.

Behind this analysis of actual facts stood the conviction that the majority were bound to suffer when parochial jobbery interfered with the working of economic laws, and prevented wages, profits, and rents from finding their natural level.

They therefore recommended that the unthinking custom which had grown up in the course of generations should be brought to an end by the application of the rational principle 'that the condition of the paupers shall in no case be so eligible as the condition of persons of the lowest class subsisting on the fruits of their own industry.' And they adduced evidence from the experience of the more enlightened parishes all over the country to suggest that dispauperization brought labourers greater independence, pay, and contentment.

As the best way of applying this 'principle of less eligibility,' they recommended 'that the practice of giving relief in well-regulated workhouses and the abolition of partial relief to the able-bodied, having been tried and found beneficial, be extended to all places'. This would not only draw a line of distinction between paupers and independent labourers, and thereby check the tendency to an indefinite extension of pauperism. It would be an automatic test of the destitution of the able-bodied. And by abolishing all arbitrary discretionary

powers it would diminish the risks of abusive administration.

In the light of this report, the poor-law amendment act of 1834 set up a permanent poor-law commission, to forbid the paying of allowances to men in receipt of wages and to carry out the other recommendations of the royal commissioners.

The principle of making relief to the able-bodied conditional on their accepting the offer of the house was gradually applied in union after union, until it became possible in Peelite days to consolidate the new practice in two general orders. The statutory commission's general out-door relief prohibitory order of 1844 applied to rural districts and allowed relief to be granted outside the workhouse only in certain specified cases; sudden and urgent necessity; sickness, accident, or infirmity; burial; a family whose breadwinner was in prison or in the armed forces or otherwise non-resident; widows during the first six months of widowhood; and widows with dependent legitimate children and no bastards since widowhood. The general outdoor relief regulation order of 1852 applied to urban districts and allowed relief to be granted outside the workhouse not only in these but also in other circumstances: if adequate workhouse accommodation was not available, as was always liable to happen in a sudden slump, able-bodied men could be given out-relief half in money and half in kind in return for task-work such as picking oakum or breaking stones in a labour-yard; able-bodied women could be given out-relief only if they had no illegitimate dependants; and temporary departures from the order were allowed on condition that they were reported to the central authority. As rural unions became urbanized they frequently obtained permission to copy the more elastic form of labour test under outdoor labour-test orders. And the overdue relief-regulation order of 1911 made the law uniform for the whole country: the urban practice of regulation had proved more

adaptable to modern problems than the original rural prohibitory principle.

Experience has brought up the administrators of the new poor-law against several practical difficulties which were not foreseen in 1832–34.

One of these may be summed up as the general mixed workhouse. The royal commissioners had recognised the disadvantages of herding all sorts of people together just on the ground that they were destitute. They proposed therefore that they should be classified by institutions, the aged and infirm being in one, children in another, able-bodied women in a third, and able-bodied men in a fourth. Each union was in fact to use one of its old parish poorhouses as an infirmary or almshouse, one as an orphanage, and two as male and female workhouses. But the custom of lumping together all the destitute died hard. Guardians thought it more dignified and less troublesome to have one vulgarly pretentious pauper palace rather than several more modest institutions. The capital outlay would be immensely bigger in the first instance; but the central commissioners were persuaded that running-costs might be slightly lower, as no institution would then be left empty at harvest-time and the able-bodied could be made to work for the others. So long as there was a labour test for the able-bodied, the central commissioners did not much mind what happened to the others.

Instead of classification by institutions there was classification inside institutions, with all the elasticity that that implied. The deterrent associations and degrading contacts of the workhouse were thus extended to all its inmates. And Oliver Twist had to suffer from the fundamental confusion that has dogged the whole history of the English poor-law. The discipline suited to the able-bodied pauper was extended to the young and the old.

It was only gradually to dawn on poor-law administrators that to employ pauper nurses either for infants or for

girl-mothers or for any other class of the sick was a false economy which tended to make the workhouse a school of pauperism instead of a testing-place for its eradication.

But it was perhaps the Oliver Twist end of this problem that attracted most heart-searching and called for most experiment.

To send workhouse children to a workhouse school, however good, or even to an ordinary public elementary school, could be only a part-time solution. Something more than this was needed if workhouse contacts were to be eliminated. With a child that could not have the advantages of a normal home life, there could be only a choice of evils; but to leave that child in the workhouse was to choose the greatest evil instead of the least.

The cheapest, most obvious, and most satisfactory way to put children in a more educative environment than the workhouse was to put them on out-relief in a decent working-class home. But this solution was applicable only with children without parents, or, since 1889, with children legally adopted by the local authority. And they would have to be regularly visited. Yet most unions clung so tenaciously to visitation by relieving officers and poor-law doctors that very few utilized the permission to board-out outside the union, as they were allowed to do from 1870, or to substitute unpaid visitors of decent standing under a general order of 1889, with the natural result that this connection with the poor-law made it harder in England than in Scotland to find suitable homes for suitable children.

At the other extreme stood the expensive device of a rate-provided boarding-school. But very few unions outside London could be scared even by an epidemic into combining to finance a district school under an act of 1844. Most preferred to transfer the responsibility to denominational orphanages. Separate training schools and training ships held out better prospects of teaching children a trade that should make

them independent. Grouped cottage homes suggested a way of providing a nearer approach to home-life. And the barracky district school was condemned by public opinion from the 1870's onwards, when it was found to be a breeding-ground for blindness. (Of every ten children in district schools, six had diseased eyes in the eighteen-seventies and one in the 'nineties).

A compromise experiment elaborated at Sheffield in the 'nineties consisted of a system of scattered homes, each of which was intended to be housed in a genuine working-class cottage acquired for the purpose, instead of the specially built and expensive villa into which the grouped cottage was developing.

In spite of these many lines of approach to a most difficult problem, there were still several thousand children in workhouses at the beginning of the present century.

While practical difficulties such as these were arising from the recrudescence of the general mixed workhouse, others arose from the survival of outdoor relief even if in a truncated form.

Small pensions were commonly granted to old and infirm poor people and to poor widows with dependent children, although they partly maintained themselves or their families by their small earnings. Able-bodied men could be given out-relief when they dropped down on the relieving officer out of the blue in some sudden and urgent necessity when special expense was entailed by sickness or death in the home. And popular preachers such as Thomas Chalmers, the apostle of the Scotch free kirk, vaunted the moral superiority of voluntary charity over public poor-relief, with such success that they provided guardians with a righteous alibi: the assumption of unrevealed private resources was a good excuse for inadequate investigation and inadequate relief.

To Goschen, when he was responsible for poor-law policy, these practices seemed like to many survivals of the custom

of supplementing inadequate wages out of the rates, thereby keeping wages low and rates high, plus the growing evil of unbusinesslike and spasmodic charities whose competition and inadequacy put a premium on fraud and deception.

So in 1869 he initiated a campaign for saddling charity with the chief responsibility for out-relief. He discouraged the granting of out-relief to widows with only one child, and the permanent use of the outdoor labour-test for men without dependents. He encouraged separate institutions for the infirm, so that their amenities might not be extended to the able-bodied, and separate test workhouses for those whom the general mixed workhouse did not deter. He persuaded parliament to grant limited powers of compulsory detention for ins-and-outs who could not be deterred from using the workhouse as a free lodging-house. He found the out-door paupers four times as many as the indoor, and he left them only twice as numerous. He found the total number of paupers, both indoor and outdoor, over one million, and he left them 600,000. He was favoured by a spell of exceptionally good trade, without which the spread of so strict an administration would have proved unpalatable. And he was helped by a charity organization movement which tried to marshal the forces of voluntary benevolence in order to save deserving cases from the need for accepting the offer of the house.

Goschen and the C.O.S. might almost be called the second founders of the new poor-law. For fifty years their spirit brooded over it. And it is only since 1921 that outdoor or domiciliary relief has again been allowed to reach a pre-Goschen proportion or that the total number of English recipients of poor-relief has again reached the million figure.

The half-century between Goschen and 1921 has been noteworthy not for the break-up of the poor-law but for its breakdown, as the result not of the burden thrust upon it but of the flight away from it.

Reformers began to look elsewhere for aid. The workhouse ceased to be a fetish, and the poor-law in general became a taboo.

For the aged and the infirm, the widow and the orphan, talk of state pensions and insurances filled the air so as to do everywhere and without stigma what the poor-law had done only here and there. Sanitary authorities built up a service of preventive medicine that put the poor-law medical service into the shade even where it did not put it to shame. And the public poured out boots and clothes and dinners for school children when parents and guardians neglected their statutory duty, which they were thus encouraged still further to neglect.

As for setting to work the unemployed, the most for which the poor-law machinery was allowed to be used was the provision of test-work. It fell therefore between the two stools of being too deterrent for some and not deterrent enough for others.

It was not deterrent enough either for the ins-and-outs who found the workhouse a home of rest for sleeping off the ill-effects of street-walking and booze, or for the skilled loafers who knew the tricks of stone-breaking and oakum-picking in the ill-supervised short-time labour-yard. For such as these even the work they had to do was not enough to make relief seem less eligible than responsibility for making both ends meet by persistent and regular work. Even a farm colony had to be unusually well-run if it was to deter them. And to measure the test-work according to the exact physical capacity of every pauper on normal diet or normal out-relief was to raise insurmountable problems of discipline.

It was deterrent to a degree for those who had no wish to associate with the chronic *habitués* of the workhouse or the labour-yard until they were driven into the last ditch. It did at least test the reality of their destitution. But neither then nor earlier did it do anything to help them get the work

they needed. Nor, if such work was unobtainable, did it provide the humanest means of deciding whether or not the unemployed person was deserving of help. Either this automatic test of genuineness would have to be dispensed with and the door re-opened to the humaner abuses of discretionary out-relief; or a better self-acting test of something other than pecuniary destitution would have to be devised.

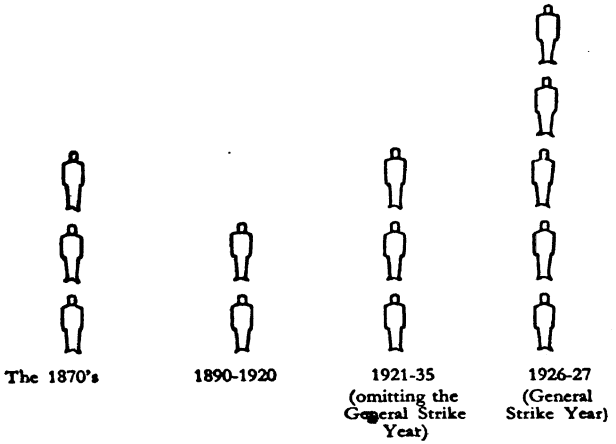
The crude effectiveness of these time-honoured tests might be successful in differentiating between those who were in the last ditch and those who were not. But that had not proved the same thing as to differentiate between the class of paupers and the class of independent labourers. The line of demarcation was financial and neither social nor moral, except in the very few localities where effective charity organization succeeded in bringing voluntary aid to the doors of all those who were merely the victims of exceptional ill fortune. It confused those who had fallen from a higher standard of human living with those who had never known more than the lowest level of animal existence.

A test of destitution was a test neither of needs nor of deserts. And it consequently struck public opinion that it was quite arbitrary to wait and impose so coldly automatic a test at this particular ebb in a person's fortunes. 'Law only works well when it secures the assent as well as the obedience of the governed,' J. R. Green had written right back in 1868, 'and the fact that large bodies of thoughtful men, brought from position or sympathy into daily contact with distress, should for a quarter of a century persist in protesting against the laws that deal with it, is to our minds a very serious matter indeed.'*

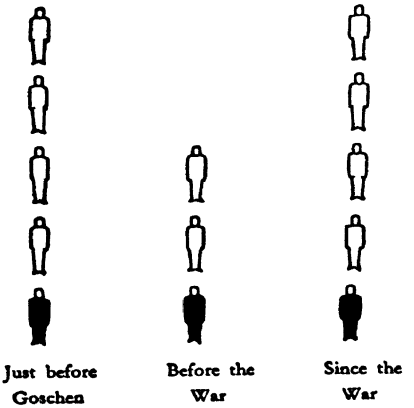
And the matter became more serious, with the growth of wealth. For voluntary agencies rushed in where angel guardians dared not tread. Private almsgiving provided insanitary shelters for the homeless poor who slept under

* *France and French Poor-relief*, reprinted in *Stray Studies*, II., p. 158 (1903).

What was the Average Percentage of Englishmen in receipt of Poor Relief on Any One Day in the Course of a Single Year?



By what method was Destitution relieved under the New Poor Law?



arches on the Thames embankment because they were deterred by the prospect of a spot of work and a compulsory bath at a workhouse. When the first snow of winter brought extra odd jobs, the West-end rained down gold on the East-end, especially if it had a few of its windows broken. Press magnates proved the value of their organs as advertising media, at the expense of their trusting readers, without lasting benefit to the recipients. Mayors and lord mayors joined in the process of going behind the backs of the statutory authority. Pauperization by charity became the order of the day in the late-Victorian *fin-de-siècle*. The new poor-law failed like so many other institutions both before and since, because it had never been tried—had never been tried in a social vacuum.

And its death, like its birth, was marked by a royal commission—the inquest of 1905—though the uncertainty what to do next made this one sit twice as long and issue two reports instead of one. But in one thing above all others both the majority and the minority were agreed : that the time had come at long last for trying to split up the poor-law into its several elements, with a view not merely to relieving destitution, but to preventing and curing it.

III. THE RUMP POOR-LAW

The very day that Campbell Bannerman formed his liberal government with Mr John Burns as president of the Local Government Board, a royal commission was set up to report on the poor-law in particular and the relief of distress in general.

It worked from the end of 1905 to the beginning of 1909. And ever since those years our social-service policy has followed three lines marked out by the evidence it collected and the reports it submitted.

Since the creation of the new poor-law, other local social

services had been developed. Public-health hospitals overlapped with poor-law infirmaries. Health visitors overlapped with district doctors. And unemployed men oscillated between municipal relief-work and the guardians' labour-yard. One obvious reform would therefore lie in putting an end to this unintentional overlapping which had arisen during the last generation.

Another change that had occurred since 1834 was that commercialization and industrialization, specialization and urbanization, had increased the risk of undeserving destitution. There was now every reason to believe that many of those who applied for poor-relief had a higher standard of living and a greater degree of self-respect than the true pauper. They were the victims of sheer bad luck. They had no families on whom to fall back. And even though their characters were no more immune from blemish than yours or mine, it was primarily to some cause outside their own control that they owed the ill-fortune which had ultimately driven them to the degradation of applying for the same relief as was meted out to the undeterrable. A second and more constructive line of reform would therefore lie in the organization of other means of providing against the major risks of life. Men and women would thus be able to establish a legal claim to help, without having to wait till they were destitute.

If duplication and overlapping of services were abolished, and if new services lessened the risk of destitution, would there be any further need for a poor-law to relieve the destitute? On all other points the majority and the minority of the royal commission differed only on detail. But on this issue they differed on principle.

The socialist minority argued that when sickness was dealt with by a health authority and unemployment by a labour authority and childhood by an education authority, nothing would remain for a destitution authority to do. A democratic state ought moreover to provide for its members in

respect of some activity in which they engaged, such as the search for health or employment or education, and not because they belonged to a particular class defined as the destitute, branded as paupers, and relieved under a significantly named poor-law. The poor-law must be gradually broken up. And this evolution would result in our ultimately having no poor-law instead of a new poor-law.

The majority, on the other hand, assumed that there would still remain a residuum whose very destitution would present peculiar problems such as could be best approached by some specialized machinery. The poor-law, unburdened of duties that could be better fulfilled in more modern ways, would thus continue to relieve those for whom neither voluntary aid nor the proposed new state-aided provident organizations provided an escape from destitution. The more it could concentrate on the hard core of the problem, the more chance it would stand of converting inadequate relief into adequate assistance. And the more assurance the public had that every case received individual attention, and indeed that most cases were provided for outside the poor-law, the less reluctant they might be to arm the public assistance authority with powers even of compulsory detention. With the pauper, as with the criminal, the aim of the twentieth century should be re-education, just as that of the nineteenth had been deterrence.

The liberal statesmen who were then in power were most attracted by the second and third of the problems discussed by the commissioners.

Even before these illuminating and conflicting reports were issued, the government had taken up the task of organizing public provision for the unfortunate outside the poor-law. It was the young and the old that first engaged their attention. Undernourished school children might be fed by local education authorities, thus lessening the need for a decent family in temporary distress to apply for poor relief, though there was nothing in the 1906 act to prevent a

family of cadgers from neglecting to feed its own children or even from obtaining relief from the education committee and from the guardians at one and the same time. Poor persons of seventy were entitled to receive a national old age pension if they were not receiving poor-relief, thus lessening the need for them to go before the guardians, although the pension was so small that nothing was inserted in Asquith's old age pensions act to prevent the poorer recipients from going in and out of the workhouse and therefore on and off the pension according to their temporary ability or inability to find a supplementary source of income, until in 1919 the law had to be altered to allow them to receive out-relief and the pension concurrently.

After the publication of the commissioners' reports in 1909, the government's social legislation was marked by the adoption of the clear and definite principle of contributory social insurance, both by Mr Lloyd George against natural risks such as sickness and disablement and by Mr Churchill against the economic risk of unemployment.

While his colleagues were thus providing modest statutory alternatives to poor-relief, Mr John Burns proceeded unenthusiastically to an overdue reform of the poor-law itself by utilizing his long-latent ministerial powers of administrative legislation. After consulting a departmental committee in 1909–10, he issued a series of binding orders in 1911 and 1913 besides a circular expressing the hope that out-relief should be made adequate. Out-relief was now regulated on the same principles throughout the whole country, as the distinction between rural unions in which prohibition was necessary and urban ones in which regulation was enough was now two generations out of date. Out-relief on loan was expressly authorized, and although this may have proved deterrent as a test of genuine need, it has had to be remitted in many individual cases where the need has subsequently proved to be of long duration. Better institutional classification was

encouraged, especially by forbidding the employment of workhouse inmates as nurses in the infirmary. And neighbouring boards of guardians were empowered to set up joint vagrancy committees to mitigate the growing nuisance of the homeless wayfarers who begged their way from one casual ward to the next.

No attempt had yet been made to solve the first problem, that of local overlapping. On the contrary, it was becoming steadily worse, as new acts of parliament compelled local authorities to make provision for the tuberculous and the mentally deficient and empowered them to help voluntary agencies for the welfare of mothers, infants, and the blind.

After twenty years, Mr Neville Chamberlain's local government act of 1929 initiated an attack on this problem. The chief reason for delay was now removed, by entrusting public assistance to a committee of the ordinary county or county borough council instead of leaving it to a completely distinct board of guardians. This made a re-arrangement of functions a matter of simple commonsense: no normal council would want to compete with itself by providing similar services through different committees. A number of special acts were therefore enumerated as peculiarly suitable for transfer declarations. Subsequent local experience and central pressure have accordingly combined to induce a continually growing number of local councils to appropriate public-assistance infirmaries as public-health general hospitals, after improving their accommodation and equipment, and to make declarations transferring the domiciliary assistance of blind persons and all assistance of mental defectives from the public assistance committee to their own special statutory committees.

After shedding many of their functions like autumn leaves, the public assistance committees thus survive like bare branches of the historic poor-law, offering the scantiest of winter shelter to those who have found no adequate protection in the younger growths of the twentieth century. The poor-law has not been

broken up. This was made plain when it was re-enacted under the labour government in 1930 in order to bring it into harmony with the local government act of 1929.

Nor has its work diminished. Both in scale and in scope it has had to remedy the inadequacies of the compulsory insurance and pensions system. And here it has brought us up against problems of which we had had no experience when the royal commission sat and reported a generation ago.

In scale, insurance benefits and pensions alone were never intended to be adequate to the maintenance of a decent standard of life, and a long spell without wages reveals their inadequacy. But the very certainty of their amount has made it easier to gauge means and needs, and therefore to render domiciliary relief adequate for almost the first time in the history of the poor-law. Official recognition has been given to the well-established habit of granting out-relief to those who had other sources of income and were therefore not destitute. In the case of national health insurance, this has gone so far as to compel public assistance authorities to disregard the first seven-and-sixpence of sickness or disablement benefit, partly in imitation no doubt of earlier acts of 1894 and 1904 which respectively allowed and compelled guardians to encourage friendly societies by disregarding the first five shillings, but partly in recognition of the need of extras during illness.* And although old age pensions and unemployment and indeed all other insurance benefits are not disregarded,† they have frequently been supplemented.

In scope, moreover, large classes have been omitted from compulsory insurance and pensions schemes. Those members of a family who are not in health insurance may have

* But blind persons who receive domiciliary assistance on a higher scale under the blind persons act do not enjoy the same privilege as those who receive the lower scale of domiciliary relief under the poor-law.

† An insured person who has previously received domiciliary relief in addition to his disablement benefit, may thus suffer a reduction of 7s. 6d. a week in his income on reaching sixty-five, when he ceases to be eligible for disablement benefit but becomes eligible for contributory old-age pension.

to call in the district doctor. Costermongers and struggling professional people have been omitted from compulsory insurance as they are their own masters and are not employed under a contract of service. Black-coated workers whose five pounds a week salary is less than many a manual worker's wage, and whose expenses are probably higher, have been similarly excluded with even less justification. Unmarried wives and unmarried widows have not been allowed to establish rights to contributory pensions or dependants' benefit as they did to separation allowances and war pensions, although they are rightly entitled to maternity benefit if they are themselves insured workers. And insurance benefits have not been available when unemployment has been caused by participation in a trade dispute.

This double inadequacy of compulsory provident schemes has revealed itself in particular in the care of the unemployed, some of whom have found themselves completely uninsured, and others insufficiently covered in view of the duration of the risk. One unexpected result of unemployment insurance has therefore been a considerable relaxation of old rules, in the interest of adequate assistance. In Scotland, for instance, out-relief was made available to able-bodied men for the first time in history in 1921. In London, unions were allowed in 1921 to charge up out-relief as well as indoor-relief to the metropolitan common poor fund, in accordance with a scale issued by Sir Alfred Mond as Minister of Health in 1922. In December 1931, public assistance committees were allowed to relieve able-bodied men wholly in money instead of being compelled to give half the relief in kind. Instead of the recipients of domiciliary relief being twice as numerous as those relieved in institutions—which had been the normal proportion for the half-century, 1871–1921—they became four times as numerous. Occupation centres, both day and residential, took the place of test-work. What was mere dovetailing and supplementing in cases of inadequate money

payments, became serious overlapping when two distinct agencies were at work on the same functional service, of keeping the unemployed fit. In 1934–35, therefore, at one swoop the unemployment assistance board tried to remove the need for supplementing transitional payments, and also relieve public assistance committees of those large categories of the unemployed who would presumably have been insurably employed if local economic conditions had not recently degenerated.

Neither the delimitation of the scope of the poor-law nor the organization of adequate provision outside it is yet within sight of completion. It is therefore too soon to say whether we are progressing towards the restriction of public assistance to the merest and most unassistable residuum, or whether towards the total eclipse and break-up of the poor-law.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION

I. PRIMARY EDUCATION

(i) *Voluntary Provision*

THE characteristics that have distinguished the history of English elementary education from that of all other countries have been nothing less than the distinctive peculiarities of English society itself.

In a land of monarchic government such as Germany, uniform state systems of education were gradually established at the expense of each parish by the princes of the age of reason: an aristocratic country such as ours owed more to the unsystematized voluntary generosity of the governing class, supplemented by the smaller generosity and the greater business enterprise of their middle-class allies, rivals, and purveyors.

In a territory, the overwhelming majority of whose inhabitants were of one and the same Christian denomination, religion made for unity and uniformity; but in a nation like ours that boasted or endured a dozen warring sects, religious antagonism was at once a spur to educational advancement and an impediment to the organization of a national system.

By these characteristics the evolution of elementary education in England has been dominated.

The common school of the eighteenth century was a private venture. Parents who wanted their children to learn to read, had to pay a few pence a week for them to be taught this useful accomplishment. The custom of sending children to such private schools was common in the more flourishing

parts of the country. The schools varied even more in efficiency than in price. Some of the best became notable centres of experiment. And some of the worst were mere dame schools that minded small infants before they were old enough to learn much more than the A B C.

For those who were above the common school, there were other private preparatory establishments, or, as a measure of economy in the large families of the day, home education under a tutor or governess was a widespread habit and a source of much enlightened interest in educational theory and practice.

But what of the many whose parents could not or would not pay for their schooling?

If they could not pay, then they should be paid. So the school of industry flourished from the days of Locke till after those of Roebuck. There the children of the very poor might be taught habits of industry and given a shilling or two at the end of the week for the plaiting or spinning or sewing they had done with their little fingers. And if they learnt to read the Bible at the same time, so much the better.

Alternatively, some rich benefactor might endow his parish with a charity school. So far from making its scholars earn their keep, this might even manage to clothe them. And it could then concentrate on reading, with a little writing and arithmetic, thus reducing handwork to a training in industrious habits for the future rather than a source of present livelihood. Such endowments were plentiful in the days of Queen Anne, under the stimulus and central organization of the Anglican Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1698). But endowments tended to be diverted from schools to hospitals—from the soul to the body—in the less enthusiastic days of Isaac Watts, when the Protestant church of England as by law established was piloted out of danger from Rome or revolution by Sir Robert Walpole.

By the 1780's, however, a new sort of educational charity

found its way into the press. Here and there some stray parson had long kept up the ancient custom of catechising the poor children of his parish between services on Sunday. And now Robert Raikes of the *Gloucester Journal* told the world of fashion how he and a curate had begun to restore the sabbath calm of his cathedral city by renting a room, hiring a reading-master, and bringing civilizing influences to bear on the neglected children of the street. For such a Sunday school no capital outlay on permanent buildings was necessary, though much of the available accommodation was so restricted that the wages bill was often heavy. And a school held on Sunday could be attended by persons who had to work for their living all the week, whatever their age.

Thus did Robert Raikes invade a hitherto untouched market. And just as the century came to an end another technical invention held out further hopes of meeting this unsatisfied demand and further cheapening the supply of knowledge.

The invention was the monitorial system. This was merely the outcome of the well-known device of mutual instruction, by which one child was put to teach others in a largish family. Bell, a clergyman at Madras, resorted to it as a means of breaking a strike among his assistant masters. And at the same time, Lancaster, a private-venture schoolmaster in Southwark Borough Road, adopted it as a method of increasing his own profits. Philanthropists such as Elizabeth Fry—a fellow Quaker—took Lancaster up, and paid poor children's school-pence for them, till the school became so big that the hope was confidently entertained of teaching a child the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic, within two years, at five shillings a year. Eminent trustees made themselves responsible for the propagation of this invention in 1808; the resultant Royal Lancasterian Institution took shape by 1810, with Brougham, Whitbread, and James Mill on its committee; and as its work extended it took the name of the British and Foreign School Society. Its patrons were

whigs or radicals, non-Anglicans or freethinkers. And its mechanical drill in the three R's neither included the distinctive formularies of our national church nor made any claim to constitute a religious education. In 1811 Joshua Watson and the Canterbury party therefore set up Dr Bell as a rival prophet whose spirit as well as whose practice were to be spread by a far richer National Society for educating the poor in the principles of the established church throughout England and Wales.

That the education of the poor should have become a matter of religious polemics and party politics was not surprising.

From its very beginning, in the early days of the S.P.C.K., modern educational charity had been dominated by a religious and moral purpose. Its aim had been to teach God's plan for an industrious life on earth and salvation in the world to come. Most classes provided themselves with the education needful for fitting them to occupy the station to which God should call them: those who could not or would not make such provision must have a similar schooling brought to their doors, so that they should not be left to prey on society or drag out a mechanical existence without principle or purpose.

This ideal was humanely and liberally interpreted by Adam Smith in his delightful essay on the expense of the institutions for the education of youth, where he argued that the specialization introduced by the division of labour ought to be compensated for at public expense by enabling the common people to learn to read, write, and reckon, and acquire some general ideas, in which he included an introduction to mechanics and geometry—'the most sublime as well as the most useful sciences'—before they are compelled to labour for their living.

The rising science of psychology combined with pietism and political economy to press home the importance of elementary education. A human being's behaviour, it was now

argued, was governed by his ideas of what was pleasant and what was painful; and these ideas came to him by way of sense impressions from without. All kinds of possibilities seemed therefore to be opened up.

The human young might just be left free to develop under the influence of nature and experience, like Rousseau's noble savage, Emile, or his aristocratic Anglo-Irish imitators, Thomas Day's Sandford and Merton or Thomas Edgeworth's unsociable son. This ideal, however, was the anarchical antithesis of all schooling.

Or they might be helped to develop into social beings in an artificially arranged environment, like the infants in Owen's model school at New Lanark or Wilderspin's at Spitalfields (1819). In Switzerland, similar experiments were being tried with slightly older children, both at Fellenberg's agricultural community for children of various social classes at Hofwyl (1799) and at Pestallozzi's school of industry for peasant children at Yverdon (1805). And the ideologists who still clung to the literary and academic tradition of pedagogy were inclined to admit that this new approach might have something to be said for it at the initiatory stage even if not for older pupils. So Brougham and his friends floated the London Infant-School Society in 1824, in the hope of providing the poorest of nurslings with a more educative environment than that of the dame school to which they were usually sent from their miserable homes when their mothers went out to work. This ideal was primarily for infants.

Alternatively, the child might sit passive and be indoctrinated with the ideas of his elders and betters. You could make of him what you would. His mind was a blank slate. And this was what nearly all except practical educators still expected in the case at least of the child who had left infancy behind him.

But what would you make of him? What ideas would you impress upon him? It was here that opinion differed.

Those who found it impossible to sympathise with the French revolution attributed it to the ideas spread by non-Christian thinkers in the eighteenth century. They reckoned that the Roman Catholic church had paid the penalty of shirked responsibilities and missed opportunities; and from this example they learnt a pertinent lesson. Their aim was therefore to teach obedience to authority in church and state as the surest antidote to revolution.

Those on the other hand who regarded the French revolution as an understandable revolt against outworn social conditions, had no such fears. They were more concerned to humanize and civilize the rise of the working-classes, so that they might make a peaceful and constructive contribution to contemporary progress. And they were so impressed with the omnipotence of education that some went so far as to speak of the spread of intelligence and the march of mind as though innate differences counted for nothing. James Mill worked out their doctrine in the famous 1818 supplement to the Scottish *Encyclopedia Britannica*. And it was not till half a generation later that Thomas Love Peacock ridiculed these pretensions in his *Crotchet Castle*.

Here then was a fine difference of outlook. What the National Society aimed at was a religious education that should strengthen the existing order in church and state. And what the British Society looked for was a diffusion of secular knowledge.

In the face of so profound a difference of purpose, heightened by the proximity of the French revolution, it was of secondary importance that both societies alike employed the same monitorial mechanism for mass-production in their schools and that both alike provided but the barest rudiments of instruction.

The keener the rivalry between the two school societies and the sharper the antithesis between their principles, the further all hope receded of utilizing the monitorial method to

establish an undenominational system of public education. Whitbread in 1807 had at least persuaded the commons, though not the lords, that the local poor-law authorities might be permitted to maintain monitorial schools out of the parish poor-rate. But when Brougham introduced a similar bill in 1820 he had to withdraw it as there was little hope of vicars and vestries agreeing on either the schoolmaster to be appointed or the instruction to be dispensed. Anglicans objected to bible-reading without doctrinal instruction; and nonconformists objected to the teaching being monopolised by Anglicans.

Non-Anglicans were relieved of their principal civil disabilities in 1828–29. So whig educationists no longer dared to suggest that a general system of elementary education should be based on Church of England schoolmasters and parishes. Instead, they adopted the principle of concurrent 'endowment' of denominational schools established by the two existing voluntary societies or by any other that might yet be established. The 1832 estimates included a treasury donation of £20,000 towards the cost of building new schools, provided that at least half of the capital was raised locally.

A treasury 'endowment' soon proved quite inadequate. It was no guarantee that a school would be well-planned, well-built, or suitably equipped. And it almost presupposed the inadequacy of local enthusiasm to keep it afloat. So whigs and radicals joined forces in a central society to advocate the establishment of a ministry of public instruction, such as liberal France was just copying from Prussia. The way being thus prepared, the whig government took the next gentle step in state intervention in 1839: the administration of treasury endowments was entrusted to a new government department with Dr. Kay, the pioneer of workhouse schools, as permanent secretary, and made dependent on visitation by H.M. inspectors. State inspection struck the churchman as an insult to the devoted many rather than a check on the

inefficient and half-hearted few, and F. D. Maurice elevated ecclesiastical resentment into a question of eternal salvation. Under the concordat of 1840 the whigs gave way so far as to agree that no inspectors were to be appointed unless they were acceptable to the denominations; they might give any information asked for, but they were not to volunteer advice or otherwise undermine the authority of the voluntary managers; and the inspection was to cover the general character of the school instead of being confined to secular subjects—for any such restriction in scope would have implied that religion was a mere subject, on a footing of equality with others, instead of the supreme end towards which all the others were but means.

Now that this mild check had been devised against the wastage of public money by voluntary bodies, grants could safely be made towards other forms of capital outlay. Grants for building schoolhouses were thus followed by others for building schoolmasters' houses and training-colleges and for providing a wider range of books and apparatus.

Besides aiding the voluntary provision of suitable *matériel*, Dr. Kay and his department encouraged the training of a suitable *personnel* for the voluntary schools by offering grants in 1846 to all teachers who trained in them. For the brevity of school life made it almost impossible to find sufficient monitors.

Towards the cost of maintenance, a capitation grant was made to managers of inspected schools in 1853, on the basis of regular attendance. This was partly in the hope of encouraging them to take steps to make their schools more attractive. But it also helped to take some of the wind out of the sails of the highly contentious 'Manchester and Salford' movement for permitting boroughs to give rate-aid to denominational schools—a movement supported inside the Peelite coalition cabinet by Lord John Russell, although it raised the then insoluble question of what conditions less tolerant boroughs would pose in return for their aid, besides doing nothing to

help the counties which on the whole had less untapped resources than the boroughs.

One of the many reasons why parents preferred their children to go to work rather than to school was the little that most children succeeded in learning. The overwhelming majority of children were sent to school some time in their little lives; but very few attended for more than one or two years; and even then their attendance was highly irregular. The ineffectiveness of the schools prompted the appointment of a royal commission under the Duke of Newcastle in 1858 'to inquire into the present state of popular education in England, and to consider and report what measures if any are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people.' This commission reported in 1861 in favour of payment by results: both borough and county boards were to be set up to make grants out of the rates towards the maintenance of local denominational schools, on condition that the grant should be a capitation one, proportioned to the number of children in regular attendance who passed annual examinations in reading, writing and arithmetic.

This extension of the powers of local authorities would have required an act of parliament. So Robert Lowe, the responsible whig minister, did the next best thing. In the 'revised code' of 1861 he ruled that capitation grants in aid of maintenance should henceforward be conditional not only on attendance but also on results. For each of the six years between the ages of six and twelve, an appropriate standard was fixed; and a grant could be earned by managers for every child that could be proved to have reached its standard in an annual examination conducted by H.M. inspector.

Refusal to submit would have been a confession of inefficiency. The case against the denominational schools seemed proven when the annual grant fell by one quarter in four years, although this was partly accounted for by Lowe's

restricting the grant so that it could be earned only in respect of children of manual workers. Lowe's worst enemies had to admit that more suitable reading-books now took the place of the Bible and that school-children were better drilled in arithmetic. Before the 'sixties were ended, a great increase occurred in the number of schools that found that it paid them to submit to inspection and examination. The 'school of industry' ideal paled before the code that fitted children for new clerical openings.

Whatever Lowe's intentions, it was soon found, however that inspectors now tended to limit their activities to examining children in the three R's. The general tone and character of the school—which was what the more reasonable denominationalists had meant by religious and moral training—might be commented on; but it soon became clear that this was too unmeasurable to be taken into account in assessing grants. A whole gamut of instructive studies and practical activities—a faint English echo of those great Swiss educators, Fellenberg and Pestalozzi—was passed by in silence, until Disraeli began to re-broaden the curriculum in 1867. Infant-schools, —into which a few seeds were just beginning to blow from Froebel's Young-Hegelian Kindergarten, wafted in from Germany on the wings of obituary notices in 1853—were left out as though they were a meaningless initiatory stage. Nothing remained except the bare instruments of learning—reading, writing, and arithmetic—and in the first of these mere cramming was not impossible: Lowe had been an Oxford crammer before he became a statesman.

(ii) *Compulsory Provision*

'If the new system is costly,' said Lowe, 'it shall at least be efficient; and if it is inefficient, it shall be cheap.'

Faced with the alluring prospect of either efficiency or cheapness, and deeply impressed by the inadequacy of the

voluntary schools, public opinion began to organize in favour of a further extension of educational facilities, especially on the passage of Disraeli's reform act in 1867. For less than half the children between six and ten were on the school registers, and a third of these were perpetually absent.

The starting-point was an agreed measure introduced in 1867 by Bruce and Forster along lines recently suggested in a private bill emanating from Manchester. Denominational schools, made more comprehensive in character by the adoption of conscience clauses, were to be given every opportunity to cover the field within a given time. But if any gaps then remained, these were to be filled by rate-provided schools, built and managed by local school-boards.

This precipitated the founding of an Education League by the Birmingham radical leaders, including Joseph Chamberlain and Jesse Collings. They took little objection to the maintenance of existing schools. And they agreed with the filling of deficiencies by secular boards—an idea that had been current for at least twenty years. But they wanted to put a stop to the building of more denominational schools, make the new board schools strictly secular, make all schooling free by paying fees out of the rates, and when it was free make it compulsory.

This League was given a great fillip by the establishment of a rival Union which combated it on every point, and in particular desired only denominational schools.

Forster reintroduced his scheme as a liberal government measure and passed it into law in 1870. But in its passage he had to make numerous concessions, especially to the radical wing of his party, concessions which he was the more ready to make as he was not himself a member of any religious denomination. The conscience clause was made a time-table one, so that parents might be free to keep their children away from all but the secular instruction. And religious instruction was not to be left to the discretion of school boards as of

voluntary managers, but on the one hand the Bible was to be read and on the other no distinctive denominational catechism was to be taught—the sensible Cowper-Temple *via media* to which even so high a churchman as Gladstone consented, undeterred by Disraeli's far-fetched broad-church jibe that to entrust religious instruction to lay school teachers was to invent a new sacerdotal class.

Voluntary societies took advantage of the twelve-months' grace allowed them by the act, and they created a million new school places, mainly by enlarging their already existing schools. The half-million places that were still needed to fill the gap were then provided out of the rates by newly-elected school-boards. As the direct result of Forster's act, the number of school places was therefore nearly doubled. And no normal British child could henceforth be without an opportunity of elementary education merely on the ground that there was no school to which he could go.

With what motives did the government insist on the public provision of sufficient schools for all children?

Four of the arguments likely to carry most weight with parliament and with the country were summed up by Forster in the peroration to his speech of 17 February, 1870:

'Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity. It is of no use trying to give technical teaching to our artisans without elementary education: uneducated labourers . . . are for the most part unskilled labourers, and if we leave our workpeople any longer unskilled . . . they will be overmatched in the competition of the world.

'Upon the speedy provision depends also, I fully believe, the good, the safe, working of our constitutional system. To its honour parliament has lately decided that England shall in future be governed by popular government. I am one of those who would not wait until the people were educated before I would trust them with political power. If we had

thus waited we might have waited long for education: but now that we have given them political power we must not wait any longer to give them education. . . .

'Upon this speedy provision of education depends also our national power. Civilized communities throughout the world are massing themselves together, each mass being measured by its force: and if we are to hold our position among men of our own race or among the nations of the world we must make up the smallness of our numbers by increasing the intellectual force of the individual.

'But there are many men . . . who are swayed not so much by these general considerations as by the conditions of the individuals around them. . . . Let us then each of us think of our own homes, of the villages in which we have to live, of the towns in which it is our lot to be busy; and do we not know child after child—boys or girls—growing up to probable crime, to still more probable misery, because badly taught or utterly untaught? . . .'

Though the local provision of schools was now compulsory, individual attendance was not. Not every child was free to take advantage of the opportunities provided. And even if his name was on a school register he did not always attend very regularly. Those indeed for whom the 1870 act provided school accommodation often came of the very class of family that showed least desire to avail itself of these facilities.

Under clauses inserted in the act of 1870 to satisfy the radicals' education league, school-boards covering two-fifths of the population framed by-laws making school-attendance compulsory from the age of five. Under Lord Sandon's act of 1876, another fifth of the population was put under similar by-laws by school attendance committees set up in places where there were no school-boards. And the last two-fifths were covered after 1880, when Mundella's act made the framing of attendance by-laws compulsory everywhere.

Compulsion was plainly impracticable unless adequate provision was made for paying the school fees of children whose parents were too poor. Guardians had been empowered to pay school fees out of the poor-rate by Denison's act of 1855, though the central poor-law board feared that this might make it advantageous to be a pauper; and under Lord Sandon's act of 1876, the payment of school fees out of the poor-rate ceased to be a ground of disfranchisement. But under clauses inserted in the act of 1870 in accordance with the programme of the radicals' Education League, school boards were also permitted to pay school fees out of the education rate, provided only that the family was necessitous. But who was to judge its necessity? The school-board wanted to encourage regular attendance in order to earn the largest possible grant and create a local atmosphere in which compulsion might work. So there was a widespread tendency for school boards to treat an application for remission as evidence of necessity although at Birmingham and other places where the influence of the Education League was strong, the school board refused to pay fees out of the rates, unless the recipients sent their children to the rate-provided board-schools and not to the church schools.

To help the church schools and put a stop to the farce of uninvestigated necessity, the unionist government in 1891 obtained parliament's consent to a fee grant of 10s. per head. This led to a widespread abolition of fees; but in places where they had previously amounted to more than 10s., they continued to be collected, until the extension of rate-aid, even to church schools, since 1902 made possible their gradual abolition. Not till 1918 had all public elementary education to be free.

Free education had never been recommended by any royal commission or any previous act of parliament. It was adopted in some localities as a matter of radical principle. But for the country as a whole its adoption was little more than a

matter of administrative expediency: there was no authority that could be trusted to decide which parents could and which could not be expected to contribute towards the cost of their children's elementary education.

Between 1872 and 1902, denominational schools were rapidly overtaken by board schools. The newcomers took over many old British schools. But the key to their success was their ability to build schools on borrowed money and maintain them out of compulsory rates, while their competitors had to rely on voluntary subscriptions both for capital outlay and for maintenance. As new districts were developed, it was the board schools that were first on the scene. And where parents had a choice, it was the board school that was the more efficient. In thirty years the board schools increased the number of their pupils till they almost reached the church-school level. But out of rates they raised twice as much as the church schools raised by voluntary subscriptions. They forced up the cost of elementary education from 25s. to £2 10s. a head. The more local money they spent, the more government grants they managed to earn.

After several hand-to-mouth expedients for helping the poorer schools, Arthur Balfour, the unionist prime minister himself, put his great education act through parliament in 1902. Henceforward the voluntary schools were to be maintained by the local education authority out of the rates like any rate-provided school. The local authority was therefore to appoint two school managers out of every six, and no teacher could be appointed without its approval. The denominationalists, in fact, abandoned the race: they had to ask for maintenance out of local rates, and in return they had no alternative but to accept control by the local ratepayers' elected representatives. The managers thus remained little more than trustees, responsible for providing the actual school accommodation and maintaining the denominational religious instruction desired by the founders. In name as in deed:

the denominational schools ceased to be called voluntary, and were distinguished—from the ratepayer's point of view—as non-provided.

Payment by results had meanwhile proved inadequate as a basis for government grants. The results tested were too restricted to put a child in the way of understanding the world in which he was to live; English, history, and geography were therefore admitted as subjects for inspectorial examination in all standards by Disraeli's government in 1875, and elementary science took its place with these under the liberal government in 1882, though all alike were still treated as reading-book subjects. The various subjects, moreover, were not end-results but only means to an end, whether that end was described as the formation of character or as the development of intelligence: at the same dates, Disraeli's government therefore introduced a grant for the moral tone of the school, and Gladstone's a grant for general merit.

All children down to the exceptionally low age of five came within the range of compulsion during the 1870's. A less literary technique had therefore to be thought out for infants' classes. Froebel and the other half-forgotten continental educators were resurrected. And throughout the whole school the hope was radiated of humbly treating the spontaneous activity of the merest child as the raw material without which the best-intentioned training must be meaningless and fruitless.

The teacher counted for more. So classes were limited to sixty children in the 'nineties. New class-rooms erected since 1924 have seldom provided for more than fifty. And the twentieth-century decline in the child population tends to relieve the pressure on space. But in older districts, many schools—especially the non-provided—still survive from the day of the pupil teacher, when two or three classes worked within the same room so as to be under the supervision of the same adult.

The home also counted for more. In the days of voluntaryism, when the only children who came to school were those whose parents were sufficiently interested to pay school fees, little more was needed to enlist their co-operation than to make them feel that the school was sufficiently efficient for regular attendance to be worth while. Free and compulsory education have intensified the contact between the school and a less interested type of parent. But the very broadening of the range of elementary education may perhaps tend to bring it within the field of many a parent's comprehension, especially where the physical health and activity of the child are concerned. The school-child still spends the greater part of its life outside school. When school and home do not co-operate, the child is the victim of a tug-of-war between the two.

Without relieving the parent of his responsibility, the school has none the less its responsibility to fulfil. It has often had to inculcate a higher standard of behaviour than that of the slum home. That was the aim of our historic schools of industry and of the nineteenth-century ragged schools. That was also the ideal behind the day industrial schools which Disraeli's 1876 act empowered school boards to erect, there to wash and feed as well as teach the children. The fulfilment of the ideal has lain partly along the lines of the official school canteen where children might learn to eat like Christians, instead of being fed like starving pigs as in the days of unthinking charity. It owes still more to the nursery school, preached and practised by Margaret MacMillan and officially blessed by Mr Fisher's act of 1918; for infants from the age of three are here provided with an opportunity of developing habits of decency and order such as they might never have learned in their own home or that of a neighbour, besides learning to express themselves in intelligible English. And some thousands of those who have no gardens and no spare rooms to play in and who would otherwise have been

left to run wild outside school hours, have been drawn off our dangerous streets into play centres where they can spend their holidays and evenings unconsciously learning the art of living together under the guidance of a paid games-leader, much as their more favoured fellows would do in a boarding-school, though perhaps with more liberty.

Faced as they have been with the increasing competition of free and efficient public elementary schools, whose pupils have gradually improved in tidiness and cleanliness, it has been hard for private schools to survive without being either inefficient or expensive. In 1918 they were all but handed over to the tender mercies of the local education authorities, who were to have been allowed to decide whether or not they were efficient. And, according to the milder wording that was then substituted, it is only if they are open to official inspection that a parent can claim in a court that he has sent his child to school as commanded by the law. Thus many that dared not invite inspection have been bluffed into closing down. We are thus gradually reaching an age in which a curious social and educational cleavage is becoming apparent. On the one hand are those that choose to pay for their children's education, believing that they are thereby doing the best that they can for them, even if only in speech and manners. And on the other hand are those who accept the education the community provides. With this difference of outlook there goes a whole world of difference in speech and dress and behaviour. All is not snobbishness on the one side, nor is all slum on the other. Yet in the minds of many the two tend to be separated by an almost unpassable taboo. And behind this lies the uncharitable memory that our elementary schools originated in a wave of charity, and the equalitarian feeling that the right and liberty of any citizen to give his own children what he considers a better education than that given to his neighbours is a survival from days before democracy.

II. THE EDUCATION OF THE ADOLESCENT AND THE JUVENILE

(i) *The Few*

Parishes all over Western Europe were endowed in and around the sixteenth century with schools where adolescents, whose families might not otherwise have been able to meet the cost, could make a sufficient acquaintance with the ancient classics to enable those who wished to proceed to a university and a liberal profession. Not all might have that goal in view—Shakespeare presumably had not—but it was that high goal that set the standard for the rest, and Shakespeare and his like no doubt gained more than they lost by submission to this discipline.

The early nineteenth century saw the survival or revival of many such schools in continental countries, romantically rejoicing in such classical names as lyceum, athenaeum, and gymnasium, and as carefully fostered by the post-revolutionary state as formerly they had been tended by the counter-reformation church.

English grammar schools had a very different story to tell; for they touched greater extremes of growth and decay.

Some rose in the world. So did their ground-rents, as agriculture was commercialized. And so did the size of their staff, as the evolution of the boarding-house offered a means of supplementing the income of the foundation. Economic rent and private profit thus helped some local grammar schools to approximate to the historic public schools in drawing boarders from as wide an area as the mail-coach and the railway could conveniently carry them. For in this aristocratic England there was something above the grammar school: something that exerted a magnetic attraction upon it; something more fashionable with the ruling families; and something less local and therefore sharpened by competition to a high pitch of perfection in an age that was fortunate in

combining improved communications with religious seriousness-mindedness.

While a few grammar schools rose, many declined. Nonconformists disliked their anglicanism. Small business men thought their Latin useless. Professional men thought it was badly taught. Manual workers preferred the elementary school. The local gentry felt less limited in their choice now that a rising rent-roll opened to them the doors of public boarding-schools both old and new. And the governors found new ways of disbursing or appropriating the rising income of foundations of declining educational value.

The endowed grammar schools that managed to preserve an even keel were fortunate, and not perhaps so few and so far between as we often imagine. There was only one Whitgift that flourished for thirty years with a master but no boys. When a new industrial city like Manchester or Birmingham or Bradford inherited an old endowment, the rising local middle-class made good use of it, time-honoured scholarships reached a ladder up into the universities and professions and down into the working-classes, and then as ever the grammar school at its best represented an exceptionally rich cross-section of all but the two extremes of English society.

Some such grammar schools managed to make their curriculum more useful and more attractive by introducing modern studies so far as chancery restrictions would allow. It was perhaps in newly-founded schools that these innovations were easiest to accomplish. Even before Cheltenham led the way in the establishment of new boarding-schools with broader curricula, new day schools had begun the pioneering work. Bentham had preached ' chrestomathia.' Nor was the church of England backward. ' Public attention being now directed to the expediency of establishing local or district day schools for the purpose of affording a sound and liberal education at a moderate expense to the sons of professional and mercantile

men and others,' a newspaper announcement in 1829–30 suggested that new grammar schools should be established on church principles and—like Eton and King's College, Cambridge—affiliated to King's College, London, 'which will thus form the centre of a system of education for the middling classes of society. . . .'*

King's College School itself (1831), the Anglican joint stock prototype of these new day schools, revealed the magnitude of the unsatisfied demand when it enrolled four hundred boys at fifteen guineas a year by the beginning of its fourth school year, in spite of a compulsory leaving age of sixteen.

It was, however, new boarding-schools with broader curricula that aroused most enthusiasm among the early Victorians. Yet the more fashionable the Rugby and Winchester type of school became, the greater grew the demand for day schools run as nearly as possible 'on public-school lines,' as they said in the railway age. So in 1864–69 Lord Taunton and the schools inquiry commission made out a case for adapting educational endowments to the needs of their age. Under the resultant endowed schools act of 1869, schemes were made under Gladstone's government for reforming the administration of some two hundred foundations. Dead and dying schools were resuscitated. Rich foundations were obliged to run not only a first-grade grammar school able to keep boys till they reached university age, but sometimes a second-grade school as well for boys who left at sixteen, and in the case of the very richest foundations a school for girls too. To satisfy parents that they came up to an average standard of attainment and to ward off the threat of state examination as a test of efficiency, these schools and others voluntarily submitted themselves to the local examinations organized by the universities for the convenience of private schools for both boys and girls since 1858. They were subjected to boards of local governors; but no adequate provision

* *Centenary History of King's College, London*, p. 81. seq.

was made for the representation of either the masters who made the school or the distinguished old boys of the future who might be expected to take a loyal and generous pride in its gradual development.

Educational endowments were thus applied to female education for the first time. And this gave a great impetus to the creation of girls' public day schools. A non-profit-making joint-stock company promoted by Maria Grey in 1872 established a chain of what the Americans called high schools, in towns where no endowments were available for girls. Frances Mary Buss transformed a private school, where she, like her mother, had made a good living, into the North London Collegiate School, by 1879. A good day school with specialist teachers became as fashionable as had been the untrained and ill-educated governess. In spite of Dorothea Beale of Cheltenham, the spread of the boarding-school was thus slowed down, and new ideals fostered of the relation between the cultured parent and the local school.

Schools such as we have so far considered were like the great public schools in that they were more or less able to pay their way out of school fees, provided only their capital expenses could be met from an endowment or some other voluntary source. And government intervention was limited to irrigating them with such waters of voluntary benevolence as would otherwise have ran to waste.

In other strata of the community, however, there were larger and increasing numbers of children whose school fees were inadequate to cover the running cost. Their elementary education was subsidized both by voluntary local charity and—after 1857—out of the taxes. If they were to have any schooling after mastering the first elements, this too would have to be subsidized. By the later 'forties the National and British school societies therefore began to develop schools for those of their pupils whose families were prepared to keep them away from work for a few years longer even after they

knew their three R's. To this advanced education the French term ' secondary instruction ' was applied in official quarters. For the schools, the German term ' middle school ' was much favoured, especially as it was suggestive of the lower middle class ; or ' commercial school ' was for a while a good alternative, with its suggestion that its products were destined for the desk and the counting-house rather than the jenny or the plough.

And as the children came from families that could afford fees of a shilling or so a week, no public grant was available either for building or for maintenance.

Under the system of payment by results introduced in 1861, moreover, an increasing number of children reached the top standards of elementary schools, either because they were intelligent for their age, or because their families kept them at school as long as they could. These head classes or tops did not limit themselves to subjects that could properly be called elementary. Pupils were sometimes encouraged by free places to stay on and help the school earn government maintenance grants—with the encouragement of the government from 1876 to 1881. A new VII standard was created for their benefit in 1882, and beyond it ' ex-VII ' pupils were often to be found.

Nor were the examinations, conducted by the Board of Education since 1861, the only means for a school to obtain payment by results : similar examinations, re-organized by Huxley in 1872, were conducted by the science and art department. South Kensington's scale of payments was higher than Whitehall's. And its science was the convenient sort that could be taught without expensive laboratories. So it was an obviously paying proposition for school boards or voluntary managers to hitch on an ' organized science school ' to the top standards of the elementary school. The resulting fusion could then be organized as a separate entity, seeing that not all the elementary children passed into it. For this

post-primary outgrowth, different names found favour in different places and at different times, such as 'higher central elementary school' in the 1870's, 'higher-grade school' in the 1880's, or 'senior-standard school' in the 1890's.

But were school-boards within the elementary education acts when they levied rates for education other than elementary? Cockerton, a district auditor, held in 1900 that the London school-board was acting illegally; Queen's Bench Division upheld his ruling; and if the school-board was acting illegally, it could no longer expect financial help from the government. The Court of Appeal held on the contrary that the school-board was within the law when some at least of the instruction was elementary. But a point had obviously been reached when only fresh legislation could remove the anomalies and straighten out the complications that had arisen through inability to define the word elementary.

Meanwhile another local authority had arisen by whom education other than elementary could be provided at public expense. This was the county council. In 1889, the year of its birth, it was permitted to levy a penny rate for technical education. In 1890 it was compelled to spend 'whisky money' for similar purposes, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought it better policy to humour the temperance cause by diverting to social betterment a tax he had intended to spend in compensating publicans for the non-renewal of redundant licences. And any schools a county council established might earn science and art grants by working for the necessary state examinations. This made it possible for county councils to provide a general education as an introduction to technical training. It enabled them gradually to build up a system of county scholarships. And the measures they took to foster technical education were not limited to adolescents who were about to go straight into remunerative employment; pupils might be prepared for further full-time education, including that offered in the

universities. Thus the educational ladder—used by the grammar schools, advertised in 1889 by the Cross commission on the elementary education acts, and labelled by Huxley—came into publicly provided education by the back door.

Both the supply of post-primary education and the demand for it were thus steadily expanding, when a liberal government set up the Bryce commission on the organization of a system of secondary education. This royal commission had so little idea what this mysterious official term meant that it defined it as ' education conducted in view of the special life that has to be lived, with the express purpose of forming a person fit to live it.' But it was at least clear that two defects existed. The one was that cramming for science examinations meant a neglect of literary studies, with a consequent failure to cultivate the power either of clear self-expression or of appreciating the humaner aspects of life. And the other defect was that public day schools of the grammar school type which came nearest to providing a well-balanced education were almost non-existent in those parts of the country that had failed to attract endowments in earlier ages.

In 1900 the Cockerton judgment made it imperative to substitute some rational system for the makeshift by-products of ill co-ordinated examination regulations which had now been superseded. In 1902 Balfour's unionist government therefore acted along the lines suggested by the liberals' royal commission. Rate-provided education other than elementary was made the responsibility of the counties and county boroughs. And as these authorities then took over the board schools in most districts, many former higher-grade or organized science schools were metamorphosed into county or borough secondary schools. Here and there an endowed grammar school that could not keep going out of fees would also come on the rates. And new schools on the grammar school model were provided whenever the supply of schools of this higher type was inadequate. The status of these

schools, the type of child recruited, and the proportion passed on into a university, have varied considerably from place to place according to the degree to which they have been overshadowed by a voluntary foundation. But for grant-earning purposes the Board of Education has found it convenient to lump them all together in its regulations for secondary schools, though parliament carefully avoided using this term. Hence has come an illuminating divergence in the use of words: for in the professional jargon of the educationist, any school whatever is now called secondary if it provides for the adolescent—at least, the Board of Education would add, if it keeps some of its pupils beyond the age of sixteen: whereas in common speech the word secondary has long kept its older two-edged implication of an education posterior to elementary but inferior to that associated with the endowed schools.

It is already possible to divine that the future lies with neither of these outlooks. Financial needs have already lessened the distance between the rate-provided and the endowed, by bringing more and more day schools under government regulations, some to earn rate aid when over-ambitious governors have frittered away their endowments and then find their income from fees inadequate to keep the building and equipment up-to-date, and many to earn a government grant such as that which Mr Fisher offered in 1919 to encourage the employment of specialist masters and the development of sixth forms, working for the higher school certificate and competing for state scholarships. This latter development has enabled many a new municipal secondary school to send a fair number of pupils to the university, while the demand for secondary teachers and industrial chemists has provided them with new liberal professions into which they may enter. This approximation to an older type has provided some justification for the increasingly frequent adoption of the title 'grammar school' of recent years.

Yet it is hard to see how differences of kind and grade can

be avoided. To some extent these are functional differences. But so far as the functions men and women perform are the outcome of the opportunities they enjoy, and so far as these must inevitably be conditioned to some extent at least by the families into which they are born, such differences are social as well as functional. They show themselves in the different homes the children come from, as well as in the different jobs they go to. And when common speech has equated secondary with second-rate, it has been thinking of the overwhelming proportion of pupils that come from elementary schools and the quite uneconomic fees that even fee-payers pay. Nor is that all, although it is quite enough to mark out one standard of life from another; for a policy was formerly pursued which did not conduce to the establishment of that respect which should normally exist even between distinct and different grades. From 1907 to 1933, grant-earning secondary schools were compelled to offer a definite percentage of free places—usually 25 per cent. before 1924 and 40 per cent. afterwards—many of which were accepted by families that could well have afforded the moderate fees demanded but who thought it cheaper to have their children coached after school-hours for the competitive free-place examination. Here we fell between two stools. Under the American system, the local authority might have provided a high minimum of gratuitous education at all stages for all social classes. Or the English tradition might have been followed, and a modest proportion of scholarships and maintenance allowances made available for those who were marked out for some particular kind of higher education but whose families could not otherwise have met the cost. Instead of following either of these courses, we tried an ill-thought-out compromise which did not materially affect the predominantly middle-class composition of the new secondary school, but which does seem to have given the school a bad start by artificially creating an unhealthy atmosphere in which gratuity was smugly equated

to intelligence and fee-paying to dullness. Financial stringency and the substitution of payment according to means coincided with growing realization that democratic principle did not oblige the state to provide free education of this particular type for families that could afford to contribute towards its cost while it neglected to provide any adequate schooling for the many that could not. Questions of part-payment or gratuity have again turned out to be mere matters of fiscal convenience, important for the atmosphere they create, but unimportant for their influence on the composition of the school. What democracy demands is that every child shall have the education for which it is best fitted. All else is of minor importance.

(*ii*) *The Many*

It is one hundred years since our first factory legislators defined the young person as one who was above the age of a child compelled to receive an elementary education but below that of an adult able to fend for himself. The juvenile was then defined in relation to conditions of employment rather than in relation to educational needs.

Under the influence of biology and in his study of the irrational, the psychologist has since then discovered the importance of adolescence. In 1904 Stanley Hall devoted a book to its peculiar problems of adjustment. And within the last generation we have come to regard it as a crucial phase in the mental, moral, and physical development of the human individual. For it is the phase when he more or less consciously adopts the standard of living and the ideal of conduct which he will try to live up to for the rest of his days.

The fortunate few at whom we have so far been looking sit during these years at the feet of masters both visible and invisible, who express themselves better or have more to express. They grow up in an atmosphere not devoid of the

culture which does something to sweeten the social advantages of some and compensate for the disadvantages of others. They learn in their bones, if their education is worth anything at all, that they are not the last word, but that there are traditions mightier than they with which they will do well to come to terms.

How far are the less fortunate many being brought under similar influences during these last formative years? The school-leaving age has gradually been raised to fourteen. The way is gradually clearing, first for raising it to fifteen, and then for part-time continuation schools. Young persons are no longer left to sink or swim uncared-for in the whirl of under-employment. And voluntary education and after-care are proving an invaluable supplement to compulsory schooling.

For the overwhelming majority of British families before the present century, schooling usually stopped short at the point where some familiarity has been gained with the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Adolescence has been essentially the time for learning a trade or otherwise entering into wage-earning employment. Continued school had to be additional to long hours of work. This was recognised by the factory acts since 1833, when they tried to harmonize employment between the ages of eight and thirteen with compulsory part-time attendance at elementary schools at least up to the age when an inspector would certify proficiency in the three R's, and from then till eighteen employment under such safeguards as parliament might think good. And it was recognised by a system of grants for voluntary evening elementary schools since 1851, for young persons who were at work all day.

Lowe's revised code with its scheme of payment by results had the merit of indicating that a fair mastery of the elements by a normal child could usually be obtained only by regular

attendance between six and twelve. When sufficient elementary schools for this purpose were provided under Forster's act of 1870, school boards were permitted to frame by-laws making school attendance compulsory up to the age of twelve unless exemption was obtained by reaching a certain standard of proficiency. In 1880 Mundella made the framing of such by-laws compulsory up to the age of thirteen. In 1900 it was raised to fourteen. And under Mr Fisher's act of 1918 the local education authority is permitted to insist on school attendance up to fifteen—an age-limit that has been generally adopted in other English-speaking countries though it has hitherto been insisted upon here in only some dozen localities.

While local authorities were thus permitted or compelled to raise the school-leaving age the government followed them up some years later by fixing a minimum age for employment, below which no exemptions were allowed. Under Lord Sandon's act of 1876 this was any age between ten and fourteen at which a child could satisfy the inspectors that it had attained a certain standard of efficiency or that it had at least attended school regularly. After the Cross commission reported on the need for longer schooling, a liberal government raised the lower limit to eleven in 1893, and a unionist government to twelve in 1899, except for agriculture. In 1918, Mr Fisher's act made fourteen the minimum age for employment for more than an hour or two a day, thus establishing a uniform national minimum where previously there had been considerable diversity; the Lancashire custom of short-time compulsion, which had grown up under the influence of the factory acts, was brought to an end.

Since this general adoption of fourteen as the minimum school-leaving age, we have had a choice between the full-time and the part-time roads to a further extension of school education.

The full-time road was indicated as early as 1900, since

when a number of local authorities have experimented with junior technical trade schools for the vocational training of those few children of 13–15 who have made up their minds to enter a skilled trade, as an alternative to learning the trade from inside, in the hope of stimulating a more rational understanding of the principles applied. Since 1911, local authorities for elementary education have also set up central schools for the more advanced general education of those larger numbers of children of 11–15 who are not destined for skilled trades. In the counties these have tended to be non-selective schools to which all the older elementary-school pupils can go. In urban districts and boroughs, they have tended to be selective; and in those where secondary schools do not suffice to meet the demand for non-manual labour, they have developed into cheaper substitutes for secondary schools, insisting on attendance up to fifteen or sixteen, offering a predominantly literary curriculum, and preparing pupils for the external examinations that are in favour with prospective employers.

When, however, the central school has been selective, the vast majority of elementary-school pupils have had to have some other provision made for them. Otherwise they were apt to remain a despised residue, marking time in the top standard until a birthday brought release. The solution to the problem has lain in the organization of distinct senior schools, with a practical bias, for all over eleven who have not gone to central or technical or secondary schools. In some places the senior school has become a distinct department in a general school building. In others it is housed on a separate site; but the abstract educational argument in favour of this re-allocation of buildings has often been counterbalanced by concrete social disadvantages such as the swamping of children of a higher by children of a lower standard of life, the complication of medical care when a single family is split up between several schools, and difficulties in the way of the

older children escorting the younger across increasingly dangerous main roads when their schools lie in opposite directions.

In the evolution of these various types of school for the child over eleven, we have gone far towards fulfilling the ideal of *Secondary Education for all*, published by Professor R. H. Tawney in 1922, and officially consecrated by the Hadow report of the consultative committee of the Board of Education on the *Education of the Adolescent* in 1926.

Now that these senior schools are developing curricula adapted to the aptitudes of their pupils, the general raising of the school-leaving age to fifteen becomes a matter of practical politics. Another factor favourable to this advance is that we have now reached a point in time when the number of children of that age is no longer inflated by the end-of-the-war rise in the birth-rate: we shall not have to provide accommodation one year for more children than will occupy it in the succeeding years. Industrial firms, well organized to meet the blast of foreign competition—unlike distributive businesses—have little desire to-day to entrust their valuable machinery to the weak and inexpert hands of cheap juvenile labour. And children's allowances can be drawn up to the age of sixteen under both the widows' and orphans' insurance law of 1925 and the unemployment insurance act of 1934, if they remain at school. Three grave questions of social policy here remain unsolved. One is whether still wider categories of parents may need compensation for the loss of their adolescent children's small contribution to the household income. Another is to what extent the development of juvenile employment committees has now made it possible for local education authorities to gauge with some degree of accuracy and uniformity whether certain openings might prove more beneficial to certain children than staying at school till fifteen. And the third is the extent to which religious denominations and local authorities will be able to agree on the

conditions under which rate aid may be made available for the first time for the provision of denominational schools; for the emergence of the senior school for children from eleven to fifteen has emphasised the nineteenth-century limitations of the accommodation, voluntarily provided by the church with the help of the treasury, in the days when there were no rate-provided schools.

This evolution of the senior school thus completes the first rough outline of our incipient system of full-time juvenile education. Where the French republic and the German states have diversified their schools to the point of stratification, we have tended to evolve a much easier gradation. Between the great public schools and the working-class home in which the majority of adolescents have to pass their holidays, there is certainly a gulf which no one can pass in his own person. Yet, by a curious paradox, it is the public school, which alone stands outside our public system of education, that dominates the whole system, gives it unity amid its diversity, and stamps it with a definite national character. The cult of games and sportsmanship, the Arnold myth of prefectual self-government, aversion to practical pursuits, and suspicion of free thought and humane culture, have all proved as pleasant to schoolmasters of one class as to those of another and provided the products of the most different types of school with a common attitude of mind. The tone of our school system has been set not by the state but by society. Emulation among unequals has fostered that blindness to the persistence of privilege that has become a potent factor in British national unity. And every Hadow senior school to-day tends to think itself as good as a Fisher central school, which considers itself as good as a Balfour rate-provided secondary, which believes itself as good as an 1868 endowed grammar, which feels that it is as much a public school as the early-Victorian boarding-schools, which were deliberately modelled on the chief of the mystical seven Great Public Schools of Old England.

This moral approximation has been fostered by the inevitable tendency of full-time schooling to make the school into a self-contained world of its own.

The prolongation of full-time schooling to fifteen has not, however, been the only means of continuing education beyond the elementary stage. Evening continuation classes or institutes, recruited on a voluntary basis or under pressure from employers, have been earning government grants since at least 1893. So might not a day continuation school prove equally valuable? It might enable adolescents to master elementary subjects whose utility they had not appreciated before they went to work. It might give a new significance to history and geography and literature, marrying humanism to industry, as Professor J. Dover Wilson suggested, as an inspector, in his *Humanism in the Continuation School*. It might enable the school medical service to keep an eye on the health of adolescents until at sixteen they passed into national health insurance service. It might help them by their contact with one another to realise the advantages of a real opening over a blind alley. Part-time education in short has been resuscitated as a convenient way of bridging the chasm between school and employment. A hundred years ago it was the thin end of the wedge by which alone elementary education could be introduced: to-day it is a way of tapering-off after the elementary education has been assimilated.

With these ideas in mind, Mr Fisher's Education Bill of 1917, passed into law in 1918, compelled all education authorities to prepare schemes for compulsory attendance at continuation schools up to the age of sixteen at first and eighteen ultimately—this latter being the age at which young persons become adult for factory-act purposes. The depression of 1921 has so far prevented these schemes from being put in force. But they have left behind them a number of voluntary day continuation schools. Some employers have made attendance at these schools compulsory: they have attracted

the type of youngster that is keen on getting more schooling, and frightened away the type that is not; and the result is that they have stimulated confidence in the day continuation school and its products.

Since 1918–21, the Hadow re-organization of senior schools has made possible the extension of full-time schooling to fifteen; but as soon as this step has been taken, compulsory continuation schools from fifteen to sixteen or eighteen must inevitably come back into the picture, not as Mr Fisher expected as a substitute for longer full-time schooling, but as a supplement to it.*

Between the age of compulsory school attendance—hitherto fourteen—and that of compulsory entry into health and unemployment insurance—sixteen—an absurd gap has long persisted. When national health insurance was instituted before the war this gap may have been an unreasonable prolongation of friendly-society dislike of juveniles. And when unemployment insurance was made general in 1920, it may have been preserved in the expectation that continuation schools were about to become compulsory up to sixteen. But neither of these historical excuses has really been of even the most temporary validity. The gap still remains to be bridged.

Before 1935, the only important official attempt to bridge this gap was in connection with employment and unemployment. Under the choice of employment act of 1910, local education authorities were permitted and encouraged to establish juvenile employment bureaux—subsequently co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour—thus recognising that their work was only half done if they did not enable their pupils to embark on a promising career as the logical outcome of their education. And those authorities that did not desire

* A curious by-product of the 1918 Act comes from a provision exempting young persons from attendance at continuation schools if they have matriculated. Some employers therefore thought it safer to insist on matriculation. And the habit has outlived the original motive, with the result that an artificial and unintended stimulus has been given to secondary education.

to set up bureaux of their own could do the next best thing and work through the national employment exchange system by means of a local juvenile advisory committee, an alternative that has survived at London, owing probably to the circumstance that general employment exchanges were already better developed there than in most districts, during the years when it was first realized that education without after-care was incomplete.

But there was no obligation on any juvenile to visit the employment bureau to hear what advice it might have to offer, any more than there was any compulsion on his employer—if he had one—to give a good reason for dismissing him. The very juveniles that needed most care and advice continued to tumble over each other as they leapt from one unskilled job to another in the distributive trades, only to find that these were blind alleys with no opening for them when they wanted adult wages, or even that they were not wanted there when they became insurable. And the small-scale employer in these sheltered trades continued to hire cheap labour as he had done for centuries past, because he knew no other way of standing up against competitors who did the same: survival though this was of social conditions that had ceased to be tolerable, it was one factor in the survival also of the small-scale enterprise.

Some hope of improvement was awakened by the unemployment insurance act of 1934. The age for entry into this insurance—though not yet into health insurance—was reduced to fourteen. Benefit became receivable at sixteen,—the simplest way of inducing registration at an employment exchange or bureau. An unemployed parent could draw a child's allowance in respect of an unemployed juvenile of 14–16 if this latter was also officially registered. And on a juvenile leaving his employment the employer was in future to return his insurance card to the exchange with an

explanation. No part of this otherwise controversial law has evoked so much hope or so little doubt.

Juvenile unemployment centres have also been organized in many localities, just after the armistice of 1918–19, during the winter of 1920–21, and again during the recent depression. For the unemployed juvenile, insurance benefit could be made conditional on attendance at a course of instruction; but this indirect compulsion could be applied only when the young person was otherwise qualified for benefit, and this could never be until he was well past sixteen. Local education authorities, moreover, hesitated to establish adequate instruction centres, partly through doubts about the unknown extent of juvenile unemployment, and partly through difficulty in earning Board of Education grants by co-operating with the Ministry of Labour.

Here again the Act of 1934 has taken a big step towards overcoming these difficulties. The Ministry of Labour has acquired powers to compel local education authorities to provide juvenile instruction centres where the need is apparent. And the unemployed young person is induced to attend by having this or any other attendance counted as equivalent to an insurance subscription which will entitle him to benefit at the age of sixteen. Rapid fluctuation in its school population makes it impossible for such an unemployment centre to organize a long-term course of instruction like that of an ordinary school. But the published experiments of Mr Valentine Bell at a voluntary centre at Battersea suggest that the need for improvising interesting instruction may have a valuable effect in giving a more practical bias to the education of the adolescent and juvenile.

Outside the official efforts, which are only now beginning to assume even the barest outlines of a system, the only after-care provided for the juvenile during the all-important years of his entry into self-supporting employment has long been the supervision provided by voluntary agencies.

The records of athletic and social clubs do not find their way into muniment rooms. Statisticians have not included them in census returns. And the demographers cannot draw a mathematical curve to show the rate and limit of their expansion. But they have long promoted habits of getting on with one's fellows, taking responsibility, and obeying the rules of the game.

This almost spontaneous popular growth has been supplemented by nation-wide organizations, with a characteristically English compromise between local initiative and central guidance. The boys' brigade look like a reminiscence of the Saturday afternoon soldiering of the Victorian volunteers. The boy scouts with the dress of a cowboy and the handiness of a backwoodsman, bid fair to become a permanent by-product not only of South African guerrilla tactics but also of the nineteenth century 'frontier' in general. Girl guides have proved real pathfinders in the unknown; for after school years the working girl of earlier generations tended to be either a maidservant, for whose scanty leisure some special society existed, or a junior materfamilias with innumerable brothers and sisters and no leisure. And when the years of scouting and guiding are past, rovers and rangers have carried on the work and helped to provide a new generation of youth leaders.

The primitive interests of nearly a million young persons have found an outlet in these directions, but an outlet that has been canalized by the ideal of each doing his best for the community. And scope has been left for their individual initiative in the avoidance of mechanical obedience to adult orders and of the antiquated drill-yard puppetry that has made our public school junior O.T.C.s all but useless for training officers.

It has gradually become a well-recognized function of sanitary authorities not only to provide open spaces for mental relaxation—to say nothing of the myth that says that they are 'lungs'—but also to allow physical recreation in them,

although it would be hard to find an authority that has kept its supply of playing-fields up to a demand that increases with the shortening of hours and the reduction in the size and ties of families.

And it would be only a short step further for local education authorities to help provide centres where juvenile organizations can have their own rooms, and can share a common handicraft-room, swimming-bath, gymnasium, and meeting-hall. Nowhere is this need greater than where the local authority has opened up a new cottage estate in a suburban wilderness or where it has re-housed the inhabitants of a slum area at the centre. Private meeting-places, unsuitable in quality where they do exist, are here specially inadequate also in quantity, and in slum-clearance schemes have sometimes even been remorselessly swept away. And where the resources of the tenants are small, a good case could be made out for a benevolent public landlord to supplement—but not supersede—voluntarily-provided accommodation. Here, as with the schools of a hundred years ago, the problem that is hardest for voluntary educational effort to solve is that of meeting the initial capital cost of a suitable building.

Voluntary educational effort concentrates on the juvenile to-day, just as it concentrated a hundred years ago on the child. But it is also true that it now concentrates on this supplementary moral and physical education, and tends to leave formal instruction in school to the public authority. For it makes a more generous contribution to-day by way of service, and a less lavish one by way of money. Moral training has always been the chief aim of British educational effort: and never has it been more successful than when it teaches by freely-accepted leadership and personal example.

Whether in the school or in this supplementary voluntary education, what is looked for is an all-round training that shall fit the adolescent and the juvenile for work, for leisure and for citizenship. It must fit him to earn his living by an

honest contribution to the work of the world, to utilize the opportunities and enjoy the freedom of his leisure hours in ways that do not interfere with others, and to take his place as a responsible member of his state and family. However imperfectly this ideal may be realized by mortal men and changing institutions, this must be the standard and the norm by which our emerging educational system is constantly tested, corrected and remodelled.

III. THE EDUCATION OF THE ADULT

(i) *Within the Universities*

The vitalizing influence of state intervention in the close corporations called universities seemed axiomatic in every European country except ours in the early nineteenth century. Victor Cousin was as usual expressing only what all his contemporaries were thinking when he denounced ' l'esprit de corps, si funeste à la science.'

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, scientific research was mainly associated with academies and societies under princely patronage outside the universities. Their contributions to scientific knowledge might be usefully applied to navigation, minting, mining, metallurgy, and luxury manufactures. But they in no way fulfilled the educational functions that were then associated with a university. For the university was merely the classical breeding-place for men who were destined to serve God in church and state in much the same sort of way as in the Middle Ages.

Every territorial prince in Germany had his local university for indoctrinating his future pastors and officials. As the doctrine changed from one generation to the next, the professor became a participator in the work of creation. The research of professor and student alike led to a continual reinterpretation of the past in the light of the present. The

keenest student became the most invigorating teacher. The university became a place of learning, a place of new learning.

At Oxford and Cambridge it barely remained a place for handing down the learning that in the sixteenth century had been new but had now become old. And at Paris, where the new learning even in its heyday had found a home only in the Collège de France, the university was still stuck in much the same narrow theological groove as in the Middle Ages.

In France the only hope of progress was for the sovereign people to sweep away the university along with all other corporate bodies and ecclesiastical temporalities, and then begin anew.

In England, the residential clubs of future squires and parsons were saved from a similar fate by an access of seriousness, partly through a methodistical reaction from their own laxity, partly because linguistic scholarship was as likely as any other craze to become fashionable among men of taste in the age of Gibbon and Adam, and not least because the guillotine put the English gentleman on his mettle. This new seriousness entrenched itself in a new institution, the written examination, invented by Cambridge as the only way of testing and classing her mathematical wranglers. Oxford imitated Cambridge in 1800, with an optional honours examination for which private coaching was necessary. And the colleges imitated their university, Oriel to select men of judgment as fellows, and Balliol to select scholars of linguistic promise. The home of lost causes became the foster-mother of written examinations. In setting a high goal of examinable scholarship, she did for the English public schools voluntarily what the first state minister of public instruction did for the Prussian *Gymnasien* compulsorily. Just in the nick of time she proved the virtues of which aristocratic Anglican self-government was capable when its very existence was threatened by French republicanism and Bonapartist imperialism.

Nor was this all. For the Oxford humanists of the early

nineteenth century adapted the old medium of classical studies to new and modern ends: reading for Greats provided the future statesmen with second-hand political experience and the future ecclesiastic with a pre-Christian revelation.

Vigorous as they became, Oxford and Cambridge suffered however from a double defect. They were too classical and mathematical, and too Anglican. They did not provide for the study of all manner of subjects by all manner of men.

What they delayed in doing, others attempted. Thomas Campbell in 1824 broached the idea. The result was the voluntary establishment of a joint-stock university in Gower Street, with a range of professors almost as wide as at Berlin. The impossibility of getting Englishmen to agree on religious doctrine compelled the founders to confine their teaching to secular subjects. This apparent though unintentional godlessness compelled the Canterbury party to found a rival King's College where Anglican theory and practice might be compulsory ingredients in every course of study; and a Tory government helped by providing them with a site. Thanks largely to the combined intervention of church and state, London got two colleges instead of one. Yet neither obtained the right to confer degrees. Concurrent endowment was a reasonable principle to apply to denominational elementary schools in England, if not to denominational theological seminaries in Ireland; but concurrent chartering of rival universities in the selfsame city would have implied a spirit of fatalistic sociological tolerance that was alien to the liberals of the 1840's. Nor was such a reduplication in accordance with the contemporary idea of a university. When Lord John Russell established a new degree-conferring university by royal charter in 1836, he had only to out-Oxford Oxford: London University, like Oxford, was to be an examining and not a teaching body. The only difference was that it was free to examine candidates from affiliated colleges of any religious denomination in any part of the world:

twenty years later it even examined them simply as individuals, regardless of whether they belonged to a college or not. And the examination was strictly confined to secular subjects, like the instruction given at the Gower Street college; for secularism was the nineteenth century's H.C.F., much as deism had been that of the English eighteenth century.

The older universities still had one advantage over their government-created rival, and that was their residential colleges, where undergraduates could live in vitalizing contact with one another and with their tutors. This was outweighed, however, by a double disadvantage. Oxford's scale of values left little room for any science other than what Thomas Arnold called 'the great science of the nature of civilized man,' except perhaps in the heaven of platonic ideas, where it culminated, in Newman's idea of a university, in the re-enthronement of theology as queen of the sciences. When Newman ruined the Oxford movement by carrying romanticism to its logical conclusion in 1845, the natural sciences began to creep back into the colleges where they had last flourished in the liberal days when Protector Cromwell was chancellor. It was then that the state in the person of Lord John Russell intervened as emancipator. In 1850 he appointed royal commissioners on both universities. Their reports were followed up by new legislation which went far towards removing denominational intolerance and transferring university government from archbishops Whitgift and Laud to living dons. All that the state had to do for the present was to let loose the forces of reform, and then retire into the background. But the choice of regius professors was sometimes important, as when the appointment of the Oxford sanitarian, [Sir] Henry Acland, coincided so fortunately with cholera and the Crimea that he was able to found the museum and introduce biology and chemistry as useful preliminaries to medical education.

During the fifty years that followed that emancipation, it would perhaps be just to say that the older universities did

more for the state than the state for the older universities. But with the others it was otherwise.

The London examining-university developed two defects. The one was that it ceased to insist on the educational advantages of college contacts. And the other was that college teachers found it inconvenient and undignified for examination syllabuses to be drawn up by an external body: they objected to state examination by the London University in the nineteenth century, much as their predecessors had objected to church examination by the bishop's chancellor in the thirteenth century. Hence a demand for teaching-universities on a local basis.

The first step in this direction was the chartering of new federal universities. Colleges had arisen at Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool, partly to escape from the last surviving religious tests of Oxford and Cambridge, but still more in order to provide the technological training needed in their localities. These were federated in the Victoria University of the north in 1880. They were followed by the federation of Aberystwyth, Cardiff, and Bangor in the University of Wales in 1893. And when London University failed to make adequate provision for the metropolitan colleges in accordance with the report of a royal commission presided over by Lord Selborne in 1888, a distinct internal or academic side under the control of the local colleges was set up by act of parliament alongside the older external side in 1898, in pursuit of recommendations made by yet another—the Cowper—royal commission.

A second and more drastic step towards realizing the idea of the teaching-university was taken in 1900 when Joseph Chamberlain obtained a charter for Birmingham. Henceforward civic instead of federal universities became the rule. The Victoria Federal University split up into its several units. One by one other provincial colleges received charters which empowered their teachers to confer degrees on their own

students, instead of entering them for the London external examination.

And in the metropolis itself the federated colleges drew closer together, abandoning denominational tests in order to facilitate inter-collegiate teaching, co-ordinating their post-graduate work, mitigating overlapping, and even experimenting in formally incorporating themselves in the civic body of which they were now proud to be members.

How far has this development of modern universities been due to actual government aid in reinforcement of government policy?

After the Duke of Wellington's bestowal of a site on King's College in 1829 as a state subsidy to religious inequality and intolerance, very little help was given by the government in the actual foundation of these new colleges and universities. There were in fact only two notable instances. The one was when the Prince Consort's great exhibition of 1851 left behind it at South Kensington royal schools of mines and also of science as applied to the arts. And the other was when Gladstone of Hawarden took the advice of a departmental committee presided over by Lord Aberdare, and endowed Wales in the early 'eighties with the local colleges which her own benefactors were not opulent enough to provide unaided.

Towards the cost of maintenance, however, the state acquired the habit of contributing more generously. And this was peculiarly necessary; for the cost of upkeep was far higher than in the older universities. In these, all that was necessary was for the richly endowed colleges to save their venerable walls from the ravages of time and ivy: with the help of a library they could then cultivate the humanities in peace, if they were so inclined. But for the study of science, and especially of technology, expensive laboratories were required. For each individual college to provide its own would have been redundant and exorbitant; yet the university as a whole was not organized, and indeed had hardly any funds,

for the purposes of scientific research or teaching. These new studies had therefore to be cultivated elsewhere. Technological colleges and departments were established through local generosity in London from the 1830's, in Manchester from the 1850's, in Leeds and Birmingham from the 1870's, and since then in many another city. But it was not enough to build and equip them: they needed constant re-equipment if they were to retain their usefulness. And they had to provide many scholarships if newly-developed industries were to recruit the best brains. As machines came to be manufactured by machinery, as metallurgy became more and more scientific, and as electrical engineering began to vie with civil and mechanical in importance, it became clear that Whitworth scholarships and Siemens laboratories and Mason's college were hardly adequate when compared with the efforts made by continental governments to develop industries like Britain's. The Devonshire royal commission on the advancement of science (1872–76) had one effect: it stimulated the city and guilds of London into using some part of their endowments for the advancement of skill and science in the mastering of modern crafts. The next royal commission on technical instruction (1880–84) surveyed the whole field of education, from the practical work of the elementary schools, up through the nascent system of privately established scholarships, to the technological colleges and departments. Such was the influence of this report and of the great depression that had produced it, that in 1889 the Treasury began to make grants for advanced technological instruction and in 1890 the county councils were empowered to make grants for the same purpose as well as for junior technical instruction.

The original Treasury grant of 1889 was for £15,000 a year for five years, conditionally on satisfactory reports of inspectors; but by renewal it was made permanent. In liberal hands, the Treasury was able to use the power of the

purse not only to promote efficiency but also to compel denominational colleges to open their doors to engineers of other creeds. When the Board of Education took over the administration of these Treasury grants in 1911, it even tried to compel King's College to move to a more spacious site, without suggesting any way in which so expensive a removal could be financed; but it found it cheaper to retreat, make its grant to London University as a whole, and then trust the university to co-ordinate the work of its members.

The county councils were similarly able to use their power of the purse to insist on the removal of denominational tests, first on behalf of their ratepayers' sons, and then on behalf of the representatives whom they appointed to governing bodies.

In the technological faculties, public help thus made all the difference between greater and less efficiency. But in the arts and to some extent the science faculties its influence was greater still; for in the newer universities these faculties hung uncertainly between life and death until at last they were saved from inevitable bankruptcy by the influx of publicly subsidized undergraduates who intended to teach in publicly subsidized schools.

This movement began in 1890, when the universities were empowered to provide day training-colleges as an alternative to denominational residential training-colleges for elementary-school teachers, the government paying half the fees. As it was exceptionally difficult for such ill-prepared Queen's scholars to reach an academic degree in a two-year course while pursuing their professional training, the universities took a hint from the Bryce commission on secondary education and evolved an alternative scheme under which the academic course culminating in a degree could be separated from professional training which would be relegated to a post-graduate year and would culminate in a pedagogical diploma. After trying-out this new scheme on graduates who aimed at

teaching in the new secondary schools, the universities gradually persuaded the Board of Education to contribute towards the fees of such future elementary as well as secondary teachers as should prove able and willing to follow the universities' four-year course. And the number who thereafter read for degrees for two or three years before passing on to their post-graduate year of recuperation and professional preparation was further increased by the use made by some local education authorities of the permission they obtained in 1902 to erect their own secular day training-colleges and pay the whole of their members' fees for academic tuition.

A new type of arts faculty has thus arisen in these new colleges and universities. Its undergraduate members are much less of a social microcosm, than in the colleges of the older universities. They are drawn from a less varied range of schools and homes. From their families they bring less private culture and less public experience. In the struggle to earn their education by scholarship and examination, they have neither the time nor the money nor the outlook that will enable them to reproduce more than the faintest replica of Oxford and Cambridge conditions. They are seldom free to follow their vocation and develop into the rich variety of statesmen and civil servants, writers and lawyers, investigators and social workers and clergymen of to-morrow. They seldom come into contact with any one that is destined to count outside their own or some similar profession. And according to the principle of gradation that manifests itself through every English educational institution, it is reserved to Oxford and Cambridge to be the mills through which nine out of ten of the leaders of to-morrow are ground; and a democratic system of state scholarships emphasizes their pre-eminence by enabling them to skim the intellectual cream of every social class.

In such a college, where contact of undergraduates with undergraduates tends to be less educative than elsewhere, the

value of college membership depends mainly on contact between undergraduates and tutor. An educator with a mission would create an all-pervading atmosphere of humane culture, manly criticism, good-humoured tolerance, and sympathetic understanding. And he would aspire to build up a college courageous enough to stand or fall by the value of its own products, even though he himself happened to be only an immigrant from the banks of other rivers or perhaps only a bird of passage. On the contrary, he has missed his opportunity, shirked his responsibility, and displayed his lack of social sense, when he has measured his success merely by his pupils' place in an examination-list, when as a wholesale merchant he has been content with selling the correct quantity of abstract information to the future retail distributors, or when he has encouraged research as an end in itself regardless of the practical experience and future career of the student.

(ii) *Adult Education without the Universities.*

If education means the focusing of influences conducive to the development of a higher standard of thought or action, then there is no reason why it should stop short at any definite age.

To eighteenth-century publicists, moral education seemed the chief rational purpose and justification of an established church. And Adam Smith's chapter on the economics of adult education was devoted mainly to a discussion of the supply, demand, and market price of clergymen.

But there came a time when the homely moral wisdom beloved of the eighteenth century needed supplementing. Anderson of Glasgow conducted evening classes. A chair that he endowed was occupied by Dr Birkbeck, who found that no students were more interested in his scientific apparatus than the mechanics who made it. And when Birkbeck migrated to London in the 1820's the idea of mechanics'

institutes followed him, to be taken up by Brougham and the scientific radicals in the belief that the systematic diffusion of useful information would bring the working-classes more benefit than they had gained from the political agitation of 1819. Between 1826 and 1851, however, a large proportion of these mechanics' institutes tended to develop into literary and scientific institutions, catering for clerical rather than for manual workers, and providing the majority with a centre for the rational use of leisure rather than for attendance at courses of mildly vocational instruction.

In a generation whose imagination was haunted by memories of the Jacobin revolution of 1792, the educational mission of the church had been mainly among the young; the parochial system was thought to provide adequate after-care, and the merely temporary success of mechanics' institutes with their secular interests served only to point the need for making sure of the young while there was yet time. By the 'forties, however, Anglican educationalists became alarmed at the inadequacy of their expanding system of child-education either to frustrate the Chartist agitation or to cope with the growing problems of urban life and conduct. While evangelicals under the patronage of Lord Shaftesbury tried to teach the criminal classes to earn an honest livelihood, the staff of King's College in 1849 gave the first course of evening lectures in any English college to 'those who are employed during the whole day in offices of various kinds.' And F. D. Maurice and those whom he inspired, sought their mission neither among the ragged, who were left to the evangelicals, nor among clerks, whose belated secondary education could at London be left to King's College, but among the skilled manual workers for whom the working men's college of 1852, like the Christian Socialist co-operative workshops of 1850, was primarily intended.

Again a quarter of a century, and when this movement had spent most of its force, two others arose. In the 'seventies

all the universities gave official recognition to the extra-mural courses undertaken by their members among working men and ladies of leisure; for dons, like statesmen, realized after 1867 that there was nothing immoral in addressing themselves to the intelligence of a popular audience. And since 1880 polytechnics have provided technical and cultural education, at first as one aspect of Quintin Hogg's private Regent-street club for young working men, and since 1890 throughout the country as municipal evening institutes, supported out of rates and whisky money. While the university extension movement aimed at diffusing something of the new found liberal and scientific spirit of the universities outside their walls, the polytechnic movement aimed at providing persons of all ages with a substitute for the secondary education and technical training which they had not been able to obtain. And on account of the systematic and methodical character of the courses it arranged, as well as of the vocational bias of many of them, the polytechnic thus became the first aspect of adult or young-adult education to be publicly subsidized and regulated.

Yet another quarter of a century and again two movements of importance appeared. One arose from a consciousness of the need of education if organized labour was to be a power as well as a party in the state. Ruskin College, in Oxford but not of it, tried to train a labour *élite*, like a kind of adult Eton of the labour world. For the less ambitious there were university extension lectures; but these seemed not altogether well-adapted to meeting the new requirements: the large audiences that were necessary if these courses were to pay their way were hardly conducive to individual tuition. So tutorial classes of a less ambitious and a more thorough nature, in which better opportunities should exist for close contact between tutor and student, were organized from 1907 under the auspices of the universities, through the medium of the Workers' Educational Association, and under the inspection

of the Board of Education which aids them with a conditional grant.

And while the universities have thus stretched out their tentacles beyond their city walls, some have made increasing provision for students who can come to them at night to follow degree and diploma courses identical with those offered to persons who are able to devote their working hours to study.

Finally, in the last phase of all, what is most striking is the tendency to turn from food for the mind to skill of hand and eye. As the arts and crafts have passed out of ordinary workaday life, they have shewn some sign of coming back as occupations for the leisure hour, at least in so far as they combine domestic utility with intelligent relaxation and relief to the family budget. Women's institutes in their short life have already enlisted more supporters than tutorial classes. And they have made an even greater contribution to the unemployment centres that have been promoted of recent years to help the unemployed keep up their standards and maintain their interest in life.

From out of this curious succession of movement after movement for the last hundred years and more, two acquisitions stand out.

One is the rising consciousness on the part of the universities that they exist for the ultimate benefit of every class in the community, and that it is all to the good if their teachers at some time in their career come face to face with the ultimate consumers of the hypotheses they produce. A country like ours with a long tradition of aristocratic leadership and a cult of social solidarity cannot regard it as a *trahison des clercs* when citizens and Christians go into the market place with a full sense of their responsibility.

A second salient characteristic is the way these movements have been dogged by the inadequate earlier education of their supporters. In trying to meet the needs and interests

that develop only after adolescence, their promoters have come up against the desire to make good the deficiencies of previous education. And they have too often found themselves up against the alternative of being either elementary or exhilarating but superficial.

Another and more encouraging discovery is that there exists a disputed border country between adult education properly speaking, in which some persons try to raise the standards of others, and the rational use of leisure, for which persons of much the same standard combine in societies. It is becoming increasingly apparent that both are complementary. That adult education movement has always struck the deepest roots which has behind it the group loyalty of a local community or some working-class organization; and the humble musical or literary or dramatic society and the football or swimming club has proved a powerful instrument for maintaining or raising a standard of living when utilized by a settlement or church or some other ameliorative institution.

It is accordingly on both sides of this ill-demarcated frontier that those services to which most public attention has been given have set their feet.

Public libraries, for instance, have come to be used for a rich variety of motives. In places where they have made a point of honour of catering for every taste and every opinion, they have achieved an almost unique position as one of the few modern institutions that are now resorted to by all sections of the community, although free libraries originally began as semi-charities. Even after public expenditure on libraries was legalised by William Ewart of Dumfries in 1850, they had to look to a Carnegie or a Passmore Edwards to meet the capital outlay: to-day they are no longer limited to a halfpenny rate as in 1850 or a penny rate as in 1855. Then they were almost the sole purveyors of good-quality literature for those that read more books than they bought: to-day, when universal elementary education has enormously widened the

market for reading matter, they can profitably leave it to commercial firms to supply the more ephemeral of mass-produced and standardized best-sellers at twopence a volume.

The museum has a less humble origin as a place for the proud display of a nation's or a city's treasures, although it too was not a lawful item of municipal expenditure till 1850. But that does not deprive it of all educational side-effects. It has usually aimed either at presenting models of taste and skill for admiration and imitation, or at satisfying curiosity by exhibiting objects that have acquired accidental interest by their fortuitous connection with some historic personage, and too seldom at training the historic sense by grouping together the products first of one age and then of the next.

Broadcasting might almost be called a public service as well as a social service, in that it can be and is made to pay its way. It is perhaps our chief British achievement in this new field that we have done this without making the new device into an advertisement medium. And our rich experience in adult education has been utilized to make its services instructive and provocative as well as recreational and soothing.

And ought we not to include the education of parents as parents, even though it is performed largely by the school medical service? For what makes for the physical well-being of the next generation, makes also *en passant* for the moral and mental improvement of its parents. Maternity and infant welfare, school children's medical care, and skilled property management, are just so many forms of continued education, making up for what parents were not taught in their schools and what they would not then have fully grasped in all its implications even if they had then been taught it.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC HEALTH

I. CLEANLINESS AND GODLINESS

BETWEEN the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, a revolution occurred in the population of this as of most countries in Western Christendom. The population of England and Wales which had been only five or six millions in 1700 had risen by 1801 to nine millions and was to rise by 1851 to eighteen.

According to popular mythology this increase was due to an increase in human fertility, brought about by the invention of the steam engine. According to statistics and history it was not the birth-rate that rose, but the death-rate that fell.

For a hundred years prior to 1880, the English birth-rate always hovered about thirty-five per thousand per annum. What little variation did occur was in the downward direction, touching some thirty-two per thousand in the 1830's.

What really changed, we are now told, was the death-rate. Eighteenth-century insurance companies reckoned that it was at least 25 per cent. and there is good evidence for believing that it was over 30 per cent. in the age of Walpole. Yet it is calculated that by 1810 it had fallen temporarily to some 20 per cent. before settling in the region of 22 per cent. for the years 1840–70.

To what exactly do we owe a change of this magnitude—the postponement of one death out of three?

We do not know. Mr G. T. Griffith, to whose statistical calculations we are largely indebted for our knowledge on this subject, and Miss Mabel Buer who has thrown similar conclusions into vivid relief against the social changes of the

time, have between them suggested more than a dozen explanations. To these there is only one common feature: the decline in the death-rate between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries was due not to public but to private action. Social services had nothing to do with it. Government compulsion did not reach beyond ships' quarters and army barracks, gin duties and county gaols.

Yet it does not follow that the rulers of the United Kingdom did not bear their share of responsibility. The court and the landed aristocracy and the merchant oligarchy shared in the spirit of the age. It was theirs to set the example, theirs to find the funds.

Ignorance was profound. Nobody understood anything. And nobody measured anything.

It was not till about 1800 that temperatures were taken and pulses felt and urine analysed and chests sounded with a stethoscope. (Till Dr. Oliver Goldsmith's time, chests had not even been tapped).

Yet experiment was rife, both in medicine and in surgery. And if doctors did not yet know the why, they were already beginning to understand the how.

They knew nothing of vitamins. But Captain Cook kept his crew free from scurvy by means of fresh fruit and vegetables, and the introduction of lime-juice into the navy in 1796 cut down the sick-list by one-half. They knew nothing of bacteria and their products. But they discovered that artificial variolation was less deadly than natural small-pox, at least to the great ones who were inoculated, though not perhaps to the servants who proceeded to catch the disease from them. And Dr. Edward Jenner was voted a small fortune by parliament when he showed in 1798 that vaccination with cow-pox was still less deadly and no less effective than variolation.

They no longer believed that diseases were arbitrary acts of God. They were coming to believe that all that happened followed ascertainable laws of cause and effect. For since

1689 the Deity had become a constitutional ruler. What man had to do was to ascertain those laws and fit in with them as best he could. If he studied and obeyed them intelligently, so much the better for him. And if he tried to disobey, so much the worse.

Frederick the Great, it is said, never bathed. And Chippendale seldom if ever designed a wash-stand. But by the end of the century fresh air and warm water were fighting their way into fashion. Adam designed bathrooms. Humphrey Clinker found bathing-machines at Scarborough. Fever and lying-in hospitals were half cleaned and partly ventilated. Ships' quarters and barracks and spinning-mills and gaols were whitewashed. Less prisoners were herded together, and more treated to solitary confinement. For the first time since the baths and aqueducts of the Romans had been abandoned, we Christians washed and were clean. Hygiene was reborn. And the result was that 'fever' declined—or, as we should say nowadays, less opportunity was left for lice to carry the germs of typhus from one human body to another.

Nor was this all. The commercialization of life which brought wealth and ease to the classes who set the fashion was helping to improve the chances of survival of all. Fields were hedged and ditched, marshland drained, roads paved, sewers covered: there was less malaria and less ague, and better supplies of fresh vegetables and fresh meat.

Moreover, a declining death-rate proved to have a cumulative effect, and this in two ways. For one, towns ceased for the first time to be a drain on population: they began to help instead of check its increase. And, for another, as the proportion of burials to baptisms among children under five in London was reduced from 75 per cent. to 41 per cent. between 1740 and 1800, more grew up to become the parents of the next generation.

II. SANITARY SCIENCE

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the public health movement came to be linked up with a definite man and a definite system of thought. In 1828 a young man up from the country who was just reading for the bar contributed an article on life insurance to the philosophic radicals' *Westminster Review*. The insurance companies were making good profits because the chances of living were now greater than when they calculated their premiums. Now here was a real achievement, the most definite and tangible and measurable reform imaginable: the span of human life was being lengthened. And that was of interest not only to the individual directly concerned but also to dependents whom his death would have left ill-provided for. It was in fact a definite increase in *life and happiness*; and that was the prime aim and object of all utilitarians.

But how was this result achieved? And how was it to be consolidated and extended?

As a good utilitarian doctrinaire, Edwin Chadwick soon had his explanation ready.

If any change came over the life of the human being it was because of a change in his environment. If brass and iron bedsteads, and cast iron hot-and-cold water systems, and cotton shirts, and oilcloth, and earthenware pipes were making man's environment cleaner, then there would be the best part of the explanation. Cleanliness was next—at least—to godliness. On the other hand, if the whole atmosphere was stinking with morbid and putrid exhalations and foetid emanations, then one might be sure that disease was in the air. Smells and putrefaction were pestiferous. Blind alleys were as dangerous as back-to-back houses: they stood in the way of a through draught of bracing fresh air. Sore throats came from bad smells, consumption from foul air, and rheumatism

from damp. And doctors had no ground except their professional interest for attributing the spread of disease to contagion—personal contact.

To understand the physical effects of man's man-moulded environment, a new branch of study was required: sanitary science. And to apply this science a new technique and a new profession must be developed: preventive medicine. Prevention was better than cure; and safer too in the then state of therapeutics.

To mould man's environment mere private action would not suffice. Public authorities with their powers of compulsion must be called in. Public hygiene must supplement private. Sanitary institutions must be created to give effect to the sanitary idea.

As luck had it, quite a number of circumstances arose which gave an impetus to the realization of this programme.

First and foremost were the cholera scares of 1831–32, 1847–48, 1853–55, and 1865. The bark of the new epidemic was somewhat worse than its bite, even though at Berlin it did kill Hegel and Klausewitz. Prayer and intercession proved powerless to avert it, even when a whig ministry knelt down beside a tory archbishop. And no good was done by reviving the unenforceable quarantine regulations which had been devised against the quite different plague of 1666 thirty years after it had become extinct. All that was clear was that somehow cholera drifted here from Asia, first reaching our North Sea ports, and then attracting much attention in the most overcrowded and the dirtiest quarters of the growing cities. It predisposed large sections of the people in favour of any more or less scientific preventive measures that might be devised. The first of these visitations enabled Dr. Kay, for instance, who was then at the Manchester dispensary, to begin his career with a pamphlet on the *Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Industry*. 'Excrement-sodden earth, excrement-reeking air, excrement-

tainted water, these are for us the causes of cholera,' was the verdict of the medical officer to the privy council as he summed up these insults to early-Victorian respectability as ' the filthiest chapter in the history of our pestilences.'*

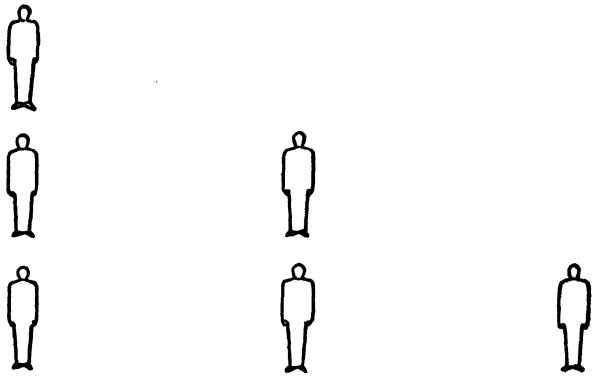
Other opportunities came with the appointment of the statutory poor-law commission in 1834. The commissioners' business was to eradicate pauperism ; but under the guidance of Chadwick, their secretary, they soon decided that the causes of pauperism were as often physical as moral. Sickness, whether endemic or epidemic, drove families to seek temporary medical relief ; and the death of the breadwinner made them a permanent charge on the parish. This appeal to economy was put into an open letter written to the Home Secretary by Chadwick in the name of the commission in 1838. This letter was reinforced by the researches of Dr. Kay and Dr. Southwood Smith into the connection between fever and destitution in London. The subject was debated in parliament, the Bishop of London himself participating. Similar information on the whole country was called for, and after being collected by the commissioners' medical assistants it was edited by Chadwick in 1842 as a *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Classes.* Boards of guardians were empowered to vaccinate everybody. Peel was moved to appoint a royal commission under the chairmanship of the Duke of Buccleuch to report on the health of towns. And 1848 saw the passage of the first public health act, under which a general board of health was set up with Chadwick as secretary and Lord Shaftesbury a member, and local boards of health here and there in all the best and the worst districts in the kingdom.

Besides Asiatic cholera and the new poor-law, a third circumstance contributed to the setting up of our sanitary institutions, and that was the Crimean War. It was not altogether a coincidence that the central health authority

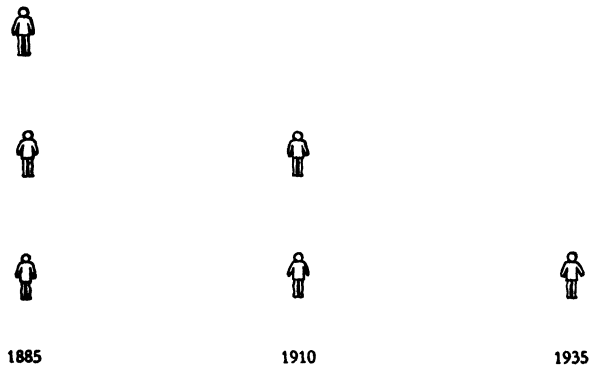
* J. Simon, *Privy Council Reports*, ii. 296 (1866), 327 (1867).

HAVE THE SOCIAL SERVICES HELPED?

What percentage of Englishmen have died each year?



How many infants out of every twenty have died in their first year?



survived the pensioning-off of Chadwick in 1854; that 1855 saw the appointment of (Sir) John Simon as the first medical officer of the general board of health, and the foundation of *a Journal of Public Health and Sanitary Review* by (Sir) Benjamin Richardson; that in 1857 a royal commission reported on the sanitary condition of the army; and that in 1860 E. S. Parkes, who had been at Gallipoli, was appointed to England's first chair of hygiene at our first army medical college.

The most obvious result of all this agitation was that expensive systems of sewage-disposal and water-supply took the place of the cesspool and the churchyard pump during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. For careful observation and the shrewd interpretation of statistical evidence from different localities now made it possible to guess that cholera and typhoid were connected with sewage, and especially with polluted river water, and that typhus was encouraged by dirt. 'A people that has inaugurated railways, that has spanned the Menai Strait and reared the Crystal Palace, can hardly fear the enterprise of draining poison from its infected towns,' John Simon reported to the city of London. 'A people that has freed its foreign slaves at twenty millions' ransom, will never let its home population perish for cheapness' sake in the ignominious ferment of their filth.'*

Act followed act. Bruce's act of 1866 attracted particular attention: it pretended to impose on urban sanitary authorities the imperative duty of making sure that their water and sewage system was adequate. They were also to prosecute all nuisances; but no one could be sure what constituted a nuisance unless it was included by parliament in a rapidly lengthening list, and the courts hesitated to convict unless actual danger to health could be proved in each particular case. This chapter was brought to a close by Disraeli's famous public health act of 1875, an act which innovated nothing, but which consolidated twenty-nine earlier measures.

* Reports to City of London, i, 140 (1853).

Disease anywhere means danger everywhere. And during these years the ruling few learned to seek their own safety in the health of the many. 'The "public health" of a country means the health of its masses,' was a doctrine well known to their lordships of the privy council.*

Chadwick's hope that destitution might be buried in the same grave as disease was even then seen to depend for its fulfilment on the removal of the economic causes that contribute to both social evils alike.† But there can be no doubt that the virtual completion of our sanitary system did coincide with a renewed fall in the death-rate of all classes.

Of every hundred inhabitants of this island, death now comes to one a year. One hundred years ago it came to two, and two hundred years ago to three.

III. PREVENTION BY TREATMENT

The desire of the eighteenth century to prolong life by the advancement of science was fulfilled in the nineteenth century, along two different lines.

On the one hand, as we have seen, there arose the common-sense school of the laymen who thought that environment was having a determining influence on disease. To them and their medical advisers we owe the progress of personal and public hygiene and the revolutionary conception of preventive medicine.

On the other hand, the science of healing was slowly plodding forward and improving its methods for treating the great mass of disease which the sanitarians still failed to prevent.

Sanitary science concentrated on the social wood, medical science on the individual trees.

The state took little interest in treatment until 1865. For this it had two good reasons. The one was that it hoped to

* J. Simon, *Privy Council Reports*, ii, 98, (1863).

† J. Simon, *Privy Council Reports*, ii, 97.

render treatment unnecessary by the short cut of prevention, especially as the Benjamin of the sciences seemed to be making more rapid progress than its elder brethren. And the other was that treatment was being provided by a network of philanthropic agencies, which had gradually grown up since a London bookseller set the fashion by endowing Guy's Hospital with the profits of his South Sea Bubble speculations.

Scattered up and down the kingdom were a host of voluntary and endowed hospitals and dispensaries for the sick poor. Nowhere were they more prolific than in London, where fashionable doctors gave their services to the charitable institutions that sprang up on their doorsteps through the generosity of their noble patients, especially as they found them convenient centres for giving clinical instruction to their private pupils and apprentices. These voluntary hospitals seem to have done better work in training doctors than in curing patients until a few remarkable changes produced a great increase in public confidence.

The introduction of anaesthesias, disinfectants and trained nurses, removed three of the worst horrors of hospital treatment, and enormously increased the chances of cure. The names of Joseph Lister and Florence Nightingale became symbolic of the prevention of death and suffering. Since then, a further rapid progress of specialized knowledge has been coupled with the development of highly expensive equipment, such as the X-rays, radium, and light. Institutional treatment which had formerly been a deterrent to all but the sickest poor has gradually become indispensable to all classes of the community.

In this movement of renewed confidence in medicine and surgery, and especially in hospital treatment, public authorities have been led to play a great part, as the result of other functions which they had assumed in days before the value of hospital treatment had been proved.

Under the poor-law, hundreds of thousands of destitute

persons were relieved. And if they were sick this relief had to take a medical form. If they were living in their own homes, a private practitioner in the district was paid to physic them. And if they were inside a workhouse they were usually relegated to an infirmary ward where they were attended by a part-time medical officer in private practice and nursed by their fellow paupers.

Allegations in 1865 that the death of two pauper patients in workhouse sick-wards in London had been caused by negligence, led to an attempt to develop a poor-law medical service. A metropolitan asylums board was set up by Gathorne-Hardy in 1867 to relieve the London unions of their small-pox, fever, and mental cases. For less dangerous diseases and the physical infirmity of old age, the London guardians were compelled to build infirmaries. And in a score of other large towns similar poor-law infirmaries were built.

Little by little the best of these rate-provided hospitals obtained full-time medical officers, trained nurses, and adequate equipment for surgical operations. But in many ways they always differed from the voluntary hospitals. They contained large numbers of chronic and infirm cases, wet and dirty cases, and cases of the more common illnesses which had to come into an institution because there was nowhere else where they could be nursed—all of them cases which the voluntary hospitals would not have found interesting and for which they had no beds to spare. In some towns, as many as one-third of the population have gone to the poor-law infirmary to die.

Owing partly to this difference in the class of case provided for and partly to the parsimony of guardians, the tendency was to allow less bed-space and a smaller proportion of doctors and nurses than in the voluntary hospitals, even leaving the nurses to do the menial work in many institutions. Yet, stinted as they often were, these were none the less the first

publicly-provided general hospitals. Treatment in them ceased in 1885 to be a disqualification for the franchise. And in some unions, such as Bradford, anyone was admitted as destitute if he was destitute of the means of obtaining adequate treatment for diseases such as tuberculosis which would have driven his family to literal destitution if treatment had been delayed till he was past work and past cure.

If the poor-law authority was one door by which the state provided medical treatment, the sanitary authority was the other. If the relief of destitution was its original aim in the former case, in the latter it was the prevention of disease.

One obvious way of curtailing the ravages of disease was to treat the sufferer, not only for his own good but also for that of the community. For the vague feeling that disease was communicable was widely held even before it could be scientifically explained. So public health acts in 1868 and 1875 empowered all the new sanitary authorities to provide hospitals out of the rates, much as had been done by a few pioneering districts for a hundred years past in their attempt to isolate fever patients.

But this was almost immediately followed by the discovery of the part played by various micro-organisms in the spread of disease. Bacteriology came to the help of preventive medicine. The communicability of some diseases at least was put beyond all doubt for the first time, now that the cause itself had been discovered.

To treat and to isolate the sick person thus acquired a scientific importance which it had never achieved before. So wherever the hospital-building powers of the 1875 act were used, it was almost exclusively for treating the most deadly and most highly infectious of acute illnesses, such as enteric and small-pox, scarlet fever and diphtheria, in isolation hospitals. This was specially necessary as voluntary general hospitals did not want cases so dangerous to other patients, while poor-law infirmaries were intended primarily for the

destitute. Where there was danger to the community, patients could be compulsorily removed. Doctors encouraged families well above destitution level to take advantage of the new facilities. In London and some other districts, removal and treatment were made free of all charge, so as to facilitate fulfilment of a duty that was in everybody's interest.

Thus the new municipal hospitals became isolation hospitals. Attention was so far concentrated on this aspect of their development that in 1893 the only kind of joint hospital which small districts were empowered to combine to build was an isolation one. And, once built, the isolation hospital opened its doors in the twentieth century to other acute infectious diseases such as common measles and whooping-cough.

Yet there was no legal reason why the sanitary authorities should not have promoted the public health by providing general hospitals. In the twentieth century some few began to use their powers to provide for accidents, poisonings, and urgent necessities of both a medical and a surgical nature. And after 1929 the larger authorities were able to appropriate poor-law hospitals, open them to all classes on payment according to means, expand them into places of scientific treatment rather than of medical relief, and enlarge them so as to provide at least one bed for every two hundred of the population.

This has made it advisable for them to co-ordinate their expansion with that of the voluntary hospitals. For these also have been attempting to keep abreast of new demands by raising money both for more beds and for more equipment. Only by co-operation could they economize both in capital expenditure and in working-costs. Yet their competition for funds has made them hesitate to co-operate until forced to co-ordinate their development with the expansion of what are now the municipal general hospitals, which already have some 150,000 beds against the 75,000 of the voluntaries, to

say nothing of as many beds again in special municipal hospitals for infectious and mental cases. Meanwhile a breach has been made in the monopoly of medical education which the voluntary general hospitals obtained about the 1830's: state and municipal hospitals have begun to develop schools for specialised post-graduate research, though not for general medical education.

The local authorities have also begun in the twentieth century to provide for treatment of a chronic disease, tuberculosis, to which about one death out of every ten was due. In so far as this had been shown by Koch in 1882 to be of bacteriological origin, it was liable to be contagious, under certain circumstances at least, especially when there were small children in the household or when the patient was in an advanced state of phthisis. In so far as death or cure was a matter of months or years, voluntary general hospitals could not hope to provide more than a small part of the accommodation needed, and very few families could meet the cost of the new private sanatoria which began to arise in Switzerland in the 'eighties and in Great Britain in the 'nineties. Yet experience showed that this disease was frequently curable, provided only that it was diagnosed in time and that the patient would consent to earn his cure by leading the reasonable and regular life for which a well-directed sanatorium offered unrivalled opportunities—provisos which had seldom been fulfilled in the case of the workhouse consumptive. And common sense suggested that it was a measure of economy to give timely attention to the treatment of the white scourge whose social importance lies in its habit of attacking men and women in the prime of life at the very time when they are assuming family responsibilities.

Rate-supported sanatoria, properly equipped for supervising and modifying the evolution of the disease and for occupying the enforced leisure of the otherwise healthy patients, thus became the only rational way of coping with the problem.

For diagnosing the disease and supervising those who could safely be left at home, an equally well-equipped dispensary in charge of a rate-paid specialist was just as necessary. As the smaller sanitary authorities shrank from building beds each of which would be occupied for so great a length of time by the same patient, the central treasury made a grant of a million and a half to the county councils in aid of capital expenditure in 1911, in the hope of providing one sanatorium bed for curable cases for every five thousand of the population. And so that this longest of all curable diseases should not deter families from timely acceptance of the only good chance of recovery, gratuity was gradually found to have advantages in the overwhelming majority of cases.

Nor have isolation and general hospitals and tuberculosis sanatoria and dispensaries been by any means the only ways chosen by the sanitary authorities for checking the spread of sickness. Under the contagious diseases notification acts 1889–99, parliament and the central department have added disease after disease to the list of those that doctors are compelled and paid to notify, while local authorities have been empowered to add yet others to the list. To facilitate diagnosis they have arranged for the free bacteriological analysis of swabs, sputum and urine. Diphtheria anti-toxin and other expensive sera and medicines have been supplied gratis to doctors who are treating patients in their own homes. The cleansing of persons act of 1907 has encouraged them to treat scabies and pediculosis. Nurses have been provided here and there for infectious cases under treatment at home. Health visitors have in many places followed up contacts and kept an eye on the home conditions of discharged patients. And after-care has been widely needed to help the ex-tuberculous to overcome the ignorant prejudice which permeates all English society from the universities down, and makes it absurdly difficult for them to recover their economic

independence, without being driven to dangerous overwork or a lower standard of living.

Yet these numerous approaches to the problem of contagion do not exhaust the ways in which treatment has been used for purposes of prevention.

IV. THE RISING GENERATION

The romantic nineteenth century had a kind of mystical faith in a new golden rule which it was pleased to sum up as the survival of the fittest. Our present century has been more impressed by the unfitness of the survivors.

So it has turned to cope with the problems of childhood, infancy and maternity, gradually probing further and further back until some prophetic souls caught visions even of positive and negative eugenics. Here it has found the cause of as much preventible weakness and ill-health again as had previously been found in actual contagious disease. 'A stitch in time saves nine' became the programme of a new generation. And public opinion has been rallied to the new crusade by the scarcity value acquired by children since the decline in our birth-rate: fewer in quantity and better in quality has become the modest aim of this country as of France.

The health of the school child attracted public attention as soon as its plight was made obvious by its being brought into contact with a publicly supported school. To be unclothed or unshod was at once a danger to health and an excuse for not attending school. And to be underfed was to be overworked. So school-teachers and education authorities grasped at any device for facilitating attendance and attention, especially in the age of payment by results (1861–90). A vast field of publicly tolerated parental neglect, ignorance, and ill-management stood revealed, and with it an equally vast field of destitution unrelieved or inadequately relieved by the publicly-elected poor-law authorities. This absurd situation, due

largely to public and private negligence, led to the spasmodic pouring out of voluntary doles of boots, clothing and free dinners, as if to prove that the public had a soft heart as well as a soft head. So far as the child was concerned this alleviation of mere symptoms may perhaps have been better than nothing; or by condoning and encouraging parental and poor-law neglect it may have been worse than nothing. The inadequacy of these charitable doles led many school managers, in London at least, to penetrate behind the child to the home itself and attempt to remove the causes of which the child's malnutrition was only a symptom.

The question was brought to the centre of the political stage by the appointment after the Boer War of a misleadingly-named interdepartmental committee on physical deterioration, which reported in 1904, and by a sensational but unsuccessful attempt to substitute poor-relief for charity. The Gordian knot was cut in 1906 by the education (provision of meals) act under which local education authorities were themselves permitted to make arrangements for the provision of school meals, recover costs when parents could afford to pay, and meet the cost out of the rates only when the children would otherwise have been unable to benefit fully from their schooling. Under this act the local authority might associate voluntary charities with itself on school canteen committees, and it was empowered to pay for the school meals out of the rates only when funds other than public were inadequate or unavailable. The result was the rapid migration of charity to other fields and the assumption by most local authorities of full responsibility. But voluntary care committees survived in some localities, to continue their noble effort to encourage parents to share their interest in maintaining the health of the school child, organized and directed in the county of London by professionally trained and publicly paid social workers.

The subsequent expenditure of local authorities on school meals has so far been distinguished neither by steady growth

nor by steady diminution, but by intense variation according to the state of employment. For instance, it reached the high-water mark of nearly £1,000,000 in the slump of 1921–22, only to fall to one-seventh of that figure by 1924–25, when it was lower than on the eve of the war, and rise again to all but £800,000 during the year of strikes, 1926–27. It is not clear whether its chief value may not have been in helping decent families through temporary distress without having recourse to poor-law, making sure that the child has a meal even if the family goes short; or whether it has continued to be used to supplement inadequate poor-relief as in the days of indiscriminating charity and thus be frittered away in a self-contradictory attempt to help a child apart from its family.

Children's minor physical defects and ailments did not make the same appeal to public sentiment. But their ultimate physical ill-effects were likely to be just as great as those of under-nourishment, while their immediate educational effect was to add yet another cause for irregular or unprofitable attendance. Some of the larger local education authorities, therefore, began to appoint their own medical officers and nurses as 'necessary officers' under the general powers conferred by the education act of 1870, while some of the smaller ones called in the local sanitary authority's medical officer of health to search for contagious and other preventible diseases, after duly notifying the parents. Not content with discovering any defects and calling the parents' attention to them, they began to follow up inspection both by having the homes visited and by offering treatment, while conciliating the private practitioner by employing him for part of his time and by not treating the child in its own home.

Thus Bradford experimented in a school clinic and an open-air school, besides school baths and a school canteen, between 1894 and 1902, while Margaret MacMillan was a member of the school board and Dr. James Kerr its medical officer. And

the Croydon authority was curing its own ringworm by X-ray by 1905.

This medical inspection and clinical treatment which had so far been purely experimental on the part of intelligent local authorities for elementary education, was made binding upon all of them under the Education (administrative provisions) Act of 1907 though it was still open to the more enlightened to provide more than the statutory minimum. But from that day to this the number of defects receiving treatment has not ceased to expand. During the ten years 1923–33 alone the number of children treated for dental defects has doubled while the number of visual defects and cases of adenoids and enlarged tonsils has increased by one-half. During the twenty years 1913–33 the cost of this service rose from £200,000 to £2,000,000. The increase in cleanliness of hair and skin, though hardly measurable in figures, has been perhaps the most important and most noticeable of all the improvements. And care for the health of the child is having a cumulative effect, by now entering into the habits of a new generation of parents.

Behind the school child, however, stands the infant and the mother.

It was just about the beginning of the twentieth century, when there were already some statistical signs of improvement, that their welfare began to attract hopeful attention on both sides of the Channel. Infantile mortality was taken as symptomatic of still greater infantile morbidity. Efforts directed towards reducing the death-rate were expected also to reduce the sick-rate.

The problem was at one and the same time educational and physical. Milk had to be made available at less than cost price, both for expectant and nursing mothers and for infants who had to be artificially fed. But it was even more important to teach many mothers how to care for their children. So the two aspects were linked together, and the help

made conditional on attendance or visitation for the receipt of advice.

Centres for weighing and examination, advice and encouragement, were opened, in some places by the medical officers of health and in others by a voluntary association. The war stimulated the expansion of this voluntary work, in a double desire to help mothers when food was dear and to make up for the destruction of the nation's manhood by the saving of infant life. So in 1918 local authorities were empowered to work through local voluntary agencies and in 1929 were compelled to draw up schemes for such co-operation. The work thus organized has spread out to include the provision of mothers' home helps, of gynaecological advice, of maternity hospitals and observation-wards, of convalescent homes, and of early orthopaedic treatment.

The next big task seems to be the utilization of this preliminary experience so as to make these facilities available everywhere—a development which seems likely to involve the organization of a nation-wide maternity service, in which antenatal clinics, midwives, family doctors, obstetric specialists, and hospitals will all have a better defined place.

Of every twenty British babies, one now dies before its first birthday. A quarter of a century ago, two would have died; and, half a century ago, three. To this achievement our infant and maternity welfare services have no doubt contributed.

The maternal death-rate, however, has not so far shared in the great diminution effected in the general and infantile death-rates. Here a more adequate diagnosis of the causes of mortality and morbidity is required before we can be sure in what measure this is preventible. And there is some ground for fearing that this occupational risk may be greatest among other sections of the population than those who stand financially in need of such maternity services as have hitherto been provided.

V. HOUSING

Chadwick did much to open the eyes of his generation to the probability that if disease was one of the causes of destitution, bad housing might be one of the causes of disease. The housing of the poorest class of the community thus became of vital importance to all classes.

Nor was it only men's physical condition that might be directly affected by bad accommodation. The environment might be expected to influence them morally, by offering little inducement to habits of self-control and tidiness, cleanliness and privacy.

For both physical and moral reasons, early-Victorian philanthropists therefore became passionately interested in this newly discovered problem.

To understand just why this new interest developed at that precise point of time, one must remember especially the supreme importance that was then attached to environment. To attribute the new enthusiasm to the factory system in particular or the industrial revolution in general is to substitute faith for fact.

The problem was to some extent a rural one. Here it was perhaps due partly to the decline of living-in. But it had undoubtedly been intensified by certain aspects of the old poor-law. Here and there some speculator had found that it paid him to run up a block of defective cottages for the labouring classes, obtain exemption from the parish poor-rate in consequence, raise the rent proportionately, and then get the rent paid out of the rates. And here and there again some landowner, less scrupulous than most and more influential, might use his control over all the parish to diminish the number of cottages within it in the hope of making it difficult for a new generation to acquire by birth a settlement which might eventually entitle them to parochial relief. While this

rural evil was sporadic, the remedy was no less so. It came from the very nature of the English landlord system. Good landlords, and they were many, often built model cottages throughout the middle years of the nineteenth century, and leased them with the land and the farm-buildings to the farmer by whose labourers they were occupied, at what was often a nominal rent.

Meanwhile, in the growing towns, and especially in London, the problem was mainly that of the tenement house. If a house that had been built originally for one family turned out to be in a neighbourhood where there was little demand for its original purpose, the line of least resistance was to let it to some enterprising middleman with just enough capital to assume the risk in subletting it. If the house was a large one, the middleman might hope to obtain high enough rents to enable him to live rent-free; and if it was less large he might let off sufficient rooms to compensate for changes in the numbers or the incomes of his own family.

There was thus a case for building blocks of flats, deliberately intended for the purpose to which they were put, and let at rents more moderate than those charged where there was extensive subletting. This movement was initiated by Shaftesbury and other philanthropists by 1841, and it received a great impetus from the experiments by Baroness Burdett-Coutts in 1862, Sir Sydney Waterlow in 1863, and George Peabody in 1864. The erection of these model dwellings was usually an act of philanthropic capitalism rather than of charity. The philanthropist provided the capital and gave up all hope of private profit; but the dwellings had to pay their way, and, in the case of George Peabody's, they had to bring in enough profit to provide the capital for building yet other blocks, until, by the cumulative effect of this process during the long course of centuries, they should cover the whole face of the town. Within a dozen years, 30,000 persons were re-housed by these trusts, at a cost of over £1,000,000. And

£250,000 was advanced to them through the Public Works Loans Board under an act of 1866. Barracky as were these model dwellings, alien as they were to English traditions, and damping to youthful ambition as their addresses have become, they were none the less important in so far as they embodied the principle of 'one family, one structurally separate dwelling.'

This was immediately followed by a smaller but still more effective experiment. Some of the houses let off in working-class tenements were sufficiently well-built to warrant thorough reconditioning; but if this heavy expenditure were to pay, care would have to be taken to stimulate the co-operation of the tenant with the landlord. In other words, the improvement must be moral as well as material, and re-education must keep pace with re-conditioning. This was the meaning of John Ruskin's alliance with Octavia Hill, a grand-daughter of Dr. Southwood Smith, the Benthamite fever specialist, in 1866. He provided the capital and she the skilled property-management. Within ten years she had 3,000 tenants. Thus these two idealists showed that the discussion whether the slum caused the slum-mind or the slum-mind the slum was an irrelevant abstraction, bred of the mania for reducing everything to a sequence of cause and effect: the two were indistinguishable, and, if any real progress were to be made, it must be by a simultaneous attack on both at once.

Private experiment was soon reinforced and supplemented by municipal enterprise. For while the private philanthropist could proceed only by way of example and competition the public authority could act also by compulsion. And one of the unexpected by-products of private effort was that by its influence on public opinion it paved the way for public action, helped also by the example of Hausmann's Paris. Liverpool, Glasgow, and Edinburgh led the way with local acts of parliament in 1864 and 1866, empowering them to eliminate the most insanitary of their dwellings, clear their

criminal quarters, and open up broad new thoroughfares; and during the next fifty years the Glasgow municipality gradually rehoused some 50,000 persons.

How far the new dwellings provided by trusts and municipalities were occupied by previous slum-dwellers was uncertain. But, by making more accommodation available at a modest rent, they tended to relieve the pressure on less hygienic accommodation and thus stimulate a general filtering-up process. And the compulsory clearance embarked upon by Glasgow had yet another advantage, well described by Octavia Hill: 'Merely to break in upon these nests of thieves cannot but be a great good: some kind of wrong is not decreased by scattering it, but dishonesty thrives most when fostered in such dens. The near presence of honest, respectable neighbours makes habitual thieving impossible; just as dirty people are shamed into cleanliness when scattered among ordinary, decent folk, and brought into the presence of the light.'*

To extend to the whole country the powers at first exercised by only a few of the most disease and crime-infected cities was a natural process. Two possibilities were indicated both by private and by municipal enterprise. Local authorities might deal either with individual buildings or with whole areas.

In the case of individual houses unfit for habitation, they might put before the owner the alternative of either reconditioning his property or closing it: this piecemeal procedure was made generally available by Torrens's artisans' and labourers' dwellings act in 1868.

And in the case of insanitary areas, they might clear them, provided that the tenants were rehoused and both they and their landlords compensated: this wholesale procedure was likewise extended to all large municipalities acting on the

* O. Hill in *Macmillan's Magazine* (June 1874) on the Glasgow improvement scheme.

initiative of their medical officer of health, by Assheton Cross's artisans' dwellings act in 1875, though the local authorities were expected to re-let the areas they had cleared to housing trusts, so as not to become purveyors of a prime necessity of life or speculators in real estate.

Considerable slum-clearance was effected under Cross's act in a dozen centres of population, at a cost of some £5,000,000. And in two of these the change was of sensational dimensions. The Metropolitan Board of Works cleared some fifty acres and provided for the re-housing of some 30,000 persons by leasing the sites to the philanthropic building trusts. And Birmingham city council cleared an area nearly twice as large.

Yet when the first royal commission on housing was set up by Gladstone's government in 1884 the position was still far from satisfactory. The few authorities that had tried slum-clearance had found that compensation had proved more expensive than they had expected, even though it was limited to the market value of the property and did not include a 10 per cent. bonus to compensate for compulsion as in the case of land purchased by railway companies; for it provoked a preliminary rise in rents. Those that found it cheaper to use Torrens's act were getting only some four hundred houses a year reconditioned or rebuilt. And hardly any use had been made of other acts empowering local authorities to provide accommodation where none had existed before: where there was no privately-provided plague-spot, no public body was yet anxious to intervene, even though permission had been expressly granted in Shaftesbury's oddly called lodging-house act of 1851, and practical inducements added in 1866 in the shape of limited rights of compulsory purchase and financial assistance from the Public Works Loan Board.

This royal commission had little influence on legislation beyond the consolidation of the housing laws of the previous forty years in 1890, in a housing of the working classes act,

whose three parts—slum clearance, reconditioning, and new housing estates—provided the legal basis for municipal work during the next nineteen years. Leeds used the act to clear nearly as great an area as Birmingham at nearly twice the expense, and London brought up the total of its clearances to 75 acres and 50,000 persons. Much useful work was also done by way of removing defects in individual buildings, Manchester in particular making a valiant attempt at letting some air through her thousands of back-to-backs. And the London County Council took to building not only blocks of slum replacement tenements but also large estates of small suburban cottages for a better type of tenant.

To this new development two new factors contributed. The one was an economic one. The standard of working-class housing demanded by public opinion and by law was rising, so that the building of houses to let was becoming a less attractive speculation in years when building costs were on the high side.

And the other factor was at once social, aesthetic, and hygienic. The town-planning movement was breeding a conviction that tidying-up was not enough, and that orderly planning on a large scale in the first instance might prove cheaper in the long run.

The powers of local authorities were brought into harmony with these new developments in 1909 by John Burns's housing and town-planning act. On its housing side this was largely a re-enactment of the act of 1890; but it provided means for harrying the more apathetic sanitary authorities out of their inaction, by empowering the central department to compel them to deal with individual houses unfit for human habitation.

In late-Victorian England the obvious objections to placing compulsory powers in the hands of private philanthropists had necessitated municipal participation in housing. Similarly at the beginning of the twentieth century the reluctance of all but the biggest local authorities to use their statutory powers,

especially as they would have to do so almost entirely at their own financial risk, left no alternative to the assumption of statutory powers of compulsion and financial means of persuasion on the part of the central department.

This tendency was already at work before the war. But the end of the war gave an illusion of dramatic suddenness to what might otherwise have been a gradual and almost imperceptible process. And it led to a temporary transfer of emphasis from the qualitative to the quantitative aspect of housing.

In 1919, four years' pent-up demand for houses was suddenly let loose on a world where four years' supply was missing. And the high prices which this would in any case have implied were still further enhanced by the war-time inflation of the currency.

Under such circumstances no private speculator could be expected to enter the field and provide houses on which he would soon cease to see a reasonable return for his outlay. If houses were to be built for letting, it was only a taxing authority that could afford to run the risk. Yet the entry into the market of public authorities with limited experience and comparatively unlimited resources drove prices yet higher, till a £250 house cost £1250. And the higher the cost soared, the greater grew the number of families that could ordinarily have purchased their house but were now unable to do more than rent one.

It was therefore at immense cost that 175,000 houses were painfully provided under the Addison acts. The subsidies paid are reckoned to be costing the rates and taxes nearly £1 per week per house, or a total of nearly £7,000,000 a year for forty years. Nor could these houses often be let at rents within the reach of those who could normally afford only to rent a home. For this expensiveness, circumstances were not alone to blame. Insufficient foresight was shown both by central and by local authorities: plans might have been prepared,

land bought, and standardized materials mass-produced, instead of waiting till economy became almost impossible. And it might have been wise to limit the government subsidy to the loss incurred by the local authorities through inflation —which could have been determined by subsequent valuation —leaving them to bear the loss due to their own extravagance, instead of limiting their share of the loss to a penny rate.

Many of the 1919 principles were therefore reversed in the Neville Chamberlain act which was in force from 1923 until its author repealed it in 1929. The central contribution was fixed in amount and limited to twenty years, and the local authority left to bear the remainder of the loss. The maximum size of the subsidized house was brought down considerably below the pre-war smallholder standard which had been found ready to hand in 1919. And the private speculator who built houses for sale was encouraged to qualify for the subsidy. It was in fact he who got it in three-quarters of the cases. And local authorities were encouraged to help him by advancing money for the purchase of small dwellings. Thus another 450,000 was added to the number of grant-aided post-war dwellings. But they were still mainly for classes other than those that ordinarily paid rent.

In effect, if not in intention, these post-war housing acts were the first that were not limited to what was usually known as the housing of the working classes.

So a third attack on the problem was made by John Wheatley in 1924, at a moment when building activity had fallen to a very low level and the 1923 act was not yet having much appreciable effect. This time an attempt was made to fix a limit to the loss both of the central and of the local authorities, in the hope of making these houses cheap enough to let at low rents. And in order to stimulate the supply of labour and materials, something like a fifteen-year plan was embarked upon after consultation with the building industry. But the consequent expansion of building activity seems to have led for

the next few years to a renewed rise in costs, with the result that the subsidies tended to be swallowed up by the contractors' bills instead of helping in an appreciable reduction in rents.

In the long run, however, this renewed rise in building prices may be presumed to have stimulated an increasing supply both of materials and of labour. And the consequent fall in prices was enhanced by the depression. Since 1929 a steady rise in the provision of houses by unaided private enterprise has therefore become possible, and has already done as much as public subsidies to make good the post-war shortage. More than that: the net annual increase in housing accommodation since 1931 has been twice as high as the average for the previous forty years. The problem of the moment is whether the quantitative aspect of the housing question is being solved only in the main for those who are willing to assume the risks of owner occupiers, or whether this is leading also to such a movement of population from older to newer districts as to leave more accommodation available for those who only pay rent.

For the time being the central department has therefore felt able to leave the quantitative aspect of the question to look after itself, and return to the qualitative aspect with which it was mainly concerned before the war but to which it has since given second place.

Not of course that the two aspects are unconnected. For it has become the classical tradition among three generations of housing reformers that the solution of the qualitative problem is essentially quantitative. Build more and better houses, they say, at rents which anyone can afford, and the slum-dwellers—or at least their next generation—will make an effort to move out of their slums. And even if they do not move direct into the new houses, they will at least move into the dwellings vacated by those who do. Rehousing the worst of tenants in the newest of tenements on the self-same

site is therefore an expensive experiment doomed to failure in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

From this course we have now departed. The fall in building costs that has stimulated the private provision of new houses has also helped local authorities to replace old ones; and they have been encouraged by the central department to seize the opportunity of cheap money and concentrate on applying Mr Greenwood's 1930 slum clearance act under which a government grant was offered for each person rehoused and differential rents were legalized. In many towns, moreover, there is considerable justification for this policy. In London, for instance, several large classes of workers have arisen who have to be housed on the spot. Such, for example, are nightworkers like the porters at the food markets, the casually employed who have to be at hand to take a job at any time, and the contractor's men who can keep down the cost of travel only by living in some central district. Central re-housing on expensive and densely populated sites has therefore not been altogether avoidable. From its very nature such slum-clearance has done and can do practically nothing to lessen the overcrowding per acre. But it can lessen the overcrowding per room and give each family its own self-contained flat with sanitary conveniences widely enough interpreted to include bath and larder. In the process the children may get bigger playgrounds, though with less sun, and the men lose their backyards and with them the contact with the soil which those other flat-dwellers in Park Lane preserve by means of country houses and golf clubs. The Englishman remains unconvinced that the four or ten-storey block of working-class flats is not a noisy evil hardly to be tolerated unless for slum-clearance purposes.

One of the weaknesses of slum-clearance legislation for the last sixty years has been that we have had no fixed and certain criterion by which to decide whether a house is unfit or an area insanitary. And the subjectivity of these qualitative

WHO HAS BUILT HOW MANY HOUSES A YEAR?

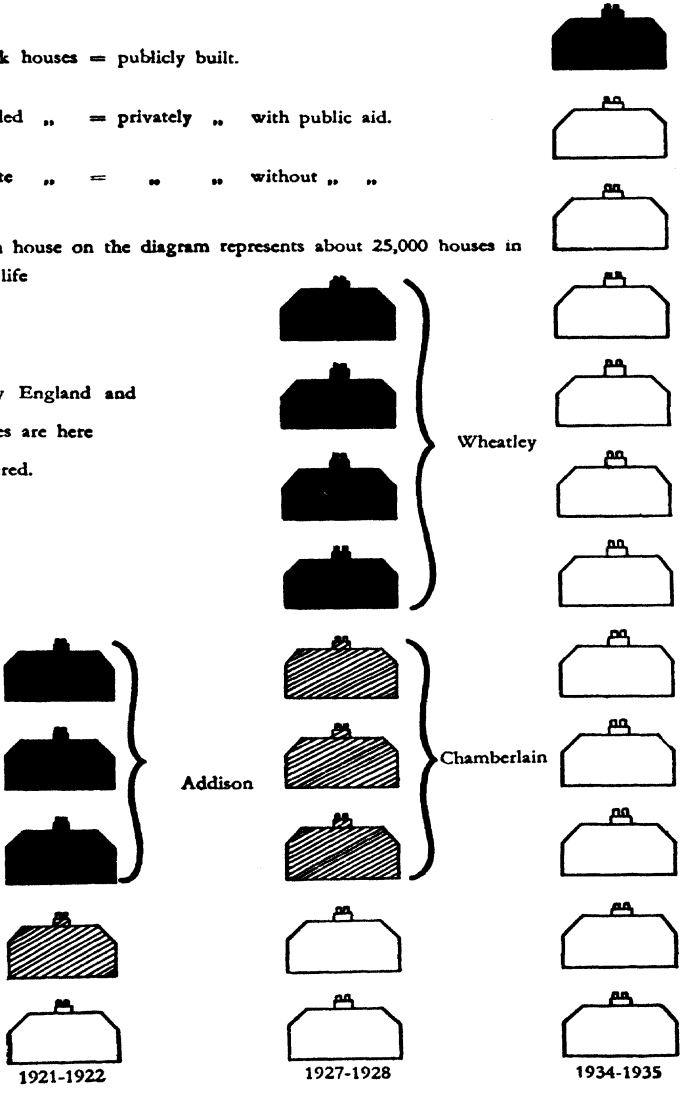
Black houses = publicly built.

Shaded „ = privately „ with public aid.

White „ = „ „ without „ „

Each house on the diagram represents about 25,000 houses in real life

Only England and Wales are here covered.



standards has led inevitably to friction between central and local authorities. But objective and quantitative standards have meanwhile been devised by social investigators, statisticians, and housing committees. Since the 1891 census, for instance, the registrar general, under Booth's influence, has calculated the density of population per room, reckoning the overcrowding in any area according to the proportion of the population who live more than two to a room. In the 1931 census, this was supplemented by the use of a definite overcrowding formula for each family. And in 1935 a similar formula was enacted by parliament. Under this formula, statutory overcrowding exists when two persons over ten years of age but of different sexes have to sleep in the same room though they do not live together as man and wife. It also exists when more than a prescribed number of persons sleep in a certain number of rooms or in rooms of less than a prescribed floor-space, an infant under one being omitted and a child under ten being counted as half a person. But penalties can hardly be imposed for tolerating such statutory overcrowding unless suitable alternative accommodation is available. The quantitative aspect of the problem is here recognized. It will be interesting to see how much overcrowding is revealed, and what action the local authorities will be compelled by public opinion to take in order to remedy the proved deficiency. When this is done, it would be interesting to see how much more overcrowding would be revealed by the enactment of a slightly more stringent standard, insisting, for instance, on a living-room distinct from bedrooms for all families of more than one or two persons.

VI. PLANNING

In every age new cities have been deliberately created or new quarters deliberately added to old. Whenever this has happened, an attempt has been made at the conscious realisation of the contemporary ideal of urban life. It was so at

Alexandria and at Rome. It was the same with the boroughs of tenth-century England and Germany. And in more recent times a similar impulse was seen at work at Cheltenham and Bath, Bloomsbury and Paddington, Kensington and Eastbourne, and the capital city of every prince in Christendom.

The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were in fact in England an age of aristocratic town-planning. Eschewing all vulgar rivalry, their houses all cried out for southern skies in the same standardized italianate style. Looking down on shady squares where genteel nurses aired noble infants, they framed a reproduction in miniature of the spaciousness and charm of English parkland. A palladian pump-room or a Gothic church supplemented their drawing-rooms as fashionable social centres during the season. Servants and horses and carriages were tucked away out of sight in the basement or under the garden or in the cobbled mews behind. Shopkeepers and shoemakers provided for the local needs of the great and their retinues. No manufactures were wanted there, nor anything to begrime the air or spoil the harmony of a patrician *rus in urbe*. The town was to become as healthy as the country, or, if not the whole town, then at least that part of it that was not intended for the all-the-year-round residence of the townsman.

The social conditions that made possible this great Georgian and early-Victorian example of orderly development have now ceased to exist. And, as old leases expire, ownership by crown or church or aristocracy is proving but a poor barrier to the destruction of a form of beauty that no longer pays.

But as our old town-planning disappears under our very eyes a new style is being created. It might almost be called democratic, in that it is aimed directly at the home comfort of the many rather than of the few. It stands in some direct relation to the commercial and industrial activities of the workaday world. It is in a sense more truly urban in that

it provides permanent residence and not a town or holiday house for those whose home is the country. And in consequence of the limited size and service-resources of its homes as well as of the permanence of its residence it is a much more complete civic community, with public halls and baths, libraries and schools and playing-fields.

How did this new ideal arise?

Robert Owen tried to give the workers in his cotton-spinning mills at New Lanark a material environment favourable to their entry into a new moral world. John Richard Green, the East-end historian of the English people, wrote as though he had in mind a yet richer Owen: 'The whole field of social experiment lies open to a great capitalist. The one thing required, for instance, to render the squalor and misery of our larger towns practically impossible would be the actual sight of a large town without squalor or misery; and yet if Liverpool were simply handed over to a great philanthropist with the income of half-a-dozen dukes of Westminster such a sight might easily be seen.'*

The same argument was pointed from another angle when one of the apostles of preventive medicine, Sir Benjamin Richardson, regaled the British Association in 1875 with his vision of the city of Hygeia. Ruskin took as practical an interest in model communities as in reconditioned houses. The Utopian tradition was renewed. And it mattered but little if an idealized picture of the country was sometimes held up to the admiration of the town; for the walls between town and country were long ago broken down in this island of peace; and the building of model villages was decidedly fashionable among the more paternal of mid-nineteenth-century landlords.

Whether it took practical or impracticable forms, this hygienic, aesthetic, and ethical revolt against the dirt and ugliness and inconvenience of the new and sprawling urban

* *The Poetry of Wealth*, *c.* 1869, reprinted in *Stray Studies*, i. 83 (1904).

agglomerations of Victorian England prepared the way for a vigorous outburst of experiment. The first essential to civic planning was concentration of land-ownership such as had facilitated the laying-out of Bloomsbury by the Dukes of Bedford, or of many a village by its squire. In industrial centres a similar position was often within the reach of a great industrialist; and as his reward he might hope for better health and greater contentment among his workpeople, to say nothing of a grandiose advertisement for his firm, and, for himself, the practice of a hobby no less fascinating than the training of horses or the cultivation of orchids. The 1890's saw the rise of model villages of which Bournville and Port Sunlight were only the most complete.

But what could be done by the benevolent and enlightened industrial dictator as a mere adjunct to his main work could also be made the principal end and object of a joint-stock company. And the result would be a somewhat more real community in that its inhabitants would be less dependent on a single industry and a single firm, even though they would have to live under the shadow of their workplace, deal for a while at least at a stores run by their ground landlord, submit to an urban authority that shared officials with its ground landlord, and run all the risks of ostracism that are inseparable from the life of so comparatively small a community. This was the plan which Ebenezer Howard published in his *Garden Cities of the Future* in 1898. And in 1903 the first garden city stepped out of the future at Letchworth, forty miles from King's Cross on the main line of the London and North Eastern Railway.

The idea that underlay it was that great centres such as London should throw off satellites, each of which should develop its own manufactures in an agricultural environment.

Another very different ideal, a mere well-planned dormitory on the outskirts of the urban agglomeration, such as Kensington and Paddington had also been two generations earlier,

was realized in Howard's Hampstead garden suburb at Golder's Green from 1907 on. And Howard's Welwyn Garden City, owing partly to its situation just halfway between King's Cross and Letchworth and partly to the financial complications of post-war building, has tended less successfully to partake of the nature of both ideals and thus demonstrate since 1920 the essential difference between the garden city and the garden suburb.

These private experiments almost immediately elicited the emulation of public authorities. One of the motives behind the public provision of new houses even before the war was the desire to improve the general appearance of new housing estates. And, in the gigantic expansion of municipal housebuilding that followed, the local authorities had unrivalled opportunities for experimenting in the laying-out of sites with a view to the harmonious appearance of the whole, the convenience of the inhabitants, and economy in road-making. In their lack of experience they made many blunders, enhanced sometimes by the natural unsuitability of the otherwise unwanted sites which alone were available. But by their mistakes they were initiated into the new craft of public town-planning.

A public authority had all the same opportunities as a private landowner when it was its own estates that were being developed. But it had other opportunities as well: it might plan for him as well as for itself, and thus indirectly control the housing of all classes besides directly providing that of a portion of the working class.

The new and statutory conception of town-planning was to be in one sense much vaster than the earlier building of model cities; for it was to extend beyond the sites owned and developed by the authority itself. Yet at the same time it was to be much more restricted; for it was limited by its very nature to the preparation and enforcement of a plan into which an unforeseeable number of owners would have

to fit, if indeed they should ever chance to come that way. And except in the case of historic cities such as Bath it therefore tended to avoid such restrictions as might frighten away those purchasers who attached less importance to architects' fees and architectural uniformity than to convenient spaciousness and pretentious individuality.

John Burns's housing act of 1909 was also the first to touch town-planning. It permitted urban districts and boroughs to zone land in process of development, subject to prior departmental consent and compensation for landowners. Ten years later Dr. Addison's housing and town-planning act of 1919 went two steps further: instead of leaving planning conditional on municipal enterprise and departmental consent, he made it compulsory in all urban districts and boroughs with a population of over 20,000; and he legalized regional planning by providing for neighbouring municipalities to combine in making a joint plan for their region, though they would remain individually responsible for carrying it into effect. These laws were consolidated in 1925 in the first act devoted exclusively to town-planning. On the principle that planning ought to increase the value of most property in the long run, provision was then made for betterment money to be collected from the many who gained in order to meet the cost of compensating the few whose property was injuriously affected. Model by-laws were widely adopted under this act. And use-zoning became common: new residential and industrial quarters were kept distinct, sites reserved for open spaces, and density per acre limited.

This proved inadequate, however, to canalise the subsequently renewed flood of private and speculative building. The motor-car that disfigured the country with the roadside bungalow, and the motor-bus that opened up the outer suburb, were no less effective in enabling the townsmen to re-discover the fast-vanishing beauty of the English countryside. So by the efforts of Sir Hilton Young and the voluntary

Council for the Preservation of Rural England a non-party town and country planning act was passed in 1932. This was to some extent a repetition and consolidation of earlier town-planning legislation, though it ceased to make town-planning compulsory on the score that the planning that was most urgently necessary had already been done. But it opened the door to local experiment in four important new directions, subject to many restrictions and above all to obtaining the prior consent of the ministry. It allowed rural districts to join in the making of plans. It allowed agricultural land to be included under certain circumstances even though it was not yet likely to be further developed. It allowed time-zoning, so that the development of some areas could be postponed until that of others was well-advanced. And it allowed urban authorities to plan for the re-development of land which had already been developed in the past.

Yet the very circumstances that were necessitating country as well as town-planning made this act inadequate during the lifetime of the very parliament that passed it. The motor-car had carried the process of development from urban to rural districts at a faster rate than ever before, till no one could say that any district however rural was static. Development, it became obvious, was a matter of degree on which opinions might differ sharply. No hard and fast line between land likely and land unlikely to be developed was any longer practicable. Yet the 1932 act retained this arbitrary and abstract conception: the minister was not to allow any local authority to carry out its resolutions to make a plan unless he was satisfied that the agricultural land included was contiguous to an area in process of development, or alternatively that it constituted a show-place, or that its inclusion was desired by the majority of its owners. What district council was likely to risk the disallowing of a plan through fear that the minister might hold that skin-deep development was no development, or that a good view was not an object of natural

interest? And on the other hand what minister would be prepared to over-ride the planning authorities on the ground that he had one conception of development and beauty spots and they another?

The problem, moreover, was one of transport as much as of housing. The ribbon development which the planning acts had failed to prevent was becoming a growing impediment to speed, safety, and the amenities of the roads. So Surrey and other county councils obtained local acts allowing them to protect the roads they had built. And by one stroke of the pen the Hore-Belisha restriction of ribbon development act of 1935 forbad all development within 220 feet of a classified road unless permission could be obtained from the county council; and at the same time the county council was empowered compulsorily to purchase land within 220 yards of the middle of the road in case it should wish to pursue a policy not merely of negative restriction but of positive improvement.

Thus in a quarter of a century of law-making, planning has been extended from urban to rural districts and from a housing to a transport problem. And everything now points towards its going a step further and attempting to exercise a determining influence upon the location of industry.

This it has to some extent already done by the discovery that a trading-estate such as was built and equipped by the garden-city founders in peace-time, or by the government in war-time for munition-making, attracted the light industries of to-day, just as a housing estate attracted residents. But what the private paternalists thought of together, public authorities at first thought of separately. While Becontree developed east of London with houses and no factories, Slough developed to the west with factories and no houses. And the consideration that it is nearly always the public authorities nowadays that are expected to provide transport facilities and houses for letting and the whole gamut of social

services, compels them to give increasing attention to the location of the industries they serve, and correlate their public and social services by more comprehensive planning.

What happens will probably depend on whether large scale or small scale planning preponderates.

National or regional planning might mitigate the extension of urban agglomerations by encouraging the development of new industrial towns. Modern methods of road transport and power-transmission make this easier than at any previous time. The result would be less time spent on travelling to work or to the country. And an increase in health and leisure might counter-balance a decrease in liberty.

Town-planning, on the other hand, on the comparatively small local scale on which we have hitherto known it, also finds new opportunities opening up. For in the trading estate it has now found a means to mitigate any migration of industry that threatens to leave high and dry its waterworks and sewers, schools and hospitals. The maintenance of those social services on which vast capital outlay has been incurred has thus developed into an overhead cost that has to be defrayed as economically as possible : health and convenience may well tend to be subordinated to this fiscal factor just as in the past they have been submitted to many another social consideration of historic origin.

CHAPTER V

NATURAL CONTINGENCIES

I. SICKNESS AND DISABLEMENT

WHEN a bread-winner calls in the doctor, his expenses go up at the very time that his income goes down.

Sickness has thus been a twofold problem ever since medical treatment became available for people with small incomes and limited resources.

The older part of the problem was to maintain some sort of a cash income in time of illness.

The simplest solution of all has been for an employer to continue to pay wages while the wage-earner was sick, or provide him with a pension if he had to be invalided out. This sort of arrangement has become increasingly common when the employer is the state, a local authority, or a statutory undertaking such as a railway company. And even if the pay has been moderate at the best of times, it has been constant at the worst.

But outside public or quasi-public employment, such continuance of pay during incapacity has never been so common, and is especially difficult to arrange in trades where a man has no regular employer or where payment is proportioned to the amount of work done.

So the next best course has been to club together in a friendly society. When tradesmen and workmen first did this seems uncertain: it was probably in the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century friendly societies abounded in the towns and villages of all Great Britain. And in the nineteenth century many local clubs blossomed forth into nation-wide federations with thousands of local lodges.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century they were known to have a million members and probably had more. And a hundred years later they counted some five million members.

If men did not equalize out their incomes so as to make good times pay for bad times in some such way as this, the only remaining way was to run into debt, the result of which was that the shopkeeper and the landlord would make up for their losses by charging high prices and high rents.

But this was only one side of the problem. It remained for the doctor to be paid. And he wanted pay for his services not only to the breadwinner but also to his dependants. If he depended on his richer patients for the bulk of his income, he at least wanted some pay, even if his services were to some extent charitable.

One or two independent family doctors often tried to recover part at least of their small fees by running a medical club of their own, through which families could contribute a few pence a week towards the cost of medical attention. Or on a larger scale a provident dispensary would make similar arrangements in connection with a whole panel of doctors, among whom its members would be able to choose the one on whose books they preferred to be. This movement was encouraged by Dr. Kay and the central poor-law commissioners in the 1830's; at Northampton at the beginning of this century a quarter of the population belonged to provident dispensaries; and some counties were beginning to imitate the towns. Some boroughs dispensed with the provident dispensary and organized a medical service by which families with small incomes could assure the payment of their medical adviser by making a small weekly contribution. And in the later nineteenth century, members of friendly societies in some districts began to hire a dispensary and a cheap doctor for such members and their families as did not prefer to choose their own medical attendant; but the medical profession

disliked this ill-remunerated club practice and the undignified Dutch auction to which this kind of club doctor owed his appointment.

For those who made no provision for their own sickness by any means such as this, there remained various kinds of free doctor. There was the district medical officer, usually also engaged in private practice for part of his time, who contracted with the guardians to supply medicines and service for the relief of the sick poor. In London and a few other centres the guardians were allowed to provide him with a dispensary. Some small attempt was sometimes made to deter applicants by granting medical relief on loan—the very last form of relief that ought to have been submitted to this condition. There was the charitable dispensary which gave you a tract as well as a bottle of medicine and tried to save your soul while it damned your body to perdition. And there was in some towns the endowed voluntary hospital which might think you an interesting case, especially for the young and inexperienced to practise on.

Wherever out-patient departments were as numerous as in London, there was comparatively little inducement to join a provident dispensary. And by the end of the nineteenth century the hospitals were driven in self-protection to appoint almoners to make those pay who could afford to, and to make special arrangements on behalf of contributors to Hospital Sunday funds in the churches and Hospital Saturday funds in places of work.

Here then was a bewildering wealth of experiment. But no voluntary insurance organization had yet gone more than part of the way towards a solution of the problems. The friendly societies were seldom subscribed to except by the bread-winner; they seldom accepted elderly or female members; and they usually left their members to pay the doctor. The provident dispensary on the other hand paid the doctor

and provided for all the members of the family; but it provided no cash income if the bread-winner was ill.

The majority of the poor-law commission proposed in 1908 that local authorities should encourage provident dispensaries, allow dispensary members to enter public hospitals without payment, and pay the subscriptions of old people and widows with dependent children so that they should not be obliged to resort to the district medical officer.

The socialist minority on the other hand held that the working-classes could not be trusted to choose their own doctors; for they would prefer medicine-men. That should be done for them by the sanitary authority's medical officer of health, just as he already supervised the treatment of infectious diseases. They forgot that the poor person's free choice of a doctor is the surest guarantee of his being treated with humane consideration.

The liberal government adopted neither the provident dispensary nor the municipal medical officer suggestion. Instead, they evolved a scheme modelled on the friendly society. In other words, they decided that it was not enough to improve the opportunities for obtaining medical assistance: if advantage was to be taken of these opportunities and if illness was not to impoverish a family so quickly as in the past, then that family must be assured of a small minimum income even when its head was ill.

Under the national insurance act of 1911, insurance was made compulsory for the overwhelming majority of persons who worked under a contract of service. Practically the only excepted employments were those in which employees continued to draw their salaries when they were ill and those in which non-manual workers were paid more than £250 a year. And certain categories of these were allowed to contract-in as voluntary contributors, especially if they had previously been in insurable employment. On the other hand, employees with a small unearned income of £26 a year were allowed

to claim exemption if they desired to contract-out. More important was the omission of everybody who was not employed by somebody else. Thus the number of persons entitled to benefit has grown with the growth of the employed population, from some twelve million at the inception of the scheme to some eighteen million twenty years later.

The employer was to join with the employee in contributing the premium, while the treasury made an annual grant which was reduced during the 1920's so as to cover little more than the cost of administration. It seems hardly fair to regard the employer's contribution as a tax on employment: it was much more in the nature of a levelling-up process, which compelled all employers to make much the same sort of provision as many of the most considerate had already made.

The weekly contributions were to be credited to approved societies in the case of all contributors who could secure admission to one, and no claimant was to be refused admission on the ground only of age or sex. The archetype of these were the friendly societies. When an ordinary industrial insurance company thought it a good advertisement to act as an approved society, and good business to get a treasury grant towards its overhead expenses, it had to imitate the friendly society in making no profits in this department of its business, although the self-government of so artificial a society was bound to remain a legal fiction. And when a trade union acted likewise, it too had to keep its state section distinct from its general funds.

The approved societies were obliged to pay cash benefits to members who had been insured for a certain time. For the first twenty-six weeks of sickness, there was to be a standard rate of sickness benefit—now 15s. for a man, 12s. for an unmarried woman, and 10s. for a married woman—the rate being lower than for unemployment benefit, and no allowance being added for dependants. After twenty-six weeks, half this rate was to be paid as disablement benefit.

And on the confinement of a contributor's wife or a woman contributor, maternity benefit, now £2, was to be available. On ceasing to be insurably employed, contributors have been entitled to a free period during which they remain in benefit; but the further extension of this period on behalf of contributors genuinely unable to obtain employment was considerably curtailed when the unemployed became numerous in 1932.

Approved societies' accounts were to be periodically audited by treasury valuers. And if it was found that a surplus remained after paying these compulsory cash benefits, part of this was to be used for a reserve fund, but the remainder was to be distributed as additional benefits, both in cash and in treatment, the latter ranging over the whole field of dental and ophthalmic treatment, dentures and spectacles and convalescent homes, all of which were of preventive as well as curative value. The amount thus available has varied immensely from one society to another according to the professional composition or geographical distribution of its membership: and, in the absence of a national pool, the vagaries of fate and fortune have been accentuated instead of being insured against. Of the 15,500,000 persons insured in 1923, 15,000,000 were in approved societies showing a surplus, and only 250,000 in those that showed a deficit. The remaining quarter of a million were outside the approved societies, usually because they could not obtain admission to one.

In these ways, cash and additional benefits were assured to all who were compulsorily insured. One of the shortcomings of the friendly society was preserved: it was chiefly the bread-winner who was directly affected. In one direction the new system was more restricted than the friendly society: it excluded many small men who were their own masters. But in other directions it went wider: it included women and elderly men. And above all, it compelled the unthrifty to do what the thrifty had always done of their own free will,

although many an approved society has signally failed to strike the imagination or arouse the loyalty or win the intelligent appreciation of its unwilling members; for in half the cases the insurance agent has been on the doorstep before the friendly society or the trade union.

The utilisation of friendly society experience in providing cash benefits was, however, only one half of the scheme. It was no less important to organize medical benefit; and it was this great advance on friendly society practice that was made financially possible by the entry into insurance of other parties besides the worker. Medical attendance and treatment, medicines and certain surgical appliances, were made available gratuitously at once to all contributors: they would not have to wait until they had paid 104 contributions as for the full cash benefits, or 26 for any cash benefits at all.

But by whom should each local panel of doctors and chemists be drawn up? Professional loathing for all that smacked of underpaid club practice made Dr. Addison suggest that they should not be empanelled and paid directly by the approved societies. So local insurance committees were set up in every county and county borough to administer these professional services, leaving it to the approved societies to deal directly only with the insured contributor's cash benefit. Although these committees were dominated by the approved societies, seats were also reserved for medical practitioners and representatives of the local and central authorities. And arrangements were generally made by which contributors whose family doctors were not on the panel might recover half of the agreed fees which they charged.

Besides organizing this medical benefit, the local insurance committee had at first to organize what was somewhat inappropriately called sanatorium benefit. It would have been unfair to the panel practitioner to expect him to give his time for months on end to a disease of such long duration as tuberculosis. Yet it was often a curable disease, and many

local authorities were beginning to evolve special machinery for bringing modern science to bear on its diagnosis and cure. So the insurance committees were empowered to offer insurance contributors who developed tuberculosis the alternative of gratuitous specialist treatment, a facility which many localities have since extended to all their inhabitants. For this purpose they might make arrangements with such sanatoria or dispensaries as came into existence, or such private practitioners as were approved as specialists by the central authority. And if their funds allowed, they might contribute to the maintenance of sanatoria. In this way it was hoped that wage-earners might be induced to undergo treatment while there was still some hope of comparatively speedy cure.

It is on this medical-benefit side that there is most room at present for a further advance, and this in two directions. The constant development of scientific specialization is making it more and more useful for a patient and his general medical adviser to have resort to specialist advice such as insured persons can seldom afford to-day except through the unpaid service of private practitioners at voluntary hospitals. At the same time, the continued existence of provident dispensaries, the spread of contributory local health services, and the building of an attractive but expensive club-like health-centre at Peckham, show how much the need is felt of providing adequate medical supervision for the dependants of insured contributors: for health is often a family and not an individual matter.

A modest advance in both specialist and family treatment has been made by a new form of voluntary insurance, the Hospital Savings Association. Though started only in 1923, it has already met a need felt by over a million contributors with an income of less than £6 a week. By paying 3d. a week, a low-paid worker has become able to ensure hospital or out-patient treatment for himself and his dependants, without the bother of obtaining subscribers' letters or submitting to

an almoner's inquiry into his means. The hospitals that have had enough social sense to join in this scheme have provided themselves with an income of two-thirds of a million a year without the trouble of collecting it. And by organizing groups of contributors in the same place of work, costs of administration have been cut to a very low level and a most effective check on fraud has been devised.

When the time is ripe, voluntary progress of this magnitude will perhaps serve as a useful basis for a compulsory measure, so that all may enjoy the facilities which are at present available only to those who are able to think and pay for themselves.

Is it possible that some such expansion of medical benefit may be made possible by the gradual accumulation of surpluses by the approved societies until they are among the richest foundations in the land? Or, more probably, will a higher state contribution be needed? Or, just as probably, will the further development of specialist treatment be left to the local authorities? Or must we wait for further public action until there is less doubt about the part the hospital is to occupy in the medical treatment of the future?

II. OLD AGE

Various methods have long been used in this country for helping the aged to make both ends meet when they can no longer earn enough to keep themselves.

Pensions from employers have long been common. In rural districts, permission has sometimes been given to live on in a low-rented tied cottage, or a small cottage has been let rent free. And where the government was the employer, official superannuation funds were established to which the servant of the crown was compelled to contribute, the oldest dating back to the economical reform of the 1780's.

Poor-relief was also plentiful. Out-relief was a way by which farmers could pension their old labourers and share

the cost with the rest of the parish. Even if the recipient lived with children in regular work, few or no questions were asked about the family income. There was no need to prove destitution. And they were available for odd jobs in the fine season. The country workhouse tended to become a not unpleasant almshouse where aged widowers with no one to look after them could find a refuge during the bad seasons. And the infirmary harboured more of the bedridden aged than of the sick.

There was not the slightest difference between the old and the new poor-laws in their treatment of the aged, until the 1870's. Goschen and the Local Government Board inspectors then made some attempt to persuade guardians that the best way of stimulating old folks, their families, and their employers to make a joint effort for their own old age with the help of their families was to refuse them relief in their homes. In the London unions this was attempted. And one of the chief aims of the London Charity Organization Society was to investigate hard but deserving cases, persuade all those on whom they had some moral claim to face up to their responsibilities, and then make good the deficiency from voluntary charity.

Although so much provision was made for old age, it was nearly always, however, on account of impotence, and not on account of the mere number of birthdays. Aged and infirm were all but synonymous. It seems indeed to have been only in the urbanized, specialized, and commercialized Britain of the last two generations that old age as such, even when accompanied by perfect physical fitness and mental alertness, has become an obstacle to continued employment, and, still more, to re-employment by another firm after losing an old post.

It was at least only in the 1890's that British people became acutely conscious of an old-age problem.

Two important solutions then lay ready to hand.

The one was the provision of pensions by insurance. This solution seems to have been first advocated in recent times by Canon W. L. Blackley in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* of November 1878. What he had in mind was the possibility of paying a lump sum when young, and thus ensuring an annuity with increasing age. Two years later this idea was taken up and developed by a national provident league, in whose hands it gradually took on the now familiar features of a state-aided contributory scheme, though it was still intended to be voluntary. And in this form old age pensions received support in 1891 from a voluntary parliamentary committee of which Joseph Chamberlain was a member.

Another totally different scheme was propounded by Charles Booth in 1891. He advocated a non-contributory state-provided pension available to every one without distinction at sixty-five years of age. He backed up this proposal with statistics suggesting that over half a million persons of that age were in receipt of poor-relief, out of a population of only one and a quarter million. In other words, two old persons out of every five were already in receipt of locally granted pensions, a fact which proved the prevalence of the pension habit, even though it afforded no reliable measure of the extent of old-age destitution. And the great strength of Charles Booth's scheme was precisely that if old-age pensions were a national charge their potential recipients would no longer be at the mercy of such varying conditions as the different destitution authorities might think fit or unfit to impose.

The liberal government appointed a royal commission in 1893 with both Chamberlain and Booth as members and Lord Aberdare as chairman, to consider 'whether any alterations in the systems of poor-law relief are desirable in the case of persons whose destitution is occasioned by incapacity for work resulting from old age; or whether assistance could otherwise be afforded in these cases.' Its somewhat inconclusive report proposed differential treatment of the respectable aged poor,

but not by adopting any of the pension schemes so far suggested.

The idea that it was possible to single out a category of deserving old sheep and treat them better than the undeserving goats dominated all discussions on public provision for old age throughout the 1890's. Public support was to be a prize for being good. It was to be meted out not according to needs but according to merit. But the only objective test of moral character, and that by no means a reliable one, was independence of poor relief throughout a long term of years.

In 1899 seven bills on the aged deserving poor were referred to a select committee. Under Chaplin's chairmanship this formulated some general principles which it recommended as suitable for embodying in a future measure. One was the non-receipt of poor-relief, other than medical, during the last twenty years. And the other was evidence that the applicant had endeavoured to make provision for himself and his dependants. A departmental committee was next appointed to estimate the cost of applying these principles. But they foretold 'incalculable . . . results, . . . which would all tend either to bring down to the pensionable level those who are now above it, or to raise up to it those who are now below it, and would thus swell the pensionable list from above as well as from below.'

The immediate result was a circular to all boards of guardians in which Chaplin as president of the Local Government Board reversed the Goschen policy in 1900, confessing that he saw no objection to out-relief, provided only that it was what he called 'more adequate.' This in its turn had the result that guardians went one better than the circular and improved their indoor accommodation for the aged. And by 1906 nearly one-half of the persons in receipt of poor-relief were sixty years of age or more.

In 1903 the House of Commons received a bill to provide pensions for the aged deserving poor through the existing

machinery of the poor-law. This was again referred to a select committee which reported on the practicability of old-age pensions. And again a departmental committee investigated the cost, this time under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Hamilton, reporting that if every one over sixty-five was given a pension of five shillings a week, the cost would be £26,000,000 a year, but that less than half would be likely to fulfil the proposed conditions.

After the return of the liberals to power, Asquith as chancellor of the exchequer took advantage of a budget surplus in 1908 to put an end to the interminable discussion, without so much as waiting for the report of the royal commission then sitting on the poor-laws.

Following Booth's scheme, he established a non-contributory pension, though this meant that the treasury scheme did not go so far as it might have gone had the beneficiaries also contributed to the fund.

The pension was one of 5s. a week at first. It was raised to 10s. in 1919 on account of war-time inflation. And it has stayed at the higher figure with the reduced cost of living.

It differed from most previous schemes in that it began modestly at seventy, the age which the Hebrew psalmist fixed for death, instead of sixty-five or sixty, the age which the modern employer fixes as the limit of employability.

Largely for this reason, its disqualification of paupers was to last only long enough to give the pension a good reputation, and was then to continue in force only where poor-relief was given inside the workhouse. The result was that before long it could be supplemented by out-relief, or could be interchangeable with poor-relief according to the state of the applicant's income from one year to the next. This did not prevent its leading almost immediately to a great reduction in the number of old people who had to apply for poor-relief; and to-day only one old-age pensioner in ten has to be afforded domiciliary assistance.

It was not unconditional, but was graded according to income. The scale has been several times changed, and at present excludes the applicant who already has an income of £1 a week calculated according to a statutory formula. This formula, however, has been so framed as to encourage thrift, while offering no encouragement to remaining at work.

Only British nationals resident in this country were eligible.

Decisions as to eligibility were to be made by local committees, subject to the right of appeal to the minister. This may have facilitated the collection of information as to whether the claimant's income was really low enough for him to satisfy these financial conditions. But it seems also to have tempted some local committees or their agents solemnly to subject claimants to a silly, irrelevant, and annoying moral catechism —a belated remnant of the deserving-poor myth to which Asquith gave such short shrift.

So we got our non-contributory national old-age pensions.

In 1908 we had had no experience of state-aided insurance, and nearly all who toyed with the idea thought only of the voluntary insurance by which a person was thought to prove his deservingness.

But after 1911 the success of compulsory health insurance suggested a way in which the treasury might be generous at not too great a cost to itself. The government might lay down lines of organization and use its powers of compulsion; but it would only have to foot a tiny part of the bill, and the collecting would be combined with that for health insurance.

This expedient was adopted and adapted by Mr Winston Churchill as chancellor of the exchequer in 1925 immediately after the conservative return to office.

The age-limit could now be brought down to sixty-five.

As with full sickness and disablement benefits, the essential condition to be fulfilled was the payment of one hundred and four contributions since the last entry into insurance; and a fair number of these had to have been paid during the last

few years. Special arrangements have been made by which those who have fallen out of insurable employment may retain their pension rights. An insured woman could keep her pension rights if her husband became a contributor at the time of their marriage.

On reaching the age of seventy, the contributory old-age pensioner would retain his right to a pension at the same flat rate of 10s. a week, regardless of his income, his nationality, or his length of residence in this country.

The chief excepted employments, other than non-manual posts bringing in more than £250 a year, were those like the government services or public undertakings or the teaching profession in which the government and parliament have encouraged the organization of special statutory schemes, so that it would be unfair as well as unnecessary to ask the same person to contribute twice over. The chief difference between these and the national scheme is that only two parties have participated: the state has not contributed unless it is itself the employer. It has therefore been possible to make both contributions and benefit proportionate to income, without the state thereby assuming direct responsibility for the income-level of workers outside its own employment.

Individuals in excepted employments were free to contract-in as voluntary contributors if they had formerly been in insurable employment. And individual employees with a private income of £26 a year were similarly allowed to obtain exemption by contracting-out as under the other insurance acts.

The pension was still, however, only enough to supplement other sources of income, such as personal savings, a pension from an old employer, small earnings, accommodation in the home of another member of the family, or public domiciliary relief.

It could not be said of the contributory as of the non-contributory pension that it discouraged potential applicants from making more than a modest personal effort to provide

for their old age. Nor on the other hand could either form of pension be regarded as an imperative inducement to retire from work if satisfactory employment was still available, except in so far as the sixty-five-year-old worker's age was brought to his employer's notice by the use of a card of a different colour.

Contributory old-age pensions have proved a natural complement to health insurance: for in these days of increasing longevity the people that are never ill feel that they get back on the roundabout of old age what they lose on the swing of good health.

And by helping those that help themselves, without subjecting them to any inquisition, the contributory pension has become attractive in the lower middle-class world of the small masterless man and the black-coated employee who has learnt to keep up appearances: he looks for the fulfilment of the election promise of 1935. It will be interesting to see to what extent the non-contributory state pension at seventy will then remain necessary.

Thus we have begun tentatively to meet the social liability of increasing length of life. The May Economy Committee of 1931 accepted the government actuary's estimate that for every ten persons of working age there would be three old people in 1961, against only two in 1931. As we escape from our heritage of infantile mortality and tuberculosis, we shall have more citizens over sixty-five then under fifteen. Hence an increasing need for timely planning, if old age is not to become an unbearable financial burden to particular individuals or families. When the aged are guaranteed a modest minimum income, will it be possible to leave them to provide adequate pastime occupations for themselves? And in our re-housing and re-planning schemes, shall we sufficiently overcome our juvenile ruthlessness to provide them with the necessary opportunities to keep up the old associations without which life is apt to lose its meaning?

III. PREMATURE DEATH

The social consequences of premature death were less grave when a considerable proportion of our working population were their own masters; for it was often possible for an energetic widow to keep her husband's little business going until their children were old enough to take it over. But as wage-earners have gradually grown into a larger and larger proportion of the population, the social ravages of premature death have demanded more and more attention.

When nineteenth-century English folk provided against widowhood and orphanhood it was along much the same lines as those followed in providing for old age.

Apart from anything the family might do, voluntary aid might come from an old employer or charitable educational endowment in which either he or some friend might have some influence. Compulsory contributory schemes were rarer than for superannuation, and seldom existed outside the police forces. There was also a widespread habit of life insurance. But in the wage-earning classes it usually meant little more than a penny-a-week burial policy. Its purpose was a rattling good funeral for the dear departed, rather than any lasting provision for the survivors.

Poor-relief was widely distributed among these classes. In 1907–08 the royal commission found that women paupers were half as numerous again as men, and that more than three quarters of them were relieved in their own homes, the obvious presumption being that it was the widows that swelled the proportions. Of every five children on poor-relief, one was an orphan, usually in an institution, and two others were widows' dependants, usually at home. The out-relief consisted usually of quite inadequate doles, on the assumption that supplementary sources of income could seldom be checked. They were usually distributed unconditionally without adequate inquiry or continuous supervision.

And as likely as not they represented a public subsidy to uneducative home conditions if not to sweated labour.

Against these unconditional and inadequate yet discretionary doles, Goschen revolted. But his 1871 circular was not exactly helpful. He suggested that the able-bodied widow with only one dependent child should be left to support it by her labour, while additional children whom she could not afford to support should be taken into a poor-law institution.

Neither then nor afterwards did this highly personal view cease to arouse criticism on the ground that it was normally better for the children that they should stay together at home and that they should be the first charge on their mother's care and energy.

So boards of guardians continued mechanically to salve their consciences.

Meanwhile the system of compulsory national insurance was evolved.

At first this was applied to just those risks which men had been most inclined voluntarily to insure against. Sickness and unemployment affected their own pockets. But widowhood and orphanhood affected them less directly. And so it was only after its experience of state-organized provision against the other risks of life that the government turned to this one.

The habit of allowing pensions to widows and orphans was one moreover to which the government had grown accustomed during and after the war of 1914, when for the first time it ceased to leave them to private charity and the poor-law.

In 1925 Mr Churchill's contributory pensions scheme passed into law. Since then, widows of men in health insurance have been entitled to receive a pension for themselves of 10s. a week for life, and an additional allowance for each child. And an allowance of 7s. 6d. a week has been available on behalf of the complete orphan, the last of whose parents was either in insurance or drawing a widow's pension at time of death.

The only important exception is the rule that cheats the bright young thing of the reward she very nearly deserves when she marries an insured man of sixty or seventy in the hope of 10s. a week for life.

And the only important condition is—as with contributory old-age pensions—that the husband should have paid at least one hundred and four premiums, of which a fair number should have been paid during the last few years.

As with all other compulsory insurance schemes, the state makes a considerable contribution. The annual parliamentary vote for the combined old age and widows pension fund is at present increasing by £1,000,000 a year, and now amounts to two-sevenths of the total annual payments into the fund.

But here, as with the contributory old-age pension, the pension has not been raised high enough to discourage from work or from saving. It has merely established a definite legal claim, independent of the discretion of local destitution authorities. And although when taken alone it is not enough to live on, when taken in conjunction with other sourses of income it has often made all the difference between penury and sufficiency.

IV. BLINDNESS

There are other natural risks besides ill health, old age, and premature death. Of these many impediments to the earning of a normal living, one has been singled out for special consideration. While whole hosts of other mental and physical defects have been passed by, blindness has been accorded special provision.

This may have been because the blind beggar thrust himself more appealingly than others upon the public attention. It may have been because the blind pauper was more obviously than most a pauper through no fault of his own. It may have been because educated persons were better aware of the

seriousness of this handicap than of others, just because they themselves felt that inability to read must be the greatest of afflictions. Or it may even have been partly at least under the influence of the early Christian legends of the healing of the blind amid the sands of Palestine.

In the early nineteenth century it became clear that the problem of preventing blind mendicancy was a double one.

A member of the young, intelligent, and able-bodied minority might be trained to do useful and remunerative skilled work, as much like an ordinary person as possible, instead of being a burden to himself and a charge on the community, with nothing to occupy his time or develop his abilities.

The majority consisted of those that could not reasonably be expected to earn more than the merest fraction of their keep, especially as most of them went blind too late in life to learn a new trade. If they were still active, the most that could be hoped was that they might keep themselves contentedly occupied about their little homes.

For these two classes, two different kinds of provision were made by Victorian benevolence.

For the employable, training-schools and workshops were organized. And it was hoped that when once voluntary philanthropy had met the initial capital outlay, the blind employees would make the enterprise pay its way like any other.

For the unemployable and indigent majority, doles were provided by local charities, especially for such as kept clear of begging and poor-relief, while religious consolation was organized by visiting-societies which availed themselves of the ministration of the few suitable blind persons that were available.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the persistence of blind mendicancy and pauperism showed the inadequacy of

these voluntary experiments, useful though they might prove as starting-points for public action.

Not all the employable blind could travel to a workshop or find work in one, even if they had received the necessary training. So the royal commission of 1885–89 recommended their employment as home workers and the organization on their behalf of central buying and selling agencies, a system which had been tried in the villages of Saxony. Those, moreover, who did find employment in town workshops found their piece-rates depressed through competition both with sighted craftsmen and, increasingly, with factory machinery which they could not safely manipulate. Discontent at their own inadequate earnings was sharpened by comparison with those of their sighted foremen, and exploded in 1893 in the establishment of a combative national league of the blind, which aimed socialistically at municipal ownership of blind-workshops, a national subsidy, and a minimum wage.

The next twenty years were spent on getting the employing institutions and their blind employees to agree on the terms of a private member's bill able to command sufficient general support to assure it a first reading. An inter-departmental committee which was then appointed in 1914 reported in 1917 that the increasing disability under which blind craftsmen laboured would justify the augmentation of their inadequate earnings by an allowance from public funds. Under departmental regulations issued by Dr. Addison in 1919, an exchequer grant was made available to a voluntary association in each county on behalf of blind workshop employees and blind homeworkers—including pianoforte-tuners—whose goods and services were thus provided with an organized market for practically the first time.

The unemployable blind were also affected by these 1919 regulations: for the voluntary county associations received a grant for each blind person they succeeded in registering and for each home teacher they employed. Registration has

taught us the proportions of the problem: we know now that the unemployable blind are at least four times as numerous as the employable. And insistence on the home teacher's possession of a recognised professional diploma helped to transform her from a comforter in affliction to a general welfare visitor and a teacher of pastime occupations.

Such few of the unemployable blind as happened previously to have been in insurable employment were by now becoming entitled to disablement benefit. But this touched only the fringe of their financial problem. The blind persons act was therefore passed in 1920.

This made the state old-age pension available to the blind at fifty instead of seventy, subject to the same income-limit as with the ordinary non-contributory pension. Nor was this all. For counties and county boroughs were compelled to submit schemes for making additional provision for the welfare of the blind. They might, for instance, bring up the blind person's pension to some agreed figure by granting domiciliary assistance out of the rates, through a blind persons' welfare committee, thus removing all justification for blind mendicancy and pauperism. They might make grants to local voluntary organizations. And they might arrange for the homes of the blind to be visited by the county registration association's home teacher or by a health visitor of their own.

Under the local government act of 1929 the government has ceased to pay the blind welfare grant direct to local voluntary agencies. It has been included in the block grant to local authorities, whose contributions to voluntary agencies have been fixed in agreement with the minister. Many have seized this opportunity to take over the voluntary association's work of registration and visitation. An increasing number have made declarations transforming the public assistance committee's domiciliary relief of blind persons into domiciliary assistance by a blind persons' welfare committee, although

there has been astonishing discrepancy in the various scales to which the minister has agreed. Some have elected to relieve their public assistance committee of the distribution of relief for blind persons' dependants. And the home teacher is thus being converted into a cheap substitute for the relieving officer.

Thus a system of relief is being created which is as much outside the poor-law as is the old-age pension or any of the social insurances. It is indeed even more outside the poor-law; it is so far removed from it that in this field no ground is now left for a public assistance committee to supplement a blind person's income.

It is therefore only by an unjustifiable anachronism that some local authorities try to divest themselves of their responsibility for making adequate provision for the blind by appealing through the local voluntary association for the cast-off clothing of the charitable. A begging blind-association is as out-of-date as a blind beggar.

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC CONTINGENCIES

UNEMPLOYMENT

THE word *unemployment* has not been traced back more than seventy years, and it does not seem to have entered into popular use before about 1888.

The analysis of the problem is equally new. It was about that same date that the word *unemployable* came into use. It was in 1893 that trade unions began to supply unemployment percentages for the *Board of Trade Gazette*. And, leaving on one side the unemployables, it was not till the publication of Sir William Beveridge's book in 1908 that unemployment was widely recognized more as a *problem of industry* than of personal defect.

The unemployment of which we have become increasingly conscious during the last half century is essentially an aspect of fluctuations in the demand for labour. Such fluctuations are no doubt as old as trade and industry. There is much evidence of their prevalence a hundred years ago.* Professor W. R. Scott has written a big book on those of the seventeenth century.† They constituted the one branch of the unemployment problem with which the Elizabethan poor-law attempted to deal by the provision of work. And the early Christian parable of the labourer in the vineyard was based on the existence of a reserve of casual labour.

But though a certain unevenness in the demand for labour was far from unknown, there is no evidence that it assumed

* *Roy. com. Poor Law*, Minority Report, 1909, p. 437 n.

† *Joint-stock Companies to* 1720.

anything like modern proportions until the late nineteenth century. And in so far as it did exist it was previously masked by the circumstance that the two chief English industries were agriculture and cloth-making: in the one the tie that bound the labourer to his employer was a highly stable personal relationship; and in the other the work was largely domestic, so that men and women were at home both when there was work to be done and when there was none, instead of having the door of their workplaces shut on them.

The increase in the numbers affected by fluctuations in the demand for their labour has naturally led to an attempt 'to analyse and break up into their elements the congeries of industrial and social problems which are lumped together in common language as "the problem of the unemployed."' *

We learned in particular to distinguish several main types of recurrent unemployment, which in various degrees merit also the name of chronic under-employment.

There was first the casual employment that had become common wherever the demand for manual labour varied from day to day or from hour to hour, as happened especially in the great docks whose developments kept pace with the expansion of Britain's overseas trade in the nineteenth century.

Then there was the seasonal employment of the seaside resorts and jam factories, to say nothing of those smaller variations that distinguished one season of the year from another in most industries and helped to swell the total of winter distress.

And there was thirdly the cyclical alternation of good trade and bad, elation and depression, every ten years or so, to which workers in such industries as iron and steel and engineering were especially exposed.

Besides this temporary and recurrent unemployment, there had also arisen the grimmer problem of permanent and chronic

* H. Ll. Smith's board of trade report on agencies for dealing with the unemployed, 1893.

unemployment, when fashions had changed or a trade had passed its prime or a process had had its day, and the workers who had spent in it a good part of their lives were unable to find any one who would risk employing them in a new trade or process to which they might well prove not young enough to adapt themselves.

Not of course that these various forms of unemployment were mutually exclusive. The moon has its place in the earth's orbit, the earth in the solar system, and the sun in the milky way. Similarly one and the same worker might at one and the same time be exposed to casual, seasonal, cyclical, and secular fluctuations in the demand for his labour, and all of them be largely or mainly outside his control.

The problem of unemployment was thus a fourfold one. But different aspects have been uppermost in people's minds at different times and places. Casual employment, for instance, has always tended to engross the attention of students in London and other ports, while seasonal employment has been more in evidence at seaside towns and in newly developed districts where building is proceeding on a considerable scale. Cyclical depressions, similarly, attracted most attention before the war, while the secular rise and fall of whole industries is what has stamped itself most indelibly on our post-war experience.

All of these have been approached as problems of industry. And that has led men to a conviction that they are capable of solution by organizing and planning. But before we have succeeded in organizing away even the comparatively simple casual problem, we have begun to complicate the bigger problems which we understand still less with those blundering and tentative experiments which are the nearest we have yet come to systematic planning.

As the fate of whole industries has been brought in question, an economic policy aimed at preserving old markets and stimulating new ones has become the order of the day;

and as this would take us within the field of economic faith rather than of social fact, it hardly comes within the scope of the present history. Tiding families over bad patches and abridging the gap between one job and the next has become a smaller part of the unemployment problem than in the years before the war. But as this book is concerned with social and not with economic history, it must confine itself to the efforts made firstly to put the unemployed into touch with ordinary jobs if they existed, secondly to create jobs specially for them if no ordinary ones could be found, thirdly to maintain them and their families when remunerative work was unobtainable, and lastly to keep them fit in body and in mind while they were being maintained without having to work for their living.

I. EMPLOYMENT-FINDING

The first and most obviously useful thing to do was to put unemployed men and women in touch with such jobs as existed, and save them the weary tramp of hawking their labour from the doors of one firm to those of the next.

The placing machinery which model trade unions had elaborated since at least 1850 was practically confined to specialists skilled in some particular craft. For those kinds of labour that were less scarce, less skilled, or less organized, the nearest semblance of a system lay in the advertisement columns of popular newspapers, supplemented in the 1870's by the private attempt of a London philanthropist to publish a more general survey of the demand for labour in different parts of the country. The 1880's however saw experiments in private and charitable employment agencies like Cohen's at Egham or Hogg's at the Polytechnic. This new idea of organizing the labour market was given a wide advertisement by the French trade unionists' ill-fated demand for *bourses de travail.* And the London vestries set up the first official labour bureaux in England in 1892, although their successors,

the metropolitan boroughs of 1899, were compelled to close them temporarily through fear of exceeding their statutory powers.

Statutory authority was given to the metropolitan boroughs in 1902 and to Manchester in 1903 to open local labour bureaux. London evolved a central unemployment body in 1904, largely under the impulsion of Walter Long, and under the unemployed workmen act of 1905 this was able to take over the local metropolitan bureaux, co-ordinate their activities through a central clearing-house, with the help of the new telephone system, and thus bring together the worker who lived in one borough and the work that was to be found in another.

In the provinces, on the other hand, municipal labour bureaux were not established under this act unless there was obvious distress. And where there was distress they tended to discredit the institution by concentrating on a certain type of worker—one who was not necessarily the best qualified but whose family was said to be the most numerous—and by putting him in touch with a certain kind of work—relief work specially rigged up as a palliative for distress.

In 1909 the royal commission on the poor laws and the relief of distress unanimously recommended the organization of a national system, so as to increase the mobility of labour between the different parts of the country. This was done at once under Mr Churchill's labour exchanges act; and the concern of the exchanges with other kinds of work besides manual was symbolized by their adoption of the broader title of employment exchange in 1916.

At the end of the war, employment exchanges threatened for a while to degenerate into mere centres for the distribution of relief. But the number of places filled by the exchanges trebled between 1922 and 1932, although trade was worse in the latter year.

As a general rule this new custom of arranging employment

through an exchange, has grown up only in trades where certain well-marked conditions of employment have dominated. It has presupposed the absence of any strong personal tie between employer and employee, and may have tended to weaken such a tie. And it has also assumed the relative inadequacy in these trades of specialized private and voluntary agencies such as have long prospered in many branches of skilled employment.

It is claimed that these official exchanges have helped seasonal workers to find posts for the off-season; that they have reduced the period of waiting between jobs; that they have offered employers a wider choice and therefore a greater chance of obtaining the most efficient worker; that they have made it worth an employer's while to take on an extra hand in those marginal cases where otherwise he would hardly have bothered; and that they have put workers in touch with jobs in neighbouring districts.

In two directions especially they have opened up opportunities for mitigating great social evils.

They have not stripped dock labour of its casual character; for it is too much to expect whole classes of men to abandon the habits of a century in half a working lifetime. But they have at least helped to provide the thin end of a wedge. At the Liverpool docks since 1912, for instance, they have centralized the weekly payment of men who work for many employers.

Nor have they rooted up whole families from distressed areas, to plant them in others where their younger and more adaptable members might stand more chance of employment. Yet they have at least provided machinery, not only for letting John O'Groat's know of vacancies at Land's End, but also for assisting him to get there, especially since the need for large-scale mobility between one region and another was thoroughly realized towards the end of the 'twenties. This assistance has become more and more necessary, the greater

the distress of the area where a young person has grown up Careful selection has been necessary, careful preparation for leaving home and home surroundings often for the first time, and careful after-care in acquiring new standards of self-respect and independence amid the unfamiliar manners and customs of a new region, even to the extent of providing pocket-money to supplement the temporarily inadequate pay of a youth with good prospects, and hostels where he might find decent and convenient accommodation at a reasonable price. And in helping young migrants to find their feet, the exchanges had to enlist the help not only of their local committees, but also of all manner of juvenile organizations. A modicum of industrial transference has also been financed through the employment exchanges since 1928, by advancing fares and removal-money for green-ticket men for whom there was no hope of employment in areas that had fallen into distress through their dependence on mining or some other one industry. During 1935 the transference of some 25,000 workers from the north and west to the south has been assisted in these ways: exactly one hundred years earlier, on the only previous occasion when large-scale internal migration was systematically organized, the poor-law commissioners were able to assist over 5,000 to migrate from the south and east to the north.

But though the employment exchange system has made a tiny contribution to decasualization and a more considerable contribution to industrial transference, it has not yet been used to the full for restricting the entry of newcomers into industries that are already plagued with unemployment. For no employers have yet been compelled to fill all their vacancies through the official exchanges.

Yet even if every job that existed was filled and the entry of surplus labour into particular trades were prevented, there would usually remain large numbers of workers for

whom no employment was immediately available. Could it be deliberately created for them ?

II. EMPLOYMENT-MAKING

The employment exchanges might do much to mitigate the evils of casual and seasonal employment and of the transfer of industry from one region to another. But for cyclical depressions in particular some more drastic form of public intervention was felt to be worth a trial.

There is nothing new about public efforts to provide work when that provided by private enterprise seems inadequate. During the great distress of 1816–1819, parliament commissioned a public works loans board to advance money for the building and improvement of ports and harbours, and itself voted grants for the building of Waterloo churches. The second of these objects was the outcome of a philosophy of life which ceased to influence government action in this country after 1819. But the first had an economic and naval justification, which would have held even if there had been no depression. The loans board therefore outlived the emergency. And the government similarly encouraged Lancashire authorities to undertake public works in the hope of providing employment for the small residuum who failed to get re-absorbed into their old trades at the close of the American civil war and the cotton famine.

The mid-nineteenth century, however, was an age in which such public works as were likely to be carried out under the stimulus of the central government were very seldom of any considerable economic importance to the country as a whole : in the gas and railway age, even power and communications were privately provided.

Only local authorities were therefore seriously tempted to create work in emergencies. These now had sewers and water pipes to be laid, cemeteries and parks to be laid out,

roads to be paved, waste land to be reclaimed. Occasionally the urban guardians worked their outdoor labour test in connection with work of this kind. And more often the municipality attempted to relieve distress in this way in the hope of enabling decent independent families to tide over a bad time without having recourse to the poor-law.

This local habit of providing municipal relief works received central approval in the circular issued by Joseph Chamberlain as president of the local government board during the slump of 1886. But while he succeeded in consolidating a growing custom, he failed to secure the adoption of the conditions with which his chief recommendation was hedged around. Arguing that 'it is not desirable that the working classes should be familiarized with poor law relief,' he somewhat contradictorily advised local authorities to concentrate on engaging men whom the guardians thought too good for poor relief. And in order to induce men to return to ordinary commercial employment, he recommended that they should be paid less than the usual wages while engaged on relief work.

To make some more definite provision for relief works and mitigate the overlapping of the various relief agencies, a highly complicated scheme of Walter Long's was embodied in the unemployed workmen act passed by Gerald Balfour in 1905. In all towns of over 50,000 inhabitants a joint distress committee, representing the guardians, the municipality, and voluntary agencies, were to put the unemployed in touch with work, and levy a rate of not more than ½d. to meet these administrative expenses. And the actual relief work was to be provided by the municipality out of rates, or with the help of charity or a treasury grant, with the natural result that charity dried up and its place had to be taken by an increasing flow of treasury grants.

Twenty years' experience of state-encouraged relief work led to growing doubts about its value. However humane the intentions with which it had been established, it became more

and more certain that its effects were not those that were intended.

Municipal surveyors had to take on labourers not because they were good navvies but because they had an excessive number of children. The work was spread over as many labourers as possible, so that all should receive a dole of wage-labour, even though none received enough days' work in a week to live on : Chamberlain's hope that they would be paid less than the ordinary workman was thus fulfilled, without upsetting the trade-union principle of paying them the standard daily wage. These doles of work attracted casuals and the frequenters of workhouse labour-yards, classes with whom unemployment was more than a mere matter of tiding over. And if too many ordinary contract orders were forestalled or transformed into relief work, there was a risk of adding to the problem by putting the regular contractor's men out of employment. The result of these spasmodic experiments was therefore summed up by the majority on the royal commission in 1909 as costly inefficiency.

Octavia Hill, the last survivor of the mid-Victorian school of social workers, was more convinced than ever that the artificial provision of work was both degrading and uneconomic. But her resistance served at least to point a much needed warning against the injustice and danger of deliberately swelling the army of unskilled manual workers by local and temporary increases in the demand for their labour. Her colleagues on the royal commission on poor-laws and distress were content, however, to draw a distinction—implicit in the report of the minority and explicit in that of the majority—between relief-work and public works. Whereas the former was organized on a non-commercial basis, the latter were executed through the ordinary commercial channels. Instead of doling out odd days of work direct to inefficient outcasts of other trades, additional orders might be placed with contractors during times of stress. These contractors in their

turn would continue to place orders for equipment, and more regular employment would thus be provided for regular workers. Instead of improvising a crazy machine for relieving individual sufferers, an attempt might be made to keep the ordinary economic machine at work at least in the various constructional industries which were the very ones most liable to cyclical fluctuation.

Contemporary economic developments were, moreover, providing a wider field for useful public works which might well prove of economic or social value even if they did not directly pay for themselves. The development of the motor was leading to a revival of road-building and bridge-strengthening, for the first time since the railway ruined the turnpike. And local authorities were showing an increasing interest in housing. There was in fact a tendency to discern the existence of a rapidly extending field of public utilities on which all industry depended and which the public authorities might help to provide. Just as they furnished industry with labour of a certain standard of health and education, so they might furnish it also with transport and housing facilities, with as much or as little economic justification.

The simplest way to flatten out the curve of unemployment would therefore be to accelerate a long-term scheme of public works just at the moment when private enterprise was entering on a period of depression. Or, if adequate schemes were not already prepared, search might be made for improvements that were forgotten but overdue.

The day the United Kingdom entered the war, the Samuel committee on the prevention and relief of distress set to work along these lines. And this new policy was again resorted to on a bigger scale than ever before in the post-war slump of 1921, with the important innovation that local effort was now eclipsed by national.

The building of subsidized houses was then accelerated. Both grants and loans for building main roads were increased,

so that together they covered the total immediate cost, on condition that half the expenditure went to the wages of unskilled men. And an unemployment grants committee was set up under the presidency of Lord St. Davids to grant or lend money for docks and harbours, lighting and power, water and sewerage, on condition that labour was engaged through the employment exchanges.

The experiment failed, for the simple reason that the cyclical depression of 1920 was followed during the next ten years by a totally different phenomenon, the permanent contraction of the cotton, coal, and iron-and-steel industries. Housing scheme after housing scheme was set in motion. The roads of almost the whole country were re-made. The St. Davids committee extended its unemployment grants and loans from local authorities to non-profit-making statutory companies, and eventually under a labour government even to those that worked for profit. And procedure was speeded up, first for acquiring land for public works, and then for obtaining statutory permission without the expense or delay of a private bill. But in the face of this new problem of permanent unemployment, it was of little avail that schemes amounting to £200,000,000 had been approved by 1930. The May committee on national expenditure pointed out in 1931 that £1,000,000 sufficed to provide work for only 4,000 men for only one year. And it added the platitude that maintenance cost less than work unless the work was such that it would have been of economic value at any time. The development (loan guarantees and grants) act under which the St. Davids committee was functioning was therefore allowed to expire in 1932. And because public works had failed as a cure for permanent depression in a few trades, they were abandoned as a palliative for a cyclical depression that touched a great many trades.

This condemnation was too sweeping to last. By 1935 the lowness of interest rates and the return of business confidence

encouraged the taking in hand of housing and transport improvement that had been passed by as too costly during the 'twenties. Idle capital and idle labour tended to come together. And it was easy and inexpensive for government to stimulate this process in the replanning of urban centres, the acceleration of suburban travel, and the improvement of the railways, though they got cold feet when they thought of land-drainage. The teaching of Mr Keynes and the preaching of Mr Lloyd George, the ambitions of the Americans and the achievements of the Swedes, have all combined to resurrect the hope that an extra dose of public works may at least help us out of the cyclical disturbances into which a regular amount of public works did not prevent us from falling.

There have thus been various ways of approaching this question of public works. The natural tendency of the unsophisticated both in and out of office has long been to look round and see what there was that wanted doing but had hitherto been put on one side as too expensive. But this search through the highways and byways and pigeon-holes of an advanced country like ours has never yet yielded so large a crop of jobs that need doing as in an economically more backward country like Russia. To the political economist of to-day, public works have seemed most valuable as a fillip to trade-recovery after interest-rates have fallen. And to the socialist of thirty years ago they looked like a means for planning a more even distribution of work.

What mattered to the socialist was not work-making so much as work-planning: public authorities had only to keep their heads and place their orders, when they saw private business men losing confidence and heard them crying out for public economy. But the psychological implications of a trade cycle have rendered the socialist evening-out process almost impossible in a capitalist society. And the increasing dimensions of permanent unemployment have suggested that even if periodic dollops of public works were to prove a help

in dealing with the special problem of the cyclical fluctuation, other means would have to be sought for attacking the hard core of permanent unemployment. The planner of to-day, nurtured in the socialism of yesterday has therefore played with the idea of equalizing-out the available work between one person and another, rather than between the various phases of the business cycle.

The most obvious method of making work by redistributing it has lain in the working of shorter hours. Instead of creating employment where there would otherwise have been little or none, existing employment has been spread over a greater number of wage-earners than would otherwise have shared it. The working of short time or the cessation of overtime is an old device for avoiding the necessity of putting off old workers. This was done to some extent by the government and by other benevolent employers in the depression of 1920–21, and again of recent years, though the British government has not imitated some others in compelling the adoption of these measures. But any large-scale general reduction in working hours without a corresponding reduction in pay has failed to arouse any long-lived enthusiasm in British business or trade-union circles for a number of practical reasons. One in particular stood out in the international labour conference in 1935. If the employer was to pay the same wages, he would either have to obtain the same amount of work in a shorter time, which would defeat the whole purpose of the measure, or alternatively he must have some guarantee that less work at the same wages would not lessen his power of competing with another firm, another industry or another country. Resort to this remedy on a large scale has therefore become conditional on the signing and observance of a whole series of unobtainable international agreements.

While it seemed unreasonable that some should be working overtime while others were without employment, it seemed no less unnatural that men in the prime of life should be

condemned to compulsory leisure while children and old-age pensioners were doing the work. This consideration has strengthened the movement for compulsorily removing children from the labour market by extending the school-leaving age, besides calling forth unofficial plans for enticing the elderly to leave work by offering retirement pensions with which to supplement the old-age pensions already in force.

On the juvenile side some practical difficulty and confusion has arisen owing to end-of-the-war fluctuations in the birth-rate. To have dammed up the flood in overcrowded schools would have raised more tangible difficulties than to let it loose on the field of employment during a depression; for the demand for cheap juvenile labour did not dry up except in distressed areas. And now that we have entered on a period when children form an ever-decreasing proportion of our population, the extension of the school-leaving age becomes less important as a problem of employment-distribution, and it becomes easier to envisage it as an essentially educational question. The problem of old age, on the other hand, looks like assuming greater and greater importance as a higher proportion of the population survive past middle life.

The public organization of the labour market which began with the establishment of exchanges where private contacts were inadequate, is thus developing into public experiments in remedying the maldistribution of work and leisure.

III. KEEPING ALIVE

Neither employment exchanges nor public works have abolished the intervals in intermittent employment. Some other machinery has had to be evolved to keep together the homes of those who have fallen out of work through the operation of causes mainly outside their control. And we have sometimes committed the error and courted the danger

of concentrating too much on the provision of an emergency income, and too little on the finding or the making of employment through which alone it is possible to earn one's income by making a contribution to the life and work of the community.

The most obvious method of maintaining the unemployed without exposing them to the stigma of public poor-relief or the humiliation of private charity was to organize a system of insurance. For this was the least revolutionary way of giving them a legal right to honourable maintenance without inquiry into their means. All over Western Europe many of the better-paid skilled workers therefore insured against this risk through their trade unions or trade friendly societies.

As the risk was usually too great for their fellows to be willing to bear it by their own unaided efforts, some form of public contribution seemed to have much to be said in its favour. This, however, was only possible where it was widely recognised that it might not be altogether a person's own fault that he was without employment.

In the French-speaking towns of the continent a whole series of experiments was tried during the 1890's. But all of them had two features in common: they were grants by urban communes, and their aim was to encourage wage-earners to help themselves through their voluntary associations. The culminating success among these experiments in social solidarity was the one initiated at Ghent in 1901 and copied by many of the leading communes of Belgium, Northern France, and Alsace; and the detail that distinguished it was that the municipal subsidy took the form of a supplement to the benefit paid by the trade unions.

In the towns of the German-speaking Rhineland the actual municipal organization of insurance without utilizing trade-union machinery was tried during the same years. In the Swiss city of St. Gall in 1895 an unpopular and unsuccessful experiment was made in compulsory and universal insurance.

And at Cologne in 1896 a more modest attempt was made at voluntary insurance against seasonal unemployment, with the result that it attracted the bad risks and had to depend on charity for a good part of its funds.

England lagged behind her continental neighbours for two principal reasons. The one was that her trade unions had done and had been allowed to do more than theirs to provide their members with out-of-work pay. And the other was that her municipalities had had less liberty than theirs for the making of experiments without express statutory authority.

In 1909, however, the royal commission recommended the adoption in this country of the continental practice of publicly-aided unemployment insurance. On two points they persuaded the Board of Trade. The one was that trade unions should receive a *pro rata* subsidy and that payments should be made through them by way of supplementing their out-of-work pay wherever possible, partly so as to utilize their experience and their power of detecting ca'canny, and partly in the hope of encouraging a greater number of unions to participate in this provident activity. In this they were following the Ghent system. Where they departed from it was in the principle that public aid should be on a national instead of a local basis, on the ground that any smaller unit would tend to restrict the mobility of labour.

When the Board of Trade came to work out their principles, it added two others. The one was to make unemployment insurance compulsory, at least within certain trade groups, so that within these trades the national fund should be additional to and parallel with those of the trade unions, instead of excluding non-trade-unionists from all benefit. This was facilitated by the erection just at this time of a national system of labour exchanges which would be almost as well able as a trade union to test whether a claimant was genuinely unemployed. And it meant combining the St. Gall experiment with

the Ghent one, with an eye on the financial failure of voluntaryism at Cologne. The other British invention was the principle of simultaneous weekly payments into an insurance fund by three parties—the state, the worker, and the employer—the employer's obligation constituting a radical departure from continental precedent, and the state's capitation contribution marking the difference between unemployment and health insurance.

The subsequent working of British unemployment insurance falls into four main periods, clearly marked out from one another by the tendencies at work in determining the industries to be insured, the risk covered, the contribution exacted, the benefit paid, the statutory conditions and disqualifications for its receipt, the additional benefit allowed for dependants, and the payments made to those who were not qualified for insurance benefit.

These four periods might be labelled phases first of construction, next of confusion, thirdly of reconstruction, and lastly of restoration.

The pioneering or constructive phase covered the ten ambitious years of optimism, 1911-20.

Mr Churchill's original act of 1911 provided only for the two and a quarter million members of the building, shipbuilding, and iron- and steel-trade-groups, all of which were specially sensitive to periodic fluctuation. In 1916 a million and a half munition workers, many of them women, were included. And by the principal act of 1920 the majority of wage-earners were brought under compulsory insurance.

The excepted employments have fallen into three main groups. First there are low-paid workers such as agricultural labourers and domestic servants who have been excepted from the general scheme of unemployment insurance, although they have always been included in compulsory health insurance: for the agriculturalist, however, a lower scale of contributions and benefits now seems imminent. Next there are non-

manual workers earning more than £250 a year, who have been excluded from this as from health insurance, although the recent shrinkage of overseas trade has shown that they are far from immune from the risk of unemployment. And, thirdly, there are those who run comparatively little risk so long as they are employed in the civil service, or the armed forces, or the teaching profession, or by local authorities or certain public undertakings.

At first, any industry that liked was also allowed to submit its own special scheme so as to encourage it so to organize as to lessen or eliminate its fluctuations in employment—a privilege of which only the insurance and banking industries rushed to take advantage under the 1920 act.

Under the general scheme the risk covered was made pro portionate to the payments made, according to common trade-union practice. Under the act of 1911 there was thus one week's benefit for every five contributions and under that of 1920 one for every six. And the maximum benefit was fifteen weeks in one year.

The contributions were so moderate that they could hardly be regarded as a tax on employment; they totalled only 6⅔d. a week in 1911 and 10d. in 1920 for men. The state contributed only one quarter of this in 1911 and one-fifth in 1920. And if any contributor drew out less benefit than the subscriptions he had paid, the balance was to be refunded at death or at the age of sixty.

The benefit was increased from a modest 7s. a week in 1911 to 11s. in 1919 and 15s. for men in 1920 owing to the inflated cost of living; it has never since fallen below this last figure and has often been higher. It was not intended to be enough to live on; but it was hoped that it would supplement savings and any other sources of family income, so that a short spell of unemployment should not necessitate an irremediable decline in the standard of living.

Among the statutory conditions for the receipt of benefit,

two stood out pre-eminently by 1920. The first was that not less than a certain number of contributions must have been paid: twelve was the minimum, which was just enough to entitle the applicant to a fortnight's benefit. The third was that the applicant must be capable of and available for work but unable to obtain suitable employment. And to these were added certain statutory disqualifications affecting those who were engaged in trade disputes, left their jobs voluntarily without just cause, had paid no unemployment insurance contributions during the last twelve months for reasons other than sickness, or were in receipt of old-age pension or sickness or disablement benefit.

For those outside the national insurance system the first state provision was an out-of-work donation, popularly called the dole, for ex-service men and women and war workers. This was established a fortnight after the armistice, at the comparatively high rate of 29s. a week for men for the first six months and 20s. thereafter, with the result that the total cost reached £50,000,000. When the donation paid to those who were uninsured was higher than the benefit paid to those in insurance, it was hard to resist the conclusion that the government had some special motive in allaying the discontent of a special section of the community, whether it was the general election or the fear of bolshevism or gratitude for war service. One lasting effect was to encourage the increase in unemployment insurance benefit. Another was to set an example of special provision for those who were not qualified for insurance benefit. The 1920 act, for instance, contained temporary provisions empowering members of trades which now came under insurance for the first time to draw up to eight weeks' benefit regardless of the number of contributions they had paid.

The high hopes of this constructive period gave way to a phase of intense confusion between 1920 and 1927. A

severe blow was dealt to the newly extended insurance system when a cyclical depression brought the post-war boom to an end during the winter 1920–21, before adequate reserves had been built up. This necessitated the taking of temporary measures which really had nothing to do with insurance principles. And a second and still severer blow came when it was found that the cyclical depression left behind it a permanent problem of chronic distress. The number of registered unemployed fell from two million to one, but no lower. This necessitated the erection of temporary expedients into a permanent policy. A surplus of nearly £22,000,000 at the end of 1920 was converted into a debt of over £22,000,000 by the end of 1926. And the shallow foundation of insurance on which this ever-changing mass of doles was being piled looked little more than an archaic survival.

Industries blessed or rewarded with special immunity from unemployment were no longer allowed to contract-out of the general burden as the banking and insurance industries had done.

As the risk of unemployment had increased, a series of 'special periods' was inaugurated, during each of which all fully insured wage-earners were allowed to draw as many weeks' benefit as they had previously been entitled to draw during the much longer period of a full calendar year. Thus, by 1923 the original covenanted benefit was made available up to a maximum of twenty-six weeks in a year.

Besides this covenanted benefit—as it was euphemistically termed, although it greatly exceeded the fifteen weeks of the original insurance contract—a definitely uncovenanted benefit was made available in 1921 for all insured workers who had exhausted their covenanted benefit or had not yet qualified for it. Covenanted and uncovenanted benefit together covered practically the whole year. In 1924 they were then rechristened 'standard' and 'extended.' Thus what had begun as a temporary expedient now crystallized into a

regular system. Yet except under the short labour government of 1924 the uncovenanted nature of extended benefit was stressed by making it subject to the minister's being satisfied that it was in the public interest, a discretion which enabled him to refuse it for instance to boys living at home.

Men's benefit was rashly raised to 20s. a week at the beginning of the depression. But it had to be dropped again to 15s. three months later. And under the labour government it came to rest at 18s.

A system of family allowances such as had been granted to service men's dependants during the war was also introduced at the end of 1921. This was at first a provisional measure indended to last only six months, and it was financed by separate subscriptions into a separate fund. But like many another temporary measure it was made permanent, and its finance merged into the general fund. Throughout this phase the allowance for each adult dependant was 5s. a week, and that for each child was raised from 1s. to 2s. under the 1924 government.

To help finance these greatly enlarged benefits, subscriptions reached 2s. 1¾d. a week by the end of 1921. And as three-quarters of this had to be borne by employers and employees, it was clearly developing into something like a tax on employment, at the very crisis when taxes ought more than ever to have fallen on profits rather than on costs of production.

With the eclipse of the insurance principle, the statutory conditions were relaxed in one direction: thirty contributions in two years came to be regarded as a fair minimum, and the minister in his discretion tended to accept even less. In another direction they were made correspondingly more stringent: the claimant had to be genuinely seeking work—the foisting of a system of discretionary relief on to a system of contractual insurance benefits thus led to the introduction of a new relief-test based on the interesting assumption that

registration at an employment exchange was not enough. The prolongation of the chaotic confusion by parliament in 1924 was made temporary, in order to facilitate a thorough departmental inquiry and an attempt at rational reconstruction.

This third phase was ushered in by the Blanesburgh committee of 1925–27.

In conformity with recent expedients rather than with trade-union practice or the rules of the first ten successful years, this very liberal committee recommended unanimously that there should be no limitation on the number of weeks for which benefit was allowed, and that duration of benefit should not be proportionate to the number of subscriptions paid. 'In insurance of other kinds,' they reported, 'the benefits are not related to the number of contributions. It is the damage done by the fire and not the number of fire insurance premiums which settles the compensation payable by a fire-insurance company.' They suggested an automatic review of every case after thirteen weeks as a more humane way of preventing malingering. And these suggestions were at once passed into law.

To prevent unemployment insurance from becoming a minor cause of unemployment, they recommended that the state's contribution should be as high as that of either of the other parties, and that the total should amount to only 1s. 3d. a week. This the government hesitated to do.

To prevent its becoming a slight deterrent to wage-earning or migration, they recommended 17s. per man, per week, and less if he was under twenty-one. This rate was adopted at once and is still in force.

In one respect, however, the government could hardly avoid departing from the spirit of this report. All who had paid thirty contributions in the previous two years were to be equally entitled to benefit; and the distinction between standard and extended was swept away. But what of those

who were at present drawing benefit though they had not made thirty contributions within the last two years ? They included the most unfortunate victims of prolonged depression. As a transitional measure they were therefore allowed to remain in benefit. What purported to be an insurance system thus continued to provide for persons who did not fulfil the insurance qualifications.

The Blanesburgh Committee seems to have reported on the assumption that it was living through the tail of a cyclical disturbance of pre-war nature though of somewhat larger dimensions. Unluckily for its conclusions, the distress that was creeping over the export industries at that very time was not the penumbra either of the 1921 depression or of the coal-mining dispute of 1926, as was assumed, but was due to deep-seated and irremediable causes. Unemployment rose steadily above the million mark. And so did the debt of the unemployment insurance fund, which quadrupled during the five years of the Baldwin ministry, before it trebled during the two years of Mr MacDonald's second labour cabinet when unemployment rose again to the two million level under the influence of another world-wide cyclical depression.

The average unemployment among insured workers between 1927 and 1931 turned out to be nearer to 14 per cent. than to the 4 per cent. guessed at by government actuaries in 1911 and 1920, and was twice as high as that reckoned on by the Blanesburgh committee for the successful operation of an insurance fund on the principles they suggested.

Under these circumstances, the Blanesburgh reconstruction missed the mark. And the Holman Gregory royal commission of 1930–32 opened the way to the fourth, the last, and the most modest phase, that of restoring the insurance system to something like its original restricted scope.

The new royal commission started from the same principle as the departmental committee, namely, that unemployment

insurance ought to be a system of insurance and not of doles.

But in the new conditions of 1930–32 the majority of its members reached a diametrically opposite conclusion. Instead of aiming at insurance against the whole risk of unemployment, they sharply differentiated the secular rise and fall of basic national industries from world-wide fluctuations over shorter periods. Secular upheavals spelt chronic unemployment for the majority of the workers involved, and the risk was therefore too great to be insured against. If an insurance fund was to pay its way it would therefore have to restrict its operation to the more manageable problem of recurrent unemployment of the cyclical, seasonal, or casual nature, against which insurance had originally been devised.

The findings were foreshadowed in an interim report of June 1931, and they were not without their influence on the May select committee which reported on economy in July.

Instead of remaining indefinite, the term for which benefit was paid was cut down to 156 days in 1931. And in accordance with the commission's final report there was a return in 1934 to the principle of graduating the duration of benefit so as to entitle a fully insured person to an extra half-week's benefit for every five contributions paid during the previous five years, which would mean benefit for practically a whole year for a person who had not been unemployed during the previous five years.

In order to restore the fund to solvency, not only for the future but also for the past by paying off its debt, contributions were raised to the prodigious height of 2s. 6d. a week, two-thirds of which was to be paid by the employer and the wage-earner. Thus for the second time the desire to balance the insurance fund led to the institution of something not far short of a tax on employment in a time of crisis.

While contributions rose, benefits were subjected to a 10 per cent. cut from 1931 to 1934, which brought them down

temporarily to 15s. 3d. per man instead of 17s. But the argument that the cost of food had fallen was not accepted as any justification for making this cut permanent.

What of those fully insured persons who were deprived of benefit after 156 days under the 1931 order? They went to swell the number of those whose benefit was paid since 1927 on a purely transitional basis because they had not qualified by paying thirty contributions in two years. To stress the fact that this was irrespective of insurance rights, it was now called transitional payment instead of benefit. And instead of being granted unconditionally at a flat rate to all the genuinely unemployed like an insurance benefit, it was made subject to a means test. For lack of any other authority accustomed to the working of a means test, this was entrusted to the public assistance committee. And through lack of accommodation at the employment exchanges, claimants had to appear before these committees at the usual public assistance offices. Transitional payments differed however from ordinary domiciliary assistance in that they were neither in kind nor on loan, and could not be subjected to any labour test, but were still paid through the employment exchange in money out of national funds. But the transition from a fixed insurance benefit received as a right to a variable payment at the discretion of a destitution authority was too sudden and too humiliating to command more than the most reluctant consent. Local committees on the north-east coast refused to administer the order and were superseded by Ministry of Labour commissioners. And the standards adopted by neighbouring local committees differed so considerably that the simplest way to obtain uniformity seemed to Sir Henry Betterton to be the erection of a brand-new national unemployment assistance board; in this he departed from the advice of the royal commission, which advocated the creation of local unemployment assistance committees distinct from the public

assistance committees and under strict central control, although it was unable to discover any principle on which to allocate expenses.

Besides assisting wage-earners who had been in insurance but had either failed to qualify for benefit or had exhausted their right to it, the board was also to assume responsibility for those whose only reason for not entering insurable employment was that it had ceased to exist in their part of the country. And instead of being limited to insurance benefit figures, this new form of assistance might be raised to a level nearer to the needs of those whose savings had been exhausted by prolonged unemployment.

So another sudden and sweeping change was made, with a result that constituted one of the most dramatic fiascos in the history of the social services. The untried scales of allowances introduced at the beginning of 1935 were so steep that a large proportion of assessments were either raised or lowered. The scales were necessarily rigid. The discretion which clerks were instructed to use in hard cases was as illusory as that displayed by bus conductors towards would-be standing passengers on rainy days. Suspicion that their predecessors had been hoodwinked seems to have been prevalent among them. A uniform scale came as a shock to well-established local habits and customs. No adequate steps were taken to win public understanding and sympathy. And the very legality of the regulations was questioned.

So the new board had barely come into operation, with Sir Henry Betterton himself at the head, when the government gave way to the general outcry and curtailed its operation, by allowing those whose needs had been assessed at a higher figure by the local public assistance committee to continue to draw unemployment assistance allowances at this higher rate.

Fifteen years' struggle in both practice and theory, to determine whether the unemployed should be maintained by insurance or by some direct and non-contributory form of

state assistance, has thus ended for the present in the allocation of its own distinctive sphere to each of these rival solutions.

While remembering all that unemployment insurance has done to ward off the greater evil of destitution, it is only fair to remember the lesser evils that it has brought in its train. Like employment exchanges, and like the whole tendency of modern business organization, it has tended to depersonalize relations between employer and employee, reducing them more and more to a matter of financial calculation on both sides. To a firm in a tight corner, unemployment insurance has made short time into an attractive alternative to reorganization, and one which is only technically different from state-subsidized wages, of which indeed this has become one of the chief modern disguises. Since 1931 this conversion of unemployment benefit into a subsidy for permanent short time has been made more difficult in the anomalous case of those who have never known more than week-end labour in a popular stores, and in any case it is now of only limited duration so far as the individual employees are concerned. In marginal cases, the size of the contribution may have tended to tip the balance against an odd hand or in favour of a juvenile instead of an adult; and although this consideration has not prevented the steep graduation of contribution scales, a similar argument has led to insistence on contributions on account of old-age pensioners and aliens, and exemption for the blind.

Insurance has also had its effect on the attitude of the worker. In some trades it has militated against the shorter working week, on the ground that this would give a claim to less benefit in the event of part-time or full-time unemployment. It may also have lessened mobility from one trade and still more from one locality to another; but this has probably been least general when the benefit has been of limited duration. And it has made many hesitate rather than accept wages lower than benefit.

To weigh these results against the assurance of a minimum income, and say whether unemployment insurance has or has not been of economic advantage to those whom it was intended to benefit, would involve the economist in a maze of *a priori* arguments: he lacks statistical data on which alone he could base a convincing conclusion.

IV. KEEPING FIT

To the Elizabethan, work was nothing if it was not a way of self-maintenance. To the poor-law reformer of 1834, it was a test without which no able-bodied male adult was to obtain parish relief. To the present generation it is at best a joyous pastime and at worst a means of keeping fit.

What the Elizabethan hated about idleness among the labouring poor was the social breakdown which it implied, to say nothing of the disorder that might be counted upon if idle vagabonds took the law into their own hands. What the men of 1834 hated about public maintenance without work was that it might upset the working of the economic laws by which alone society was kept going. And we, too, have our characteristic psychological and biological ways of expressing the same old ethical conviction that 'except a man work, neither shall he eat.'

We say that the street-corner habit combines with undernourishment to produce mental and physical deterioration which unfit a man for work and so lower his standards as to remove one of the chief incentives to supporting a family by steady work. Or we say that the more sensitive feel keenly their inability to help themselves, to the point of becoming physically and mentally ill. Or we take the red-tape line and say that even insurance benefit is conditional on the recipient's remaining capable of work. 'Maintenance is not enough,' is the conclusion to which we have been driven by experience.

So the work which we have aimed at supplying is not work

that will enable an unemployed person to pay his own way, still less work that will serve as a socially degrading test, but work that will enrich a man's interests, keep him resourceful, maintain in him a habit of steady application, keep him occupied, give him something to think about, make him feel that he is still of some use in this world, treat him as though he is at least a member of a human labour reserve and not just an item in a robot rubbish heap.

The first form of work to strike the public imagination was that which involved training. The idea was developed in the Mansion House conferences that were held after the failure of the municipal relief-works and Mansion House fund of 1886. And William Booth of the Salvation Army helped to popularize it when he started his rural labour colony at Hadleigh in 1890. While the poor-law was offering only test-work and the municipalities relief-work, Booth tried to re-educate those who were all but unemployable, by submitting them to the voluntary discipline of hard work in an atmosphere of religious enthusiasm. How many of Booth's denizens of darkest England were fitted either for work or for heaven remains a mystery. But a somewhat similar experiment was made on a somewhat less exalted plane at Hollesley Bay in 1904 in connection with London's central unemployment body. This time there could be no doubt that a well-managed voluntary labour colony would be successful in getting men away from demoralizing doles of relief work and in keeping them fit; but whether or not it could find work for them afterwards would depend on the facilities for placing them in work, and these were then small, partly because the national system of labour exchanges had not then been established, and partly because there was then a declining demand for rural labour.

Our unemployment insurance acts have all paid homage to this principle of educational work. One of the statutory conditions for the receipt of benefit has always been—in one form

or another—attendance at any course which the insurance officer or (now) the minister might prescribe, unless of course the claimant had some good reason for non-compliance.

But the ministry has not been over-eager to use its powers of compulsion, especially in the case of adults, and has shrunk above all from building up a system of what might in some other countries have developed into compulsory detention camps. It has limited its activity to providing courses which might be expected to have some direct bearing on the unemployed person's capacity and availability for wage-paid work.

In 1925, for instance, when it found itself up against the problem of prolonged unemployment in special areas, the ministry started voluntary centres, both day and residential, so as to increase miners' chances of finding remunerative work in less depressed areas. A six months' course at an expensive training centre would fit a few of the most promising for entry into some new skilled trade. Or a shorter term at a cheaper reconditioning or educational centre might make the least fit less unfit for heavy unskilled labour.

The longer the duration of unemployment, the more important this problem has become. And the obligation to attend centres of one type or another has therefore bulked more largely in the unemployment assistance legislation of 1934 than in the unemployment insurance scheme.

The slowness with which the Ministry of Labour has developed this side of its work may perhaps be attributed partly to the baffling bigness of the task and partly to the slowness with which Britons reconciled themselves to the impossibility of avoiding it. But another very important factor was the lack of experience on which to build. And it has been one of the redeeming features of our recent cyclical depression that it has elicited a wealth of experiment along just these lines where it was most needed. The very crisis of 1931, with its drastic cuts in the public social services, elicited

an outburst of voluntary community service so rich in variety that it can hardly fail to bring to light many ideas of great practical value for the future.

Experiments have run along two principal lines. They have been temporary and have taken the unemployed away from home. Or they have been permanent and have dealt with them in their home environment.

To take them away from home to an unemployed camp for the summer, as has been done by local social-service councils or the universities' council, has been to give them a change of scene and interest and a stimulus to leave the depressed area, besides providing the youthful organizers with a practical outlet for their sense of responsibility and their desire for leadership and experience. Their weakness has been the difficulty of providing work of a kind that commends itself to the men as being socially useful. And this difficulty has not always been satisfactorily solved except on a country estate adapted to taking men in relays all the year round, where one relay has been able to reap what an earlier has sown.

Where on the other hand a centre has operated all the year round among the local unemployed it is sometimes one object that has been stressed and sometimes another.

If it is recreation to which most weight has been given, a kind of settlement has emerged, often with a resident warden, as a centre for music and lectures, arts and crafts, football and gymnastics. More often the centre has been occupational in the widest sense, providing opportunities not only for recreation but also for doing odd jobs of household carpentry or the family cobbling at the lowest possible cost. Wherever land has been available, occupation has passed insensibly into production, allotments and allotment societies have been brought into existence by the thousand, largely thanks to Quaker initiative, and some government help has been elicited in the form of seed and manures under the agricultural land utilization act

of 1931. Professor J. W. Scott and the home-crofters have been more ambitious and have tried to bring in capital and organizing ability, stimulate specialized hobbies alongside food-production, and organize barter between the unemployed. More ambitious still, Mr Peter Scott and the subsistence productionists of Lancashire and Monmouthshire have begun to organize experimental societies of 500–1000 unemployed workers, each contributing what quota of work he likes in the the job he has decided to specialize in, then drawing on the common stock of produce in proportion to the hours of work he has contributed, and paying in cash only enough to defray the capital outlay. Wherever production has been involved in these experiments it has always been for subsistence, whether just for the individual and his family, or for barter with similarly placed individuals, or for sale on a time-value basis to members of the association. Thus it has supplemented unemployment benefit or assistance by making it go further; as production has not been primarily for sale, it has not been counted a disqualification.

Thus even though we may not yet have discovered how to prevent unemployment, we may at least be on our way to finding out how to lessen unemployability.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIAL SERVICE STATE

I. HISTORY AND UTILITY

TO those who look for a few simple guiding principles to which all the social services can be reduced, our present system appears absurdly complex. It is the product of history. And piecemeal development has inevitably issued in a patchwork result.

A historical account of its evolution may provide an interesting explanation of present phenomena. But an explanation is not necessarily a justification. History must not be perverted to the service of anachronisms. It is the story of growth and decay, of construction and dissolution. And it would be false to its very nature if it confused the past with the present.

It would therefore not be wise to press a historical argument too far. History must be our servant in the task of understanding the genesis of the present, not our master in blocking the road to the future.

In endeavouring to explain the present in the light of the past, history may suggest that the circumstances under which an institution arose were purely ephemeral. A good case can then be made out for its survival only if it has so adapted itself to later circumstances as to maintain its utility.

But history may on the other hand suggest that the circumstances that conditioned the elaboration of an institution were of no such temporary validity. And this is peculiarly likely to be the case where the conditions that prescribed the adoption of one device rather than another were of a comparatively stable psychological nature.

Let us then analyse first the ways in which we qualify for the various social services, next the degree of centralization to which their administration is subject and the local units through which they are administered, then their place in the progress of administrative legislation and justice, and finally the chief items on both sides of their balance sheet.

We may then be in a position to judge whether there are any clearly perceptible currents in their evolution. And if there are, we may then ask ourselves how durable are the conditions that have fixed the present currents, and what subtle reasons, if any, have led to the play of so many confusing and, at first sight, anomalous eddies on the edge of each main stream.

II. QUALIFICATIONS

It is convenient to ask ourselves what we must do to qualify first for the various services and secondly for the various payments that are made out of rates and taxes, and thirdly for benefits financed in other ways.

The most simple type of service rendered by the community to the individual is that exemplified by our oldest health services. Refuse disposal and sewerage cannot but be of the same uniform and standardized quality. Every ratepayer avails himself of this sanitary service. And he pays not a penny besides what he has paid in rates.

To this simple type, other services have tended to approximate. Elementary education, treatment for contagious diseases including the venereal and often including the tubercular, and maternity and infant welfare can all now be had gratis for the asking. It is not that these are services of universal consumption. They are not. Differences of custom and quality in education and medical treatment have prevented all classes from sharing in the services for which they have all helped to pay. Why then have their consumers established a

claim to gratuity? One reason is that sanitarians and educationalists have been able to think of no better way of attracting people to treatment centres and schools. The lower the price, the greater the demand. Reduce the price to zero, and you raise the demand to infinity. And even if you do not apply this principle of gratuity to all services, you ought at least to apply it to those that are of prime necessity. In elementary education, there has, however, been another reason of less general validity. This was the rivalry between rate-provided board schools and voluntarily provided church schools between 1870 and 1890. On the principle that the cheaper would stand to attract the larger *clientèle* the board schools were able to use their superior resources to gain on their rivals. And one obvious way for the church schools to be even with them was for a unionist government to make them a grant in lieu of fees, though neither it nor they believed in universal gratuity. But as a matter of fact the real reason why the board schools beat the church schools seems to have been not so much that they were cheaper as that they were newer, better equipped, and better staffed. The cut-price argument seems in this case to have been illusory: it was by better service that the longer purse won.

When social services are not provided free to all who like to come and participate, they are sometimes provided below cost price. This is so with secondary education and with council housing. If the full cost price were charged, municipal secondary schools would be dearer than endowed; education never pays. And council houses have so often been built at times or places of inflated prices—often with much social justification—that without subsidized rents they would be hard put to it to compete with houses provided privately at times and places chosen for economic rather than for social reasons; yet it was felt that they must so compete if they were to attract the worst-housed sections of the population. In a field in which they have had no monopoly, they have

tended to approximate to the market price current among privately provided competitors. As the charging of a customary price, this level has considerable justification. But its unreal and arbitrary appearance has led to a considerable reluctance to accept it as final. In elementary education it was abandoned between 1870 and 1918 in favour of gratuity for reasons we have already analysed. In tuberculosis treatment it is in process of abandonment, partly because a supreme measure of prompt persuasion is necessary when the health of the public and the family is at stake, and partly because this disease takes so long to cure that continued contributions would be too heavy a drain on the resources of most families. In secondary education experiments in gratuity were made between 1902 and 1932, on behalf of a high percentage of pupils in most schools, and on behalf of all pupils in some localities. In housing alone no attempt has been made to tread this path towards complete gratuity except by the easiest of stages: on the contrary, as it became clear that a council house could be let at a lower rent than any other of similar quality in a similar position, the shortage of council houses made it generally necessary to exclude from them all whose incomes were high enough for them to afford unsubsidized housing.

A middle term has been found between complete gratuity and the payment of what is more or less the customary market price. This is payment according to means. By a kind of inverted means test, an inquiry is made to decide how much a person shall pay instead of how little he shall be paid. And this very seldom with the idea of excluding any claimant from benefiting from these services. The poor-law laid down this system when it wished, for instance, to hold a young man responsible for letting his senile grandmother decay in a workhouse: the relieving officer investigated the resources of the applicant's family. The municipal general hospitals have generally adopted the same principle, which

had been established a generation earlier in voluntary hospitals : an almoner investigates the resources of the applicant. In the school medical service, including milk and meals, this method has been stipulated by statute since 1906, although in actual practice the inquiry into means is not everywhere very stringent. Since 1932 the board of education has imported this principle into the secondary schools, by substituting special for free places. And certain housing authorities have begun to experiment with this time-honoured device in the new form of differential rents or rent rebates. When the disadvantages of gratuity tend to outweigh its advantages, whether in their moral or in their economic effects, payment according to means has been the favourite alternative principle. The doubt whether it may militate against individual and collective efforts to obtain better wages when applied not to temporary or occasional requirements but to a lifelong necessity such as housing is what makes the new house-rent experiment a problem of the greatest interest and importance. When differential rents are limited to families reduced to exceptional distress by economic or natural contingencies, they are merely a highly debateable alternative to adequate public assistance : the housing committee—like so many other committees—then becomes a duplicate public assistance committee.

The prevailing tendency has thus been hitherto for any citizen who so desires to qualify for the receipt of these publicly-provided services, either by just coming and taking them, or by paying a standard customary price below cost of production, or by paying a differential price fixed according to a rough-and-ready calculation of means.

When, however, we turn from these services to payments in cash and kind, we find ourselves in a realm whose doors are closed by law as well as custom to all but the comparatively poor. Payments have invariably and necessarily been made available only to those whose means are found on strict

investigation to fall below some rather low estimate of our needs. These payments have sometimes therefore been called a poverty or relief or salvage system, as distinct from what on the whole is legally if not in practice a system of general community services.

The general and inevitable adoption of this primary principle has been accompanied, however, by a wide divergence of secondary principle when we come to the actual basis on which means and needs are to be assessed.

In giving domiciliary relief, public assistance authorities have always assessed means and needs on the basis of the household that shares the same table. But in giving domiciliary assistance to blind persons since 1920, usually according to a more generous scale of needs, our local authorities have tended to take into consideration the means of all relatives who share the same roof, thus mitigating our generosity. Yet in giving 1908 old-age pensions, again according to a much more generous scale, only the means of the pensioners themselves are taken into consideration by the state: the standard is here set so high that this payment, unlike all others, hardly deserves to be branded as part of a salvage or relief system, so far as nine-tenths of its recipients are concerned.

The diversity which comes from having distinct scales and thinking sometimes of the same table, sometimes the same roof, and sometimes the same bed, is further enhanced by the statutory responsibility imposed on relatives in the direct line of descent. The legal machinery for enabling even public assistance authorities to recover the cost of relief from relatives is defective. And it is doubly doubtful whether blind welfare authorities, for instance, have the legal right even to ask for repayment from relatives who do not form part of the household.

In assessing the applicant's means, it is usually the income of the current year that is calculated. But for a 1908 old-age pension, administered by the board of customs and excise

on the analogy of income-tax, it is the previous year's income, with the curious result that a pensioner may temporarily lose his pension in the very year that he becomes worse off.

In assessing the value of the applicant's savings, again, many different scales have been adopted by different public-assistance and blind-welfare authorities, some of the former even assuming that no applicant was entitled to help unless he had exhausted his savings. But the undesirability and inhumanity of compelling decent people to become literally destitute before they had a claim to help has necessitated the development of a more considerate policy. For 1908 old-age pensions, for unemployed transitional payments since 1932, and for unemployed assistance allowances since 1934, uniform national scales have been laid down.

When we ask whether all this variety is justified, we come up against the problem whether some of these systems of payment are not themselves redundant. There is hardly one of them whose separate existence is not open to serious debate. Duplication and multiplication were inevitable to a generation engaged in circumventing and eclipsing the poor-law. After this work of destruction, the time must come for simplification and rationalization. These systems are a museum of noble intentions and *ad hoc* inventions, with little life, no affection, and small chance of permanence.

The only system of payment that has yet been devised in which there is no test of means and needs is social insurance. And in the case of medical benefit this is also the only system of services that has come near to satisfying both the partisans of gratuity and the advocates of paying our way. According to custom we have not paid these contributions without a grumble. But the desire to prevent them from degenerating into a poll-tax on employment has made it necessary to keep them within such modest limits that the whole risk of unemployment could not be covered. It has also obliged the

treasury to pay one-third of the premium against unemployment, though not yet against ill-health and disablement or against old age and premature death.

It is quite arguable that the employer gets his money's worth in an assured supply of healthy labour; and the benevolent employer has been able to turn his attention to the welfare side of labour management. Besides the poll-tax danger, the chief problem has been that of boundaries. 'Wider still and wider may her bounds be set,' has been the inevitable tendency, in the hope of making all the means-test systems redundant. Trial and error have shown that this is not practicable in providing against the too-great risk of unemployment. But insurance against ill-health and disablement, premature death and old-age, already cover half as many persons again as unemployment insurance. When the pledge to accept wider categories of voluntary contributors is fulfilled, the disproportion in the members covered by the two services will be yet greater. And it is obvious that if this now promised development had occurred a generation earlier we should have had less need of 1908 non-contributory old-age pensions, and perhaps no domiciliary assistance for the blind outside the poor-law. These social insurances are thus powerful forces militating against the multiplication of relief-payment systems, though no conceivable extension of insurance could remove the need for relief payment in the three circumstances of too-great risk, as with continued unemployment, too-small benefit, with permanent disablement or old-age, and non-insurability. Social insurance as a method of assuring gratuitous services as distinct from payments has so far been applied only to medical treatment, and, even here, only in the most tentative form. But in respect of services as of relief-payments, insurance offers so obviously simple a way of avoiding all means tests, that there is now a slight but perceptible tendency for it to be voluntarily adopted as an alternative to differential fees when hospital treatment is desired.

If we try to obtain a quantitative estimate of this development we may summarise the rise in our public social-service expenditure in Great Britain between 1900 and 1930 as follows: the cost of rate-and-tax-provided services other than sanitation was multiplied by seven, till it amounted to some £165,000,000 a year, this expansion being almost entirely due to the extension of already-existing services. The cost of rate-and-tax-provided relief-payments was similarly multiplied by seven, till it amounted to nearly £100,000,000 a year, more than half of this expansion being due to the introduction of new payment-systems parallel with the poor-law. But the prize has been taken by the social-insurance system whose expenditure rose from zero to some £150,000,000 a year.*

III. EXPERIMENTAL RIGHTS

One of the most salient features in this epoch-making series of experiments is the frequency with which the unemployment insurance system has been chopped and changed about. Between the principal acts of 1920 and 1934, important changes were made under several dozen acts and orders. Yet it is obvious that an insurance is no insurance when the risk covered, the premium paid, and the benefit received are all subject to repeated and arbitrary change on the part of the strongest of the three parties to the policy. Since the end of 1920, unemployment insurance has been simply a bundle of expedients, which has always hoped that it might some day recover its lost youth and become an insurance policy again, but has never quite succeeded. The changes that have been made have often been in the interest of insured persons, for a while at least: witness the increase in benefit in 1920 or the introduction of dependants' benefit in 1923, the abolition of the fifteen weeks limit in 1921 and the twenty-six weeks limit

* Command Paper 5025 of 1935 (the Drage return), omitting war pensions.

in 1927, or the increase of child-dependants' benefit in 1924 and adult dependants' in 1931. These changes have sometimes redounded to the interest even of those who were not previously qualified, as with the uncovenanted benefit to which they were admitted in 1921. But such advantages have proved only temporary. What was gained by the arbitrary action of parliament could be lost by arbitrary action. Rights acquired by the statutory perversion of the insurance principle were bound to be lost if ever an attempt was made to restore the self-balancing insurance character of the fund. And that was exactly what happened when persons who had paid less than thirty contributions during the last two years were retained in benefit on only a temporary transitional basis under the Blanesburgh reconstruction of 1927, and on a still larger scale when these and others besides who had previously been fully qualified were subjected to the means test in 1931.

This provisional nature of unemployment insurance policies has even been erected into a permanent system under the act of 1934. Taking a leaf out of the economy legislation of 1931, this act set up a new unemployment insurance statutory committee to which it delegated the power to initiate changes in the law any year that it thought this might be expedient on actuarial grounds, subject only to the ministry's acceptance of responsibility and the formal endorsement of the draft order by parliament. And the ministry, on the eve of an election, has picked out the more expensive and popular side of this committee's proposals and rejected the counter-balancing economies. But though the power of change was increased, the area in which it could operate was now limited to maintaining the solvency of a self-balancing scheme.

Insurance depends on foresight. Yet even to-day, after twenty-five years' experience of unemployment insurance, we have not accumulated enough knowledge and experience to say definitely what premiums will suffice to pay what benefit and for how long.

Past experience makes the onlooker wonder how far unemployment insurance can ever be more than a euphemism for a system of variable taxes and payments. But if ever the time should come when actuaries know enough to enable us to construct a true insurance scheme, then experience suggests that there might be something to be said in favour of removing this and other social insurances as far as possible from government tampering, by investing state contributions with the sanctity of a consolidated fund service, no less intangible than the salaries of the nation's king and judges, or by making them unalterable without either a poll of the participants, much as we have done with our agricultural marketing schemes, or, more usefully, a prior examination and report by organizations representing the beneficiaries and experienced in the administration of these funds.

Too arbitrary a use of the sovereignty of parliament has here led and can lead only to a conflict between legal and moral rights, with all the discontent and friction which such a conflict implies.

IV. CENTRALIZATION

In 1935 we celebrated one hundred years of expanding local government: we must not forget that the activity and responsibility of the central organs of the state have expanded in yet fuller measure, and, within living memory, at a far faster pace.

This becomes evident the moment we look at responsibility for finance, for administration, and for policy.

Financial responsibility has been very largely removed from local shoulders. Half of our total annual expenditure on the public social services—some £200,000,000 out of some £400,000,000—goes in three new national services, not one of which existed thirty years ago and not one of which derives a penny from the rates. The first of these was old-age

pensions, which had to be national if they were to obviate all fear of coming on the parish. Then came health and similar insurances which could hardly have been brought into existence if they could not be administered at the outset at least through already-existing supra-local and often nation-wide societies and unions. Greatest of all, steps have been taken towards the organization of the labour market; and, from the days of the early exchanges down to the latest experiment in an unemployment assistance board, these had to be nation-wide if they were to provide adequate machinery for transfer and mobility.

The older social services, whose foundations were laid by local initiative during the nineteenth century, have also now reached a position where as large a part of the bill is met out of taxes as out of rates. This process has gone furthest in post-war housing, on which councils spend more money from parliamentary grants than from rates, and still more from loans secured on the rates but sanctioned by the central authority. The reason for this would seem to be that councils would otherwise have shrunk from adding to their own burdens and those of their fellow rate-payers, whether as residents, as house-owners, or as industrialists. And even the three-quarter de-rating of industry since 1930 has not removed this financial obstacle to local self-taxation: the councils prefer to be dependent for the present on central subsidies and borrowed capital, while looking forward to the day when the debt will be paid off and the property be really theirs to enjoy the income from—by which time it will probably need re-building.

In education, where capital expenditure counts for less and maintenance for more, the partnership is more equal: for two generations the parliamentary vote has hovered about the same figures as the income from local sources. The reason for this is an old one. It is that government and parliament one hundred years ago would not allow any local rate at all to be levied for educational purposes, through fear that its

distribution might give rise to inter-denominational communal strife. If public aid there was to be, they preferred that it should take the form of a central stimulus to local generosity. It was therefore only between 1870 and 1902 that rate-aid took its present place as the prevailing method of providing the local share of the cost of education.

When we penetrate back to the earliest social functions of our modern local authorities—public assistance and health—we come at last to a realm in which they long remained the financial masters of their own fate. In these services alone, in the pioneer days, they had to pay their way, without any subsidy even to meet the capital cost of new workhouses or main drainage. Such grants-in-aid as were evolved were for maintaining law and order, and not for the nascent social services, with such puny exceptions as the assumption by the exchequer in 1846 of half the cost of poor-law teachers and medical officers and all the cost of district auditors, or the payment from 1875 of a fixed sum for each pauper lunatic in an asylum. Goschen in 1888 tried to call a halt to this process by consolidating these primitive grants-in-aid in a general exchequer contribution: this was limited to the proceeds of locally collected licence-duties and one quarter of the locally-collected probate duty; no provision was made for its periodic re-apportionment among the historic counties in accordance with their evolving needs; and it ceased to rise and fall with the rise and fall of local expenditure, so that the councils stood to gain unduly by parsimony even if they lost deservedly by profusion. But Goschen's search for finality was premature. And new grants-in-aid were voted for new odds and ends as they rose to importance—tuberculosis treatment and mental deficiency, for instance, in the hands of local authorities, and blind welfare and maternity and infant welfare in the hands of voluntary local agencies—to say nothing of huge items such as motor-roads which can hardly be counted

among the social services, although they have often been subsidized with a view to providing employment.

Taking advantage of the trebling of grants to compensate for de-rating, in 1929 Mr Neville Chamberlain therefore renewed Goschen's attempt to consolidate these miscellaneous grants in a general exchequer contribution. Instead of being fixed and final, these new block grants are to rise with the rise in the nation's rate-borne expenditure; a minimum proportion is guaranteed instead of a maximum sum being determined for all time. And these grants are to be periodically re-apportioned among the administrative counties and county boroughs, so that the apportionment shall gradually be made proportionate to their population, with some adjustment to meet such needs as arise from an abnormally high rate of expansion, abnormally high unemployment, or abnormally low rateable value.*

Experience is already suggesting ways in which this new formula may need modification if it is to be brought into full harmony with the trend of local development; for calculations are at present based not on the average of a series of years but on the penultimate year of each period, which may well happen to fall at a most unrepresentative point on the path of the trade cycle. And if this experiment should be blessed with better success than its predecessor, it may perhaps point the way to a single all-embracing block grant that takes in even education and housing. If this were to happen, then every council would become free to allocate its block grant to whatever service it pleased, subject only to the right of the minister to reduce the grant if the council did not provide a reasonably efficient service in certain specified departments—health is so specified at present—or if the council's expenditure seemed unreasonable.

* Expansion, if over 5% of local population are children under five. Unemployment, if over 1½% are unemployed men, ten women counting as one man. Rateable value, if under £10 per head—which local authorities are thus encouraged to arrange.

This would enable the councils to advance a big step further towards administrative responsibility. For it is a time-honoured and respected tradition, and an affair of obvious political wisdom, that the central authority should devolve as much as possible of its responsibility for detail on to local shoulders. Our modern elective local authorities have never been subjected to so rigorous an ignominy as the system of payment by results which had to be inflicted on voluntary-school managers. The inspectors of the central departments have at long last begun to win for themselves the welcome due to the travelled expert adviser instead of that which is reserved for the executioner. And the end of the ear-marking of grants might well bring with it a reduction of local over-departmentalization.

But while the local authorities are thus growing to the maturity of responsible partnership in the administration of those social services for which they help to find the money, they have had to watch the growth of those other and newer services for which they do not find a penny and over whose administration they consequently have no claim to more than the merest voice. Their services have none the less been enlisted to a surprising extent.

Councils functioning as statutory local pensions committees have thus heard and decided claims to old-age pension; and public assistance committees were for three-and-a-half years entrusted with assessing the means and needs of the formerly-insured unemployed who claimed transitional payments at the national employment exchange (1931–35). With health insurance, employment exchanges, and the new unemployment assistance experiment, there have, however been so many interests whose co-operation has had to be assured, that an *ad hoc* committee on which an elected council is only one interest among many has been preferred, whether the functions of the committee are semi-judicial as with health insurance or merely advisory and consultative.

The tendency to leave local authorities with as much responsibility as possible for local administration is clear. And whether or not this serves a useful purpose still depends less on questions of administrative efficiency than on the utility of leavening public opinion by providing opportunities for laymen to gain experience of the principles involved in meeting the practical problems of civilized government.

While devolution of administrative responsibility has remained the rule wherever it has been practicable, it has been axiomatic ever since 1834 that policy ought to be determined at the centre. The rigidity of poor-relief regulations on the question of home relief for able-bodied men is well-remembered: we forget the astonishing latitude that was allowed to boards of guardians throughout the whole of their existence on almost every other issue. And this instance is typical. The reluctance of government to lay down binding laws and regulations ahead of public opinion has resulted in always leaving a no-man's-land where local authorities have been free to experiment. This has happened not only where the act of parliament has been either permissive or adoptive, or where—since the public health act of 1848—provisional order procedure has been used for obviating the cost of a private bill. It has happened also—with doubtful legality—where parliament has been silent, as with the first municipal labour bureaux and the school-boards' higher-grade schools. And it has happened in virtue of mere statutory *et ceteras*, as in the initiation of the school medical service. The initiation of policy has never in fact been altogether closed to local authorities, although the pursuit of particular policies has been, and, as their functions have expanded, so has the doctrine of *ultra vires* and the menace of the district auditor with his surcharge on individual councillors of costs which they had no right to incur as a body. Even when a binding policy is laid down by parliament, one of the subtlest procedures ever invented—apparently when remodelling endowed schools

in 1868—has been resorted to for at least the last sixty years to secure the voluntary support and good-will of the local authorities: they are required to submit schemes, under threat of a public inquiry on the spot to show whether their scheme is adequate.

All local administrative diversity, however, can from its very nature be only temporary. To give people rights in one place which they are denied in another is inequality and injustice. Such diversity is inseparable from gradualness and liberty. But among a people that feel themselves a single nation it becomes tolerable only when it means a slight and momentary difference in the rate of advance, one local community being temporarily ahead in one matter and one in another, but all continually catching one another up and marching in the same direction. Each goes ahead in the belief that the others will be constrained to catch it up.

The problem of centralization or de-centralization is one entirely of degree. It is just a question of finding the arrangement best suited to enlisting the maximum of co-operation in the service of the needs of a particular age. And in our own age and country this has meant a great growth in local responsibilities, at the same time as a still greater growth in those of the central authority.

V. LOCAL UNITS

With the end of the *ancien régime*, the historic provinces which France inherited from feudal days were split up into departments of uniform extent on the basis of physical convenience. The towns and villages and hamlets were organized in well-defined *communes*. And within the *département* the *communes* were grouped in *arrondissements* and *cantons*. Here was a model of a uniform hierarchy of administrative units, organized on a utilitarian rather than a historical or sentimental basis.

In England such a rearrangement seemed less necessary. Except for a few abnormally large counties, we had no units so unwieldly as provinces. The average county was of the size of a *département;* and though its boundaries showed more respect for historical accidents than for physical needs, it made up for its disadvantages by being the traditional unit of aristocratic self-government. Within the county the parish was also an equally vigorous unit, and, while the county was ruled by the squires in a body, the parish tended to be dominated by its own parson.

But between the county and the parish we had no well-defined unit. And the local-government history of this country in the nineteenth century is dominated by the search for a *tertium quid* between county and parish.

So far as self-government was concerned—as distinct from the central provision of local judicial machinery—the search for a middle term was bound up with the evolution of the social services. It was within the framework of *ad hoc* utilitarian units that the new needs were met.

But this tendency was not so exclusively utilitarian that it could be expected to survive indefinitely. It was also historically conditioned. That is to say, it was a conscious attempt to side-track the traditional units of English local government, because only so could the *ancien régime* of squire and parson be superseded and local self-government be based on the new democratic principle of representation by election.

When a whig government took poor-law administration out of the control of the parish in 1834, it had no wish to saddle the landed aristocracy and gentry of the county with untrammelled responsibility and odium. So it compelled the parishes to amalgamate into unions, each big enough to employ a full-time salaried relieving officer, as some had already done voluntarily since 1819; and it left poor-relief within these unions to middle-class farmers and shopkeepers who could be subjected to a degree of central direction that

would have been beneath the dignity of the county bench.

The union having thus come into existence bade fair to become Chadwick's maid of all work. It was made responsible for the civil registration of vital statistics and for compulsory vaccination against small-pox.

It did not, however, become the universal unit for sanitation. Improvement commissioners were often elected under private and local acts of parliament, promoted by other units with more homogeneity and more corporate feeling. The municipal boroughs reformed in 1835 were obvious units, and did not often coincide with the unions set up under the legislation of the previous year. And the local sanitary boards elected under the general public health act of 1848 were also for districts marked out by natural homogeneity and local feeling.

When the network of local sanitary authorities was completed by Stansfeld in 1872, it was only therefore in rural districts that the same unit—the union—served both for poor-relief and for public health.

When school-boards were set up in 1870, further multiplication of units was necessary. The sanitary district or poor-law union was too big, as it contained parishes which had already voluntarily provided sufficient elementary-school accommodation and therefore had no need of compulsion. So a unit much nearer in size to the parish was adopted. And it was only under pressure from the radical education league that Gladstone's liberal government desisted from its original proposal to make the parish as such, with all its Anglican traditions, responsible for the new schools.

For over fifty years, England blossomed with *ad hoc* boards of many varied shapes and sizes and functions, on which the middle class enjoyed opportunities of service, responsibility, experience, and prestige such as they had never known before. But in 1884 the parliamentary franchise was extended even to the farm labourer. This made it almost inevitable

that the rulers of the county should be subjected to popular election. And no sooner were county councils called into being by Ritchie in 1888 than they had heaped on them all the new obligations of which the state has become conscious during the half-century between that day and this.

The first result was overlapping. While elementary education was still provided by parish school-boards, secondary and technical education became the responsibility of the county. While refuse and sewerage and nuisances and contagious persons were removable by the district council—as the sanitary board was more honourably entitled in 1894—newly invented methods of specialized medical treatment as of tuberculosis tended to fall to the county council, as also did the supervision of midwives and maternity homes. And while poor-relief remained the affair of the union, the new old-age pensions and blind-welfare and health-insurance systems were from the first organized on a county basis if not always under the control of the county council itself.

So long as every local authority was complementary to every other, none of them was able to see the full extent of any single problem, let alone obtain an adequate view of the mutual interaction and correlation of the different services. So the next step was to eliminate *ad hoc* authorities. This began with the abolition of the comparatively youthful school-boards in 1902, the counties taking over their functions except where a counter-claim could be established by county boroughs on the principle that they were always exempt from county jurisdiction or by lesser boroughs or urban districts on the ground that they were sufficiently populous to provide and maintain adequate elementary schools of their own without too great a risk of denominationalism.

And the movement thus begun was continued in 1929, when the boards of guardians were cut off shortly before their hundredth birthday and their duties similarly transferred to the shoulders of the county councils, with untold advantage

to the county hospital service as well as to the co-ordination of public assistance with other forms of domiciliary help.

By 1929 we were learning to leave no ill-defined boundaries for the county to contest with the district. The education blunder of 1902 was not repeated; for populous urban districts and smallish boroughs had then been left free to evolve central schools capable of competing in nearly all but name with county secondary schools; and the delay of these lesser education authorities in co-ordinating their schemes under the aegis of the county education authority had been one of the rocks on which Mr Fisher's continuation schools eventually foundered. In the sanitary field alone the district still holds its own; yet the county has been allowed to rival the district as a housing authority since 1909, although the district was then erroneously made the principal planning authority, a blunder which has become apparent now that we have realized that this is as much a transport problem—main roads being the county's affair—as a sanitary question.

The district council thus remains in fact, if not in name, the last of the *ad hoc* boards. It inherits the powers of the sanitary board; in rural districts it is descended also from the now defunct board of guardians; and in urban districts it is the residuary legatee of the school-board. But whichever way it turns—health, housing, planning, or education—it now comes up against a competing or complementary county council. And through reluctance to share a full-time medical officer of health with neighbouring authorities, it has too often had to fee a private practitioner instead of employing a specialist in preventive medicine.

Utilitarian considerations are thus gradually leading to the rehabilitation of the county as the chief unit for administering such of the social services as are locally controlled, because mere administration is not enough: intelligent co-ordination is required. This may leave the little man with less opening for the satisfaction of his petty—though far

from humble—ambitions; but the big man of wide views will have a heavy task before him if he is even now to overcome the departmentalism of our local social administration. Our heritage from early-Victorian England is not the red-tape of enlightened despotism: it is the water-tight compartment.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE LEGISLATION

The passage of a bill by parliament is only the beginning of the history of a law. It may fail to command obedience. It may remain a pious aspiration. This is what normally happened in earlier ages; and the difference between a modern and a medieval state in this respect is one only of degree.

If dead-letter legislation was to be avoided, the prime requisite was a central department empowered to supervise and direct the establishment and maintenance of adequate machinery for administering the new law. But that alone was not enough. The law itself could not be taken as a finished product the moment it had passed out of parliament's hands. All manner of adjustments might be necessary to meet technical difficulties and unforeseen contingencies. The law would have to remain plastic, for a while at least. Otherwise it might prove a piece of theoretical abstraction, unrelated to the concrete circumstances with which it was intended to deal.

Such considerations are no doubt of more or less universal and eternal validity. But they have been reinforced by the conditions under which new laws are put on the statute-book under a parliamentary regime. The government might have no time to pass a controversial and technical measure of more than limited length, especially before the importation of the closure. Or it might have to seize a convenient moment, without waiting for the details of a measure to be fully worked out, knowing that it would otherwise be caught in some

first-rate political storm, as in 1911 when the national insurance bill ran the risk of being sunk by the parliament act and the home-rule bill. Less frequently, shortage of time and a desire to avoid controversy might lead to no parliamentary action at all, beyond the appropriation of ways and means to some government department, which would then have to draw up regulations for its own guidance in allocating the credit that parliament had placed at its untrammelled disposal.

For all these reasons, the administrator was bound to turn legislator. And not all of this subordinate and complementary legislation has even been expressly delegated by the sovereign parliament.

One of the most far-reaching and instructive instances of this administrative legislation was furnished by the poor-law reform act of 1834. This set up a statutory commission, as politically irresponsible as if it had been a new court of law, with no time-limit, and with a free hand to lay down the principles to which the new boards of guardians were bound to conform. The only guidance given it by parliament was on the abolition of allowances intended to supplement the wages of able-bodied rural labourers: when it encouraged the general mixed workhouse, it was bowing before circumstances, in defiance of the recommendations of the great royal commission, and without a shred of express statutory authority. A body with such ill-restricted powers over the lives and fortunes of British subjects would have been an intolerable anomaly even if Chadwick had had nothing to do with it. And it was thoroughly in accordance with the implications of responsible cabinet government that Lord John Russell in 1847 replaced the three bashaws of Somerset House by a board of politically responsible ministers, a sort of sub-committee of the cabinet, whose legislative mandate was periodically renewed by statute for the next twenty years, until it descended to a single responsible departmental chief in the shape of a president of the local government board in 1871

and his successor the minister of health in 1919. Never since this ill-fated experiment has social-service legislation been taken out of politics and entrusted to an extra-parliamentary commission, in spite of the regrets of some subsequent poor-law administrators, although a very similar device is now on trial for such public services as broadcasting. But to this day the poor-law acts remain abnormal in that they give the responsible minister indefinite authority to decide questions of general principle, instead of merely making transitory provision for the removal of difficulties encountered on first bringing a new act into operation.

One perennial subject of administrative legislation has thus been the laying down of regulations for poor-relief which ratepayers' representatives could not transgress without the risk of surcharge. Another equally perennial subject has been the posing of conditions under which local bodies could obtain their share of grants voted by parliament for such purposes as education.

The education department was established by letters patent in 1839 as a committee of the privy council—a prerogative procedure deliberately adopted by Lord Melbourne's tottering whig cabinet as a device for settling grant-regulations by pressure, negotiation and compromise, rather than risk the agitation of first principles and the certain disintegration of the government party in parliament. Unconstitutional this department most certainly was not, since it was presided over by a politically responsible minister with the title of vice-president of the council. Yet with the aid of a permanent secretary such as Dr. Kay, and no lay criticism but that of the invisible committee of the council, he was able to prescribe conditions on which voluntary schools might receive government grants. He was able—in the person of Robert Lowe—to collect these council minutes into a code. He was able to set the whole educational world by the ears by arbitrarily revising this code. And the only check upon this

subordinate legislation was the political responsibility of the ministry of which the vice-president happened to be a not very important member. Only in 1870, when the first education act was passed, was the vice-president of the council statutorily compelled to lay all future codes on the table of the house for one month, in order to give an opportunity for the sovereign legislature to veto this subordinate legislation.

The wisdom of such a precaution has since then won general recognition. Its value has lain mainly in its inducement to additional care on the part of the department; and this check might have been rendered somewhat more effective if parliament had evolved a committee procedure suited to the automatic scrutiny of such extra-parliamentary legislation.

The health department was much slower in developing powers of perpetual legislation. It did not have to check the unintelligent and undiscriminating relief of one section of the community by another. Nor did it have to lay down conditions for the grant of parliamentary subsidies. So the general board of health of 1848 was merely a nondescript body consisting of a junior whig minister (the first commissioner of works), an unpaid tory philanthropist (Lord Shaftesbury), a radical lawyer as paid secretary (Chadwick), and a radical doctor as expert adviser on the burial of the dead (Southwood Smith), for little other purpose than to keep an eye on the execution of the earliest sanitary and nuisance statutes, investigate sanitary conditions with a view to further parliamentary action, and compel places with an abnormally high death-rate to set up sanitary authorities—although they had no power to compel these authorities to do anything except remain in existence as a badge of the town's unhealthiness. The minister who answered for their measures and reports in parliament could be outvoted at the board: the policy they outlined for the public was theirs and not his. From 1854 to 1858 the alternative experiment was therefore tried of subordinating the board to a responsible departmental

minister who should have the help of medical officers in a purely advisory capacity. But health work required so little central regulation that the now somewhat illusory board was first transformed into an equally illusory committee of the privy council under the vice-president responsible for elementary education—a curious combination originally invented in Prussia—and then in 1871 attached by Stansfeld to the poor-law audit-system in the local government board.

What governed the original establishment of our social-service departments in the nineteenth century seems in fact to have been administrative legislation in connection with the distribution of public money.

VII. ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE

The rights claimed by some can be protected only by restricting the rights claimed by others. But old-established courts of law tend to stress the protection of old-established rights. And in every age of rapid change some new machinery tends therefore to be evolved for the enforcement of new claims and the restriction of old privileges.

This happened at the end of the Middle Ages, when chancery and the council came in to supplement the courts of common law. And it has happened again within the last two or three generations.

Juries have proved better fitted to decide 'Yes' or 'No' than 'More' or 'Less.' They are apt to get lost in technical detail which is foreign to them. And the pro and the contra of any question of policy would probably find them almost evenly divided.

Justices of the peace tend to inherit and perpetuate even stronger social and political prejudices. In questions of maintenance and affiliation, the male defaulter has tended to get better justice than his woman or child creditor. Defendants' means have been assessed by rough and ready standards

according to the class to which they are presumed to belong, instead of their particular circumstances being specially investigated. Magistrates' frequent failure to deal reasonably with child neglect has necessitated the formation of a special panel for juvenile courts. Although usually well-advised in law, they are generally unadvised on policy. The latitude allowed them by law has often left room for the entry of extraneous considerations of policy. And even when their opinions on policy have some local justification, the comparatively small area covered by each of their courts has hardly been conducive to their realizing what policy or what attitude is in the best interest of the nation or the region as a whole. Such social jurisdiction as the justices still wield, especially in much that concerns family life, are survivals from the day when all county administration was in their hands. But as local elective bodies have had administrative functions, both new and old, thrust upon them, they have often had to initiate proceedings in the courts—in 1848, even boards of guardians were encouraged to equate themselves to a grand jury, as a more modern method of indicting breaches of the nuisance laws—and if the proceedings they initiate are to be judged with sympathy and understanding, it is almost inevitable for them to desire and prefer some more expert, more specialized and more consistent tribunal. The county magistracy has therefore tended to be left on one side, rather than superseded.

The county-court judges of 1846 have proved well capable of settling debts arising out of the workmen's compensation and employers' liability acts. But many of the questions that have to be decided are of a totally different character, especially when they are so much matters of policy that they cannot be reduced to terms of law and fact.

For deciding questions of fact or law arising out of the operation of the social services, three new types of judicial machinery have therefore been evolved.

The specialized court of law is less important here than in

transport. But one good instance of this device—and perhaps the oldest—is the General Medical Council which has decided without appeal since 1858 whether any individual medical practitioner is entitled to enjoy the advantages of registration. And this has been imitated by the Central Midwives' board, which has exercised a similar domestic jurisdiction since 1902, subject, however, to appeal to the high court.

Far more important has been the specialized ministerial tribunal. This has flourished most vigorously in settling social-insurance and war-pensions claims, both to decide whether a claimant is entitled to benefit and also at what figure his claim is to be assessed if he is so entitled. What might almost be called the classic instance of these ministerial tribunals was the hierarchy through which unemployment insurance appeals could be carried, from the insurance officer up through the court of referees to the umpire.

On a few rare but notorious occasions, parliament has absent-mindedly allowed the minister to constitute himself the sole tribunal for deciding questions of fact or law. So early as 1847, the poor-law board was empowered to remit surcharges if it held that the district auditor was wrong in thinking that a board of guardians had acted *ultra vires*. In 1875, again, Disraeli's public health act empowered the president of the local government board to hear and decide appeals from local authorities' decisions on the equity of compensation or betterment, without making any adequate provision for publishing either the inspector's report on which the decision was based or the minister's reason for making his decision, and without any right of further appeal even on questions of law. Under more recent acts, it is the minister again who hears appeals from the appropriate local committee on whether a particular claimant is entitled to old-age pension, or whether some blind individual is blind within the meaning of the blind persons act, or whether some special employment is employment within the meaning of the national health insurance

act: it is not at all clear why no special appeal tribunal has been erected to decide disputed facts of this sort, nor why no adequate provision has been made for appeal to the high court on points of law. It is perhaps a by-product of the minister's law-making powers.

Anomalous though it is for the political head of a department to adjudicate on questions of law and fact, it is necessarily he that is supremely responsible for the administration of policy. The objections raised against judicial decisions by a minister are not equally valid against merely quasi-judicial decisions. For here he is not deciding a claimant's legal rights: he is merely weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of some proposed line of action. Under the education act of 1921, for instance, he may decide whether a particular non-provided school is necessary to a certain locality, having regard to the adequate provision of secular instruction, the wishes of parents, and the economy of the rates. Or under the housing act of 1925, he might decide whether an improvement scheme that was complained against was beneficial. A decision of this sort involves so many imponderable factors that it must inevitably be biased by opinion, outlook, and experience, rather than based upon legal precedent or factual proof. And it is therefore properly given not by an irremoveable member of a tribunal but by a responsible minister.

Administrative justice as applied to the social services—so the lord chancellor's committee on ministers' powers has argued—thus means two very different things. It may signify the definitely judicial decisions made by the specialized domestic court of some profession or by an *ad hoc* ministerial tribunal or by the minister himself. Or it may be merely quasi-judicial. In the former case it is or should be judge's justice in the ordinary legal sense: in the latter case it is only that rough and ready social justice in which all social policy and the service of the public interest consists.

VIII. SOCIAL-SERVICE EXPENDITURE

The essence of taxation is the compulsory transfer of income from some persons to others. And one of the most striking aspects of the social-service state is the very considerable change that has occurred in the distribution of both the burden and the benefits of taxation.

In the nineteenth century a good half of the exchequer receipts came from indirect taxes. In so far as these were taxes on the conventional necessities consumed by all classes, they tended to be regressive: the smaller the family income, the larger the proportion that was liable to be transferred by taxation. Further expansion of indirect taxation was somewhat impeded by the small number of taxable articles of consumption that were not prime necessities and also by the government's fear that increasing duties might bring diminishing returns. But the rise of the joint stock company and the eclipse of landed wealth by trade and investment opened up unexplored and apparently limitless possibilities of increasing the direct taxation of wealth. And as a practical expedient there was much to be said for making direct taxation progressive, so that it should be from the largest incomes that the largest share was transferred.

Political principle pointed in the same direction as fiscal expediency. Whether the broadest backs had borne a fair share of the burden in the nineteenth century had often been questioned, and not least by statisticians and economists. When Asquith's government graduated the tax on the higher incomes and estates, it defended its policy as an attempt to make each class pay an adequate proportion to the nation's expenses.

Progressive direct taxation, adopted thirty years ago, has not replaced regressive indirect taxation: it has merely supplemented it. It is still in the lowest as well as the highest

ranges that the greatest proportion of income is liable to be transferred by the state. But in the higher ranges the transfer is compulsory, whereas in the lower it is to some extent optional: no one is compelled to consume a set quantity of beer, spirits, tobacco, tea, or sugar; changes in convention, especially among the working and lower middle classes, allow all who wish to abstain from the first three at least of these one-time conventional necessities; and taxes on the last two have been deliberately kept low. Thus the main burden of national taxation has now been flung on to the shoulders of those most capable of bearing it, except in so far as the less wealthy choose to indulge intemperately in luxuries they can ill afford. Fifty years ago, exchequer receipts from income-tax and death-duties were not much more than half those derived from the five chief taxable items of consumption: to-day they are twice as heavy. The receipts from these indirect taxes have been multiplied by four: those from direct taxes, by sixteen.

This shifting of the burden indicates an important change in social policy; but it would hardly be relevant to a study of the social services if it did not bring with it a shifting also of the benefits.

Fifty years ago, the lion's share of public expenditure was on the fighting services and the national debt service; and from these the direct benefit accrued mainly to the propertied part of the nation, although it was arguable that the less rich may also have derived an incalculable indirect benefit. The annual cost of national defence, imperial expansion, and war debt, was then three times the total sum spent out of both national taxes and local rates on popular education and poor-relief.

By 1931 the gross expenditure both national and local on the principal statutory social services had risen to approximately the same level as the annual cost of defence and the national debt. While national defence and debt expenditure

was multiplied by nine between 1888 and 1931, social-service expenditure was multiplied by twenty-seven.

Defence, debt, and the social services have increased simultaneously in cost; but over the last fifty years as a whole the expansion has been smallest on armaments and greatest on the social services.

It is not that social services have expanded at the expense of defence. Far from it. The only substantial evidence of such a conflict of policies, apart from the natural and normal rivalry of spending departments all equally hard put to it to win treasury approval, comes from the depression of 1921, and even then it cuts both ways: for the dropping of an expensive health minister and his housing programme was justified by the cost of our Mesopotamian commitments, as much as the scaling down of defence expenditure to something nearer pre-war level was accompanied by increased provision for the growing army of unemployed. It would be nearer the truth to explain all these increases in expenditure as so many aspects of the growing power of the nation-state in an age of government by consent: most of those who concentrate on using this power as an instrument of social justice, desire also that the new order as it evolves shall be protected from the dangers of international anarchy; and the wisest of those who concentrate on defending the right of their own and other countries to evolve without armed interference from outside are well aware that safety in armaments is a delusion, unless the men and women behind them feel that their country is worth defending. The man who unified Germany with blood and iron was the pioneer of social insurance. 'Homes for heroes' and 'a C_3 nation' were revealing slogans. And war pensions accounted for one-third of our social service expenditure in 1921 and one-tenth in 1931.

It is difficult to measure the exact extent to which the less fortunate majority of citizens have gained from the services

organized for their direct benefit through the agency of the state. A parliamentary wrangle on this subject between Philip Snowden and Asquith in June 1913 did, however, lead to the official adoption of a suggestion previously thrown out by Mr Geoffrey Drage: a return was made showing the expenditure incurred both nationally and locally under certain acts of parliament on what was clumsily called 'direct beneficiary assistance.' 'Social services' was the name preferred by the registrar-general, Sir Bernard Mallet, and adopted by him that same year in his history of the British budgets of the previous quarter-century: it corresponded to 'debt services' and 'defence services.' And the title has met so great a need that it rapidly passed into currency.

There are many items of expenditure which some would gladly see added to or omitted from this return;* but it does at least give a generally accepted figure as a starting-point for intelligible discussion. We all know now that nearly £500,000,000 a year†—perhaps an eighth or a tenth of our total national income—is compulsorily transferred from some pockets to others, with the direct purpose of making education and health, security and employment, available to those whose unaided private resources could seldom have sufficed to provide them with services of an equal standard.

What is no less important is the exact source from which these funds are taken.

At the present time, nearly one-half comes from parliamentary votes. In other words, it is derived from taxes. To earmark each tax and say that it is reserved for such and such a service is contrary to the whole spirit of the consolidated fund. But it is none the less interesting to notice that before the war the indirect taxes on the consumption of beer,

* It omits blind welfare, public baths and wash-houses, state scholarships, employment exchanges, and factory inspection, to say nothing of sanitary services and university grants from which all classes alike benefit directly.

† Omitting capital expenditure out of loans, but including war pensions.

spirits, tobacco, tea, and sugar, were more than enough to defray the parliamentary votes for the social services, and that it is only during the last few years that they have been insufficient for this purpose. This suggests that there may perhaps be some ground for arguing that parliamentary votes for the social services have to some extent tended to finance public provident institutions at the expense of private improvidence, to perhaps a greater extent than they have tended to transfer purchasing power from the rich to the poor.

Less than a quarter of the total receipts for the social services come from local rates and de-rating grants. The whole intention of local rating when it was sanctioned by sixteenth-century statutes was that all should contribute to the cost of poor-relief and houses of correction according to their ability to pay. Ability was intended to include all forms of property ; but a mere local authority found it difficult to assess the fluctuating stock of the merchant or the value of property belonging to rich parishioners but located in other parishes. So the poor-rate was gradually concentrated on immovable property, in spite of the contention of the judges that this practice was illegal as well as unjust. Parliament legalized this practice in 1840, and all other rates have subsequently been assimilated to the poor-rate. Thus a levy that was intended to be proportionate to ability has come to look suspiciously like a tax on houses and shops, with a variation between what is paid by rich and poor that is narrow indeed in most localities when compared with the difference in their ability to pay. There has thus been a constant tendency to relieve districts in which there is no great variety in house values of some of their burdens. This was done when the union as a whole was charged with the expenses of the poor of all its parishes in 1865 : again when Gathorne-Hardy set up the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund in 1867 to relieve the London unions of the cost of indoor pauperism : and most recently in 1929 when the county superseded the union for all

SOCIAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE

in millions sterling.

(*Compiled from Drage returns, statistical abstracts, and Sir B. Mallet's 'British Budgets.'*)

Financial year ending	1830	1888	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1934
Gross annual expenditure on the principal statutory social services (national, local, and contributory)	6	16	23	36	63	306	468	480
Annual cost of the national debt service	29	26	25	20	24	332	360	224
Annual cost of the national defence services	15	30	32	121	68	292	112	102
Receipts from taxes on beer, spirits, tobacco, tea and sugar	24	39	43	58	62	297	196	176
Receipts from income-tax, surtax and death-duties	—	23	22	30	87	442	390	367

public-assistance purposes. On a yet larger scale it has produced a tendency to favour national rather than local services, especially during the present century, from the passage of the old-age pensions act to the establishment of the unemployment assistance board. And fear that the rates might fall most heavily on agricultural or industrial property in the very areas where unemployment was most grave, has already led to their de-rating and therefore to the partial substitution of grants out of the national taxes in the place of local rates: only time will prove whether this may attract industry to distressed and heavily-rated areas.

There remains another good quarter of the social-service receipts, which is derived neither from local rates nor from national taxes. These are sums collected by public authorities as middlemen, in part-payment for housing or schooling or insurance. Of these it is insurance that is far and away the most important. The classical argument in its favour was given by Mr Lloyd George in 1913: 'There is only one way in which you can get the working classes to contribute fairly, and that is undoubtedly the method adopted in the insurance act, where the tax falls on the man who is actually earning wages at the time.'*

* House of Commons, 2nd June, 1913.

CHAPTER VIII

STATE AND SOCIETY

I. SELF-HELP

MUCH as Eden favoured the inclosure of the commons, he believed that so long as the eighteenth-century village labourer kept a cow he would not be in want. Much the same held true even of the nineteenth-century labourer's pig. His savings were invested in his animal.

When, however, he came to town, a china pig with a slot in it had to suffice. And when the pig failed to grow fat on its feed of pennies, instead of taking the pig to market the pennies had to go to a savings bank. Self-help had become collective in becoming urban.

In one direction it had become collective even earlier, no one quite knows when. That was when friendly societies gathered together in the village inn. And even though an alehouse may hardly have been the environment most conducive to thrift, their purpose, as Eden contended, was improvement, not perfection. Yet it was not till the cotton towns of Lancashire stretched out their tentacles that our dozen great orders developed with their thousands of branches.

Mutual insurance among our French-speaking neighbours has passed through the two well-marked phases of prohibition in the days of Napoleon I and subsidy since those of Napoleon III. In this country it was only orders with branches that were prohibited under Pitt's corresponding societies act. The prohibition lasted only from 1796 to 1851. And it does not seem to have been enforced after the anti-Jacobin panic died down: by 1848 the oddfellows alone numbered 250,000.

Having never gone to the same extreme of prohibition, the British state had no need to accompany its neighbours to the other extreme of artificial resuscitation. Instead of subsidizing friendly societies, the British government has attempted to encourage individuals to join them.

The oldest device—a somewhat two-edged one—was that of Pitt who in 1793 empowered them to protect their funds in the courts as quasi-corporate bodies, on condition that they registered their rules with the justices of the peace. In the terror of 1819 this privilege was whittled down by permitting the justices to certify only those societies whose rules they considered beneficial. But ever since 1829 it has been extended to all whose rules are certified as lawful by an official central register office with a barrister as chief registrar—a tribunal made famous by two mid-Victorian occupants, J. Tidd Pratt and J. M. Ludlow.

Another well-tried device also goes back to Pitt. He it was who began the process of mitigating the poor-law on behalf of friendly-society members. The most that he could then do was to mitigate the law of settlement in their favour, by making them irremoveable from any parish until they became chargeable: the mobility of labour was then in the air. One hundred years later, guardians were obliged to disregard the first few shillings of benefit: the humanizing of relief, so as to make it available before destitution-point was reached, was now the order of the day.

But all these have been eclipsed by the device of utilizing friendly societies as approved societies under the national health and contributory pensions insurance acts. The experience indeed of the largest of them proved invaluable in framing the actuarial basis of the national insurance act of 1911. Their self-governing character has given added value to their opinion on these questions of principle and practice. And of every ten workers in national insurance, four have chosen a friendly society as their approved society.

Trade unions have run a similar course, though from greater depths of repression to greater heights of influence.

As they have gradually become strong enough to negotiate and enforce collective contracts—in some of the skilled and semi-skilled crafts by about 1850 and in whole industries by about 1900—they have become the natural source from which to draw workers' representatives whenever special statutory provision has been necessary for protecting the workers' conditions. And outside the field of industrial labour conditions, trade-union representation was expressly provided for by the war pensions act of 1915.

As the organization of these new entities coincided with the extension of the franchise, they were able to command a hearing, first in the constituencies, later in parliament, and eventually in the government itself. It is impossible to say how far we are directly and indirectly indebted to them for our social services, and especially the income-redistributing ones which are most characteristic of the present age.

But what is—or ought to be—calculable in money is what used to be called the provident side of their activity and is now called the social insurance side. To the labour organizer this has become important mainly as a means to making a union strong in recruiting-power and loyalty: to the social reformer it is no less important in itself. It was largely because of this side of the trade unions' work two generations ago that Thomas Hughes and Frederic Harrison advised them to obtain from parliament the right to sue without saying anything about being sued. The right to sue would protect their growing provident funds against dishonest officials: exemption from being sued would protect these same corporate funds from litigious enemies.

The insurance benefits provided by the unions have fitted in with the state social services in several ways. Before 1911, the principal insurance which they provided and the friendly societies did not, was against the risk of unemployment among

members of skilled crafts. Some adopted the primitive method of making their members an allowance on which to travel about in search of employment; and of these unions some tried to eliminate the wearisome tramp by centralizing information on vacancies and converting the travel-allowance into unemployment pay. To encourage this side of trade-union activity, parliament in 1911 offered a subsidy of one-sixth of each benefit paid, converted since insurance became generally compulsory in 1920 into an administrative grant which has gradually been reduced from a shilling originally to fivepence in 1931: for the ministry was prepared to pay for the experience and police services of all those trade unions whose highly specialized placing machinery offered the best test of genuine unemployment. The apparent expense incurred by the ministry in asking the trade unions to help it would seem to have been a real economy; for, quite apart from the general desirability of encouraging trade-union organization, the mutual check which these trade unions and the employment exchanges have imposed upon one another has reduced fraud to a far lower proportion of the cases dealt with in collaboration with the unions than of those dealt with by the exchanges alone; and when payments have been made in error, the ministry has been able to hold the union financially responsible. As, however, the British trade unions have been trusted to administer funds contributed largely by employers and by the community at large, the fact that their own members were the most interested contributors was not accepted as a sufficient guarantee of conscientious administration: to secure the confidence of employers and of parliament, every union that administered state benefit was obliged also to pay a minimum out-of-work benefit out of its own funds. Many of the co-operating unions discovered however in the slump of 1921 that their resources were inadequate for complying with these conditions: of the eleven million workers then in compulsory unemployment insurance, four

million had this insurance administered by their unions at the beginning, but only one million at the end, of that year. During the next ten years the extension of state benefit for longer and longer terms put a further strain on the funds of co-operating trade unions, compelling them to extend the duration of trade-union as well as of state benefit, upsetting their insurance calculations, dictating continual revision of their benefit rules, and inducing a slowly increasing number to sever the onerous connection between their own unemployment insurance schemes and that of the state.* Of every pound in all the millions paid out under the unemployment insurance acts since the war, sixpence has been paid through trade unions; and to this state benefit these and other unions have added about half as much again out of the non-statutory funds provided entirely by their own members.

For sickness and disablement insurance, the trade unions have competed to a considerable extent with the friendly societies. The sums disbursed by unions on this account have been smaller since the war than those spent on unemployment, and they tend in fact towards a slight decline. Of every ten workers covered by national health and pensions insurance, two now belong to a trade union—in 1920, four were trade unionists,—and, of these, one has chosen his trade union as his approved society, some seventy unions having participated in the administration of national insurance. This has facilitated the compilation of evidence for the scheduling of industrial diseases. And it has dove-tailed in with the fighting of compensation claims.

For the rest, trade-union superannuation benefit has helped to make the state old-age pension more adequate.

In administering and supplementing the state schemes for which they helped to pave the way, trade unions have rendered valuable service. But by this very service they have lost their

* Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, *Minutes of Evidence*, (12 Feb., 1932), 36–101–42.

uniqueness: it has become more difficult for them to attract members by offering them benefits which are unobtainable from any other source.

Of consumers' co-operative societies there is less need to speak here. Like multiple stores, they have grown up on fixed prices, cash payments, a large uniform market, and the expansion of working-class purchasing-power. But within the framework of friendly-society registration they have secured big business without big fortunes. Although they have to compete for custom, they have the advantage of loyalty among members who feel that by dealing with themselves they make their own incomes go further and prevent others from making a profit at their expense. And until 1932 they were helped by the exemption of their undistributed surpluses from income-tax.

On turning from friendly societies and trade unions to co-operative societies, we leave behind us the field of true mutuality, in which one person's loss becomes another's gain. Instead, we come among another kind of collective self-help: the thrift-institution in which the amount we take out is strictly proportioned to what we put in.

Except in so far as they organize guilds and provide funeral benefit, this is so with the co-operative society. It is still more markedly so with the strangely mis-named building-societies, which have been similarly aided by the continued exemption of their shares from income-tax. At best they have enabled three million people to become their own landlord within one hundred years—one million of them since the war. And at worst they have degenerated into unsound savings banks and speculative investment trusts for the credulous, especially before they were compelled to submit to greater publicity after the Liberator crash of forty years ago. During the recent depression their membership has doubled, largely no doubt through the drift of population to new housing estates in the south. But one

wonders whether this may not also have been partly because those who were not necessarily small investors when their total investment was considered, awoke to the opportunity of making a large series of small investments in each of a number of societies. The building-societies having thus become possessed of larger funds than were required for safe mortgages to owner-occupiers, the question naturally arose whether they could not finance the provision of houses to let at low rents. Under an act of 1933, for instance, the possibility was opened up of garden suburbs being planned and built by business concerns, borrowing 90 per cent. of the cost from building-societies, if they could persuade the local authority to guarantee half the building-society's advance.

Savings banks—the pure and unadulterated essence of thrift—were deliberately, though indirectly, subsidized by the state, not of course in Pitt's time when Dr. Duncan of Dumfries established what is reputed to have been the first trustee savings bank, but for some two generations after their deposits were first guaranteed by the state in 1817. Only during the last fifty years have they become props to the state, providing it with a new source from which to borrow at favourable rates. And mere persuasion has now been resorted to through the national savings association and its local committees, in the hope of creating confidence and lessening defalcations by persuading back-street share-out clubs for feasts and holidays and clothing to keep proper accounts with a trustee or post-office savings bank. For working-class thrift means lending to others temporarily what you want for your own future expenditure. And security for the savings of those who save for security is the purpose of state intervention. The whole community is directly interested in helping its members to provide against the rainy day and the autumn of life.

The state has thus been interested in collective self-help whenever working men have aimed at making present income available in future emergencies. But during this present

century, this interest has become greatest in the case of those institutions of definitely working-class origin whose members have pooled a portion of their income, for mutual insurance against the contingencies in which any of us may find himself but on which no one individual would like to count with certitude.

II. THE LAYMAN

The compulsory self-government of Samuel Pepys's England has been brought to life for us again by Mr Arthur Bryant. We all know now how every man was then legally or morally compelled to serve his local community in his appropriate station, as constable or overseer or surveyor, churchwarden or juror, justice or sheriff.

To-day the chief compulsion that survives is the obligation to pay taxes. In this age of specialization, the citizen's services have been commuted into a money payment. The expert is paid to do the work that he can do best. Self-government has become a right instead of a duty.

Elected volunteers have come forward to supervise the administration of many of our services, especially those that were evolved during the nineteenth century. But during the present century the number of bodies on which they can serve has declined, despite the increase of population. The elimination of school-boards and boards of guardians was undoubtedly a necessary step towards the diminution of overlapping; but the price we have had to pay for the prospect of a more efficient service has been such a concentration of local authority as tends to restrict election to the comparatively small number to whom age or wealth or office assure a more than ordinary amount of leisure.

The practice of co-optation to the statutory committees of local authorities has counterbalanced this decline of direct election during the last forty years. If this extension of a

principle first introduced on behalf of municipal aldermen in 1835 has been justified, it can only have been either by securing the representation of professional bodies or by facilitating the service of individuals who have developed special interests and special experience in these particular matters, without becoming either experts or cranks.

Voluntary democratic supervision of the machinery of compulsion has thus tended to establish points of contact with social organizations of a more strictly voluntary origin. While election makes government by consent into a matter of legal form, the habit of voluntary association makes leadership by persuasion into second nature. State and society thus become all of a piece. And our voluntary self-government of urban Britain to-day is inconceivable except in the free atmosphere of multitudinous churches and political parties, trade unions and co-operative societies, friendly societies and juvenile organizations.

On the national as on the local scale, the lay volunteer still has considerable scope. The private member of parliament is well able to amend new parliamentary legislation in detail in committee. But the machinery for enabling him similarly to supervise departmental legislation and administration still remains as crude and rudimentary as it was one or two hundred years ago. The broadening-down process by which the sovereign has gradually accepted the principle of responsible government in this country, has certainly not led to any overgrowth in the everyday power of elected representatives. Continuous and effective lay supervision of departmental administration and legislation has been conceded more readily to extra-parliamentary bodies whose composition is subject to departmental control. To supplement our occasional royal commissions and departmental committees, we have evolved a series of permanent advisory committees on some though not yet all of our social services. In this way we have begun to approach the problem of how to give a well-informed lead

to public opinion, both in and out of parliament, in its attempt to form an independent estimate of what is being done and what needs doing. And here, as in local government, the field of recruitment has been facilitated by the experience of a host of voluntary organizations, such as those which have acted together in the National Council of Social Service in close collaboration with central departments and local authorities since 1919.

In this uncovenanted service of the community by laymen who possess both leisure and goodwill, the royal family has set a princely example. Those of George III's sons who did not reign took an interest in hospitals and mechanics' institutes, and in 1848, the year of revolutions, the Prince Consort made a special point of over-riding the whig prime-minister's objections and visiting workmen's dwellings with a brilliant *cortège*, at the suggestion of Lord Shaftesbury. Edward VII, as Prince of Wales, was appointed to royal commissions on housing and old age pensions. And since then the head of the state has endeavoured to set the tone to society in voluntary service as in much else. Queen Victoria's jubilee, moreover, and her interest in Florence Nightingale live on through the country in the Queen's institute of district nursing; her diamond jubilee in King Edward's hospital fund for London, whose patronage was the next-best thing to the voluntary co-operation of which these competing medical charities proved incapable; her son's reign in the Welsh national memorial for combating tuberculosis; and her grandson's silver jubilee in King George's jubilee fund for youth. Such trust funds have in fact become the chosen monuments raised to kings by their subjects, as to millionaires by themselves, and to this present age they seem of greater service and of more enduring social value than triumphal arches or pyramids.

But in an age when rich and poor have ceased to live on top of one another in small self-contained communities, all

voluntary efforts to keep alive a sense of social solidarity and responsibility have proved inadequate though invaluable. The district visitors of Chalmers's day found it all but impossible to reproduce the rural labourer's attitude of personal dependence in an urban parish where they seldom lived. The charity organization societies relieved only a fraction of undeserved need when they tried to make each case of distress a special case in which the sense of responsibility needed evoking in particular individuals. Industrial welfare work has become an aspect of labour management, dictated to employers as much by interest as by humanity. In all of this work the voluntary action of the layman has proved sadly inadequate. In her own special field, the public-health visitor has tended to be a more reliable adviser than the district visitor; compulsory insurance and contributory pensions have done more to provide a material basis for independence than reliance on charity organization; and in the very industry where welfare work was most necessary, the adequate provision even of pithead baths could be obtained only by a statutory levy on mining royalties and on every ton of coal. The uncovenanted service of the volunteer has become a useful addendum to a statutory minimum, and it has seldom been more fruitful than where the two work in the fullest collaboration, as for instance on school care committees and in the National Council of Social Service. But the aspect of life where the statutory minimum is least important, and the uncovenanted addendum of most vital value, is no doubt the voluntary organization of leisure occupations, which is the very form that the voluntary social service of the layman is most apt to take to-day. On such customary services we are largely dependent for the moral atmosphere without which we should have neither our modern statutory services nor laymen who undertake the heavy formal responsibility of supervising the experts who administer them.

III. THE EXPERT

The expert to whose care the social services of the state are entrusted is usually a paid administrator. But among these permanent officers are many who are not, or not merely, administrators: they possess peculiar professional skill and knowledge.

One of the numerous social changes effected by our many social services has in fact been the silent growth of new professions and the subtle transformation of old ones. But all alike tend to have this one new characteristic: that they are becoming salaried servants of the community, instead of fee-taking advisers of individuals.

While this has affected the older professions, it is still more marked in the newer professions that have grown up, recruited for the most part from the class whom they serve, possessed of little or no capital other than their professional skill, and seldom attaining to a standard of living far above the reach of their fellows.

On a scale unparalleled even by medieval guilds, they have marked themselves out by rigid specialization, restrictions on recruitment, and bias against transfer from one watertight professional compartment to another. If this is the soul of a new profession, its body is a professional organization, a professional periodical, an annual professional conference, a scale of payment that penalizes wide experience, and a superannuation fund that militates against the employment of persons over thirty.

The movement has long been noticeable even in poor-law administration; but it is chiefly in public education and public health that it is to be traced. For it is principally here that particular cases have to be treated not by the automatic application of a paper scale, but by the skilful adaptation of general principles.

This is very evident in education where we have gradually discovered that the contact of mind with mind is of exceptional importance.

For not only has the teaching profession expanded; but under the impulsion of state action it has become conscious of the weight and influence which it might have if it were adequately organized. It was, for instance, at the time of the endowed schools commission in 1868 that Thring called the first headmasters' conference; during the discussion of the elementary education act of 1870—and under the influence of the friendly-society type of trade union—that the national union of teachers was organized; during the preliminary inquiries into secondary education in the 1890's that the assistant masters' association and the incorporated association of headmasters were brought into being; and in quite recent years that local directors of education formed an association.

The most interesting phenomenon has here been the rise of elementary school teaching into a closed profession. As soon as an embryonic elementary school system began to take shape, it was clearly impossible to rely on thousands of untaught geniuses appearing in the wake of John Pounds, the crippled Portsmouth shoemaker who taught the ragged mates of his sailor brother's children to cobble shoes and read handbills while he worked in his little shop. And it soon became equally obvious that the monitorial system must fail even in the teaching of the barest elements, when not enough adolescents stayed at school to develop into monitors.

If there was one man more than another who deserves the title of the father of this new profession, it was Dr. Kay, the Manchester dispensary doctor whose services were enlisted by the poor-law commissioners in the 1830's and who thus became an organizer of the first poor-law schools and the founder of the first English training-college for teachers. He aimed, like Fellenberg and Pestallozzi, at producing an industrious and practical-minded working-man schoolmaster;

and, like the Dutch, he converted the adolescents who destined themselves for this training into grant-aided apprentices, he paid extra grants to schools where pupil teachers obtained preliminary practice, he made yet other grants available to the schools that employed them when they were trained, and the treasury helped to finance a pension scheme for encouraging them to retire when they grew too old. Thus a new profession was conjured into existence with the help of public funds.

As literary standards of education took the place of the earlier practical bias, under the influence of Robert Lowe and his generation, more attention had to be paid to the literary attainments of the school-teacher. Pupil-teacher centres had to be developed, for their part-time secondary education, and these in their turn were fused into the municipal secondary schools which took shape from 1902. Meanwhile, for those of greater ability or better education who were suited for work in higher-grade schools, the universities in 1890 and the county education authorities in 1902 were helped by grants to compete with the residential denominational training-colleges in admitting grant-aided ex-pupil-teachers as day students.

During the last generation, as it has become increasingly possible for all intending teachers to obtain a secondary education, many of their training-colleges have tended towards a university status. The teacher in what is officially an elementary school—often actually a senior or a central school—is more and more frequently a university graduate. The teacher in what is officially a secondary school has in a great many cases obtained his university education through a scheme intended originally for the training of elementary school teachers. The initial educational barrier between elementary and secondary teaching is thus less formidable than formerly, although a social barrier still persists between the older and the newer types of secondary school. And the majority of teachers are still expected to find their vocation before they

go up to college, like Roman Catholic priests or nonconformist ministers, instead of discovering it while they are there; they are not free to use their state-provided education in the service of the state as public administrators or librarians or social workers, even though these others should prove to be the callings in which they would be of greatest use to the community; yet the doubling of teachers' salaries since the war has made this profession so attractive an opening for the business instincts of the lower middle class, and the normal working of our new local and state scholarship system impels so many of its beneficiaries towards this inevitable destiny, that the semi-servitude of indentured labour has ceased to be justifiable as a means of pressing neophytes into an otherwise honourable profession.

Of the old and honoured professions, that which has changed most is probably the medical. The purchase of an education and a practice has ceased to be the only way of getting a living. Capital has ceased to be indispensable. Not only have medical scholarships flourished since the day when King's College thought them a means of inducing young men to come to an Anglican medical school. And not only has the private medical practitioner found considerable opportunities for part-time employment as a poor-law doctor or a medical officer of health or a school doctor, and for part-remuneration according to the number of his insurance patients if he is on the panel. But opportunities have also arisen by which young men can obtain excellently-paid full-time posts as medical officers of health and medical officers of infirmaries and sanatoria under all the larger authorities. And although parliament has favoured the employment of doctors in private practice for school treatment-centres, it has now prescribed the collaboration of the smaller sanitary districts for purposes of preventive medicine in order that they may employ a full-time medical officer of health. One curious effect of this opening of a new career has been that universities

and other public bodies have made far better provision for public-health training than for the study of industrial disease.

Apart from the municipal hospitals and the army, the biggest change is clearly in the field of preventive medicine. From being a part-time specialist consultant—which is all that he was in the pioneering days of Duncan of Liverpool, Simon of London, and Buchanan of St. Giles's—the medical officer of health both locally and at the centre has gradually developed into a full-time officer, entrusted with the administration of a department, even though he often retains the privilege of reporting direct to the public on the state of their health.

Our doctors have ceased, however, to be the only paid priests of Aesculapius.

On the preventive side we have evolved the sanitary inspector, formerly ill-famed as the inspector of nuisances, armed with statutory powers of abatement in all that concerns our bodily nourishment and our material environment, and his female co-adjutor, the health visitor, who tries by gentler methods to improve our personal hygiene, especially in cases of maternity, infancy and tuberculosis.

And the art of healing would be nowhere without the nurse, who is perhaps the only permanently useful product of German romanticism. For it was in the 1830's that the protestant pastor of Kaiserswert near Düsseldorf set about imitating the Roman Catholic nursing orders of the counter-reformation. He found English visitors and imitators. And one of these, Florence Nightingale, was sent out by a neighbour of her father's who happened to be Secretary of State for War, to imitate the French Catholic sisters in the Crimea. A dozen years later, at the very time when the biggest poor-law infirmaries were beginning to develop into hospitals, trained nurses were available in small numbers for poor-law work. Twenty years later again, part of the women's jubilee offering to Queen Victoria was set aside to found the Queen's Institute

of District Nursing to improve the means of nursing the sick poor in their homes. And this voluntary organization, now all but fifty years old, has been at the service of our county authorities for all manner of health-visiting and maternity work.

All these educational and health experts deal primarily with individuals: where no expert comes in is in dealing with families, and especially in estimating their means and needs. What we have not yet evolved is a well-trained and responsible registrar-visitor, capable of co-ordinating the work of a dozen different specialists and making sure that every family gets neither less nor more than the help to which it is entitled. In her absence, a dozen different specialists look at their own little aspect of the family problem. Each is compelled to turn aside from the job she has been trained to do well, to make an independent and a different estimate of the membership and resources of the family, with a view to meeting some of the special requirements of some of its members. Apart from some incomplete local attempts at mutual registration, no machinery exists for co-ordinating either their work or their information. And though each one may do her trivial duty, the very thing that needs doing, if the family as a whole is to maintain and improve its standards, is overlooked, and our social services fail to yield all the fruit they should.

At the un-co-ordinated fragments of the missing profession we must look in more detail.

IV. THE RULE OF REASON

Through lack of trained intelligence, the social-service state runs the risk of degenerating into a hell paved with good intentions.

The greatest danger does not lie with the ill-thought-out schemes of well-intentioned pioneers. For these never pass into law except as government measures. And they are therefore subject to the restraining influence of educated and

experienced civil-service administrators. Not of course that social legislation does not consist of leaps into the dark. At best, these laws are bold experiments: at worst, they are moderate concessions to uninstructed sentiment. And further experience may usually be relied on to assure the correction of the anomalies revealed in their working.

But the most reasonable of services must fail in its purpose if it is not effectively administered.

Here all public social services are up against an initial difficulty. They have to work through persons who have chosen local government or social-service careers because they find them attractive. This sometimes means either that they consider them less strenuous than business-life or that they have failed to find an opening in private business. And in neither such case has one the right to expect the best results from their execution of the laws.

Where statutory rights are well-defined, as is the case with insurances and pensions, any shortcomings in the executive staff can be mitigated by a system of appeals.

But where an individual adjudication is necessary, the wisdom of the decision arrived-at depends on the intelligence and power of independent judgment of the worker in direct contact with the case. It may be desirable, and it is certainly convenient, to reduce to a minimum the number of contingencies in which discretion has to be used: but reduction does not mean elimination. Whenever a child has to be boarded out in a new home, whenever a family requires accommodation, whenever a school-child's health needs care and attention, whenever public assistance is given to the destitute, or domiciliary assistance to the blind, in all these and many other cases the value of the decision taken by the responsible lay authority depends mainly on the quality of the expert advice by which it is guided.

Whether or not justice is done—whether or not each potential beneficiary receives the treatment best suited to his

own particular case—depends therefore on the mental calibre of the paid servants of the responsible authority.

One would expect therefore to see exceptional care taken to ensure the employment of persons peculiarly suited to this delicate work.

Instead, what does one too often find but an ill-co-ordinated mixture of snob-ocracy and clerk-ocracy.

Publicly-paid social workers would seem to be appointed on no discoverable principle. So many get their posts because they belong to the class that has distinguished itself in the past by voluntary social service, and so many because they have had distinguished relatives in the same or some other service, that one is left wondering whether such appointments are the rule or the exception. Universities have devised social-science diplomas; they award them to persons who are unable to reach the matriculation standard insisted on by many a business firm; they have scant respect for their own products; and if they think about them at all they then wonder why public authorities do not rush to employ them. And the salaries offered are usually such as to attract only the many who grasp at a bad *pis aller* and the few who have a sense of vocation—often mistaken.

This motley crew is usually subjected to the direction of a clerical staff that has risen from the ranks, and whose utter inadequacy clogs the wheels of every department of every local authority in the land.

Many even of the greatest authorities have carried out their social services as though they were merely conforming to the most meaningless of passing fashions. They have made of them a matter of office routine, equally dead to faith and to reason. And they have justified their callous obtusity by casting a moral halo round their presumed intellectual superiority till their behaviour is worthy of Nietzsche's lower-middle-class superman.

If the administration of justice were entrusted to such

inexpert hands, there would be the loudest of outcries. Yet it is nothing less than justice that is at stake. Every day thousands of decisions are being arrived at in the most haphazard of ways by persons totally unfit to decide the fate of their fellow citizens. The J.P.s of Squire Western's day rise to one's mind as the nearest parallel.

What is wanted? The power to see things as they are, to see them big, and to see them whole. One needs to be above the routine drudgery of life to see them in their social setting, with all its implications and complications. One needs a trained and disciplined mind to see social action in relation to its probable effects. Those very qualities of native sentiment and sympathy that make a good club leader may be the worst of guides in case work. And the detachment to which some approximation was formerly best found in the best-trained members of the gentry, is to-day best found in the universities.

The problem is therefore one of creating a university-trained profession. It may never be a rich one, any more than all doctors or all clergymen are or ever have been rich. But in trained intelligence, breadth of outlook, wealth of ideas, and scientific imagination, it would be a worthy contribution of the universities to the needs of a new age, and the only way of making the social-service state into a vehicle of something that might then resemble justice.

V. FRONTIERS OF CIVILIZATION

(i) *Crime*

For every three persons convicted at assizes and quarter sessions eighty years ago, only one is convicted to-day: meanwhile the population has doubled.

Even when due allowance is made for the transfer of some cases from these to other courts, we are still faced with the fact that one of the most sensational happenings in the history of crime is its diminution.

This may be attributed partly to greater efficiency on the part of our preventive police, better street-lighting, or a wider choice of cheap amusements. But as the decline in criminal behaviour has coincided with the rise of the social services, it would be fair to ask whether there may not be some connection between these two processes. The spread of elementary education has helped towards the disappearance of the street Arab. The criminal quarters of our cities have been broken up. Improved health has brought greater ability to do an honest day's work. Social insurance and a less rigid poor-relief have provided more adequately for times of need. 'Unquestionably by far the most important means of securing a diminution in crime is a general improvement in social conditions,' was the verdict of a recent Home Secretary.* And in this improvement it is undeniable that the social services have played no small part.

At the same time a direct attack has been made upon the problem of criminal behaviour, which is in line with all the other social-service activity of the state. And this has become specially necessary; for since 1853 we have no longer been able to shovel out our convicts and give them a fresh start in a new country. We have had to support their presence here; and when punishment failed to deter them, education in its broadest sense had to be tried, and punishment and procedure adapted to fit the new idea. Between perpetual incarceration and youthful re-education there was no logical middle term.

The reformatory colony for young offenders was not unknown in the eighteenth century. The Mettray experiment in France became famous in the mid-nineteenth. Imitated in England immediately by Mary Carpenter of Bristol and Matthew Davenport Hill of Birmingham, industrial and reformatory schools, approved by the home office, have become a recognized method of preventing the young offender

* Sir H. Samuel in the House of Commons, April 1932.

from hardening into a criminal. These are now included in the annual treasury statement on public social-service expenditure. And they have been supplemented during the present century by Ruggles-Brise's much more rigorous attempt to lick the juvenile adult recidivist into shape before it is too late, first in the disused prison at Borstal and later in other similar institutions, although great care has had to be taken not to send those there to whom it would mean a downward rather than an upward step.

A parallel development has arisen from the old English procedure of binding a person over with his own consent after conviction and respiting sentence so long as he is of good behaviour. Matthew Davenport Hill found this practice already established in the Birmingham neighbourhood, extended it and gave it publicity. Surety was often offered in the 'seventies by men like Benjamin Waugh of Greenwich, the Congregational minister who expressed his views in *The Jail Cradle: Who rocks it?* and by the police-court mission of the Church of England Temperance Society, especially in convictions for drunkenness, keeping children from school, and all manner of juvenile and sexual offences. It was never restricted to juveniles or to first offenders, although it was in these cases that it was most likely to be useful. And since 1907 it has been open to magistrates to add other conditions to the recognisance besides good behaviour, especially supervision by the local probation officer into whom the police-court missionary has thus developed. If probation officers were not too few and too overworked, binding-over without supervision would now have become something like an anachronism, especially in the case of the persistent offender.

But it gradually became clear that the root of much crime lay in parental neglect while children were too young either for an approved school or for probation. The promoters of the societies for the prevention of cruelty to children, therefore, obtained an act in 1889 to remove all doubt about the

criminality of child-neglect or cruelty. And when this act threatened to remain a dead letter except in so far as its voluntary promoters could be sure of obtaining a conviction, the duty of charging children with being neglected was imposed on local education authorities in Samuel's children act of 1908. And his act of 1932 further increased their power to assume parental responsibility and board children out in homes where a more normal atmosphere would lessen the need for re-education at a later and more difficult age.

(ii) *Slumdom*

Sir F. M. Eden, with all his usual insight, saw plainly in 1797 that the standard of living of a working-class household depended only partly on the income of the father of the family : it depended to perhaps a greater extent on the amount of that income that reached his wife.

Rowntree similarly reckoned that at York for every one family that was in poverty through the inadequacy of its income there were two that owed their plight to their own failure to make the best use of what little they had.

The problem of poverty being a double one, two approaches have therefore been necessary.

In so far as the income has been inadequate, something has been achieved by trade unions and trade boards. Much has been accomplished by each generation's attempt to better its conditions by moving from the less paid to the better paid jobs. Something has been done by the benevolence of such employers as provide pensions. Something again has been achieved by way of employers' liability for workmen's compensation. A longer working life and better health have made the family income less insecure. And the social services have made a direct contribution by means of insurance benefits, pensions, allowances and more adequate assistance. Against this must be set compulsory deductions from wages that were

barely adequate, in order to pay for compulsory insurance and for less overcrowded accommodation.

The net result has been encouraging. In 1906 Rowntree reckoned that one-seventh of the working-class population of York was in a state of what he called primary poverty—the poverty, that is to say, that came of income inadequate for the maintenance of physical efficiency at the moment. In five towns which he examined in 1913, Professor Bowley found only one in ten in this state. In the same five towns in 1924 the same statistical investigator found that only one working-class family in thirty would then have been in a state of poverty if it had been receiving full wages, or only one in fifteen at the pay actually received during the week of investigation. And the forty-year interval between the first and second surveys of London life and labour suggest a similar conclusion: the decline of primary poverty.

But this is only part of the problem. The secondary poverty which Rowntree reckoned to be almost twice as numerous is not necessarily cured by a rise in income. Only the most naïf of clergymen and school-teachers, district visitors and newspaper correspondents, public-assistance and blind-welfare committee-members, have mistaken dirt and bad management for primary poverty, and made it worse by feeding it on doles of food, clothing, or money. The subsidizing of filth and drink, betting and prostitution, have been hard to justify whether carried out by the ministers of the church or by the stewards of the state.

Better management has not lent itself to statistical measurement to the same extent as better incomes. But all observers are agreed that here also great improvements have taken place. It is not that a brooding sense of responsibility has come over the people. Far from it. They have evolved new ways of making the most of life. They are better turned out, even though their dress makes more concessions to fashion and cleanliness than to warmth and durability. They make a

better show, for the keen eye of the various public visitors and the welfare centre and the school-teacher, as well as for their own pride and pleasure. Compulsory education has left them less chance of evading parental responsibility, especially since the coming of medical inspection. They are less anxious to assume expensive responsibilities in the form of unwanted children, with the result that this century has seen a simultaneous decline in the number both of births and of infantile deaths : the children that do come into the world are less badly cared for.

Compulsory insurance has left no option but to make provision for future needs. Ability to read the football and the racing news and fill in betting slips and newspaper competition coupons has opened up a new if rather remote chance of supplementing an income : and whatever the defects of our new vice, it is probably less degrading in its cumulative effects than the drunkenness of the past. Dressing through the tallyman is necessarily expensive ; but furnishing out of income, provided it is kept within reasonable proportions, is at least evidence of a desire to make a home a home. And the automatic thrift of the co-operative society has furnished a means not only of saving as you spend, but even of saving as you borrow.

We are thus witnesses of—and participators in—a rare and fascinating phenomenon, the rise of a new standard of living, the pursuit of which has made a profound difference to the domestic economy of the poverty-stricken as of all classes.

In this process the social services have played no small role. They are one aspect of this phase of social evolution. And the whole is not conceivable without the part, nor the part without the whole.

Those services that have their roots in the nineteenth century have regarded the problem of good management

and judicious spending as one of material and moral environment and education. It has been for them a matter of overcoming lack of enterprise or intelligence by providing better opportunities and inculcating better habits. Self-respect has had to be made easy and attractive. Slum-clearance and compulsory removal to ample and sanitary accommodation has gradually become part of our life, though its results have often been vitiated by the absence of experienced and discerning property-management, and especially by inadequate attention to the needs and standards of individual families. The health visitor and blind-welfare visitor have come into the home. The public social services no longer wait until a child has been kept away from school before they knock at the door; still less do they wait until a family is reduced to financial destitution before they step across the door-step. They have learned to do on an infinitely wider scale what had hitherto been done only by a few of the wiser dispensers of private charity. It no longer pays to look poor to the same extent as in the pauperizing days of ostentatious Victorian almsgiving. Training in good habits in special schools holds out hope of making the mental defective less socially inefficient. Public elementary schools, handicapped as they are, have done something for moral and physical health, no one can well say how much, and might usefully be made to do still more. And these public services have been admirably reinforced by the voluntary community service that has devoted time rather than money to the fostering of habits of personal hygiene and responsibility among the rising generation and their young parents, supplementing public action through juvenile organizations such as scout troops and brigades and clubs, and co-operating with the authorities through infant-welfare work and school-children's care committees.

Meanwhile the newest and biggest of social services proceed on the assumption that the new scale of popular expenditure

is on the whole a marked improvement, even though it might be more judicious in some directions. Here are new habits and manners and customs whose perpetuation demands greater regularity and better security of income. Only so can we lessen the inevitable regression when earnings fall off, and facilitate greater resilience when they look up again. If the improvement that has taken place becomes a matter of second nature, and families cease to be content with an animal existence, the assurance of a minimum income in all the contingencies of life will not have been without its humanizing and civilizing effects.

VI. TERRA FIRMA

In former ages, the high road to security was the possession of land. It was in his landed fief that the office-holder received the reward due to his service. It was in land that the rich donor provided an endowment for a school or hospital or charity. And it was his holding of land that secured the yeoman or the peasant his definite status in his little community.

In this country this old ideal passed away when the commercialization of agriculture revealed the legal insecurity of the peasant's holding in the sixteenth century and robbed subsistence farming of its attractions in the eighteenth.

Elsewhere the old ideal has lingered on. The peasant freeholder has only himself to blame if he fails. In time of stress he can offer a refuge to his city cousin. And he conceives of democracy as the means by which his son can rise to a position of influence and reputation.

Among peoples for whom the land has ceased to be the basis of security, something else has had to take its place. In the days when a substantial part of our people still lived on the land even though they had lost all stake in it, poor-relief offered them a poor substitute. To-day, when most of

their descendants have moved towards the towns, we have evolved a whole series of insurance benefits and pensions and payments and services. Instead of being endowed with a parcel of the country's land, they are credited with a portion of the nation's income. Instead of pursuing a rough and ready security as individuals, they seek it as a society. The social services are in fact to-day's attempt to do what the private landownership of yesterday failed to achieve.

The equalitarian of to-day has thus no motive for advocating the equalization of property. This Utopia of the eighteenth century rationalist has lost its meaning in the twentieth century for every one except the Roman Catholic distributivist. Equal property does not mean equal security in the unequal contingencies of life. The greater the economic risks, and the greater the cost of overcoming the natural risks, the less must be the security assured by private property to any but the very richest; and even they have to resort to private insurance and public protection. For the rural worker to settle on his own subsistence farm, and for the urban worker to buy his small suburban freehold, may help him appreciably towards security; but without public health and education, insurance and pension services, even his resources are seldom elastic enough to meet all the contingencies of our expensive modern ways of living and of living long.

To equalize out the risks attendant upon living in a modern community, and also the security that is reasonably possible, we have had to regard the whole state as an insurance institution. The peasant state, though not the peasant outlook, nor, in some countries, the peasantry itself, has almost everywhere become a romantic anachronism. And in its place we see a touch-and-go attempt to realize the new ideal of the social-security state.

If this social-service state is to be more than a series of Machiavellian conjuring tricks, it must embody itself in new habits and customs, new institutions and outlooks. It

depends for its success on greater mutual respect and understanding among those who live in different ways according to the different functions they perform. For its very essence is the specialization and differentiation that distinguish the modern world and make organization such as the social services necessary as it never was before. It implies intelligence and understanding not only in devising policies and organizations, but also in executing and administering them. In the smaller communities of other days, it was not difficult to give customary recognition to everyman's right to consideration. In the more impersonal nation-state of to-day, to get similar legal recognition has been far from easy. And, even so, law has not been enough.

Even if its success reached the limits of the possible, the social-service state of to-day would be up against problems greater than itself. For there are things that even the most intelligent of social services cannot do. They have helped to stave off death, but not unemployment. They belong to an age in which man has made more progress in harnessing the forces of nature than in mastering those of economics. Though the nation-state is the community within which they are striving to renew a lost sense of social solidarity, its economic effects may well prove an obstacle not only to this solidarity but also to the sense of freedom and security without which it is not worth having. Social service, like nationalism, is not enough. And none but a nationalist can dream of its adequacy in producing a new Utopia, a static community, a state of equilibrium. The re-integration of the state in the world community is as hard as the re-integration of the individual in the nation-state.

SOME NOTABLE BOOKS

A FULL bibliography of the social-service literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries remains to be compiled. And no definitive history of the social services can be written until some socially-minded scholar has completed the preliminary task of cataloguing the printed evidence.

All that is here attempted is to refer the reader to a selection of books which are of outstanding historical importance, whether as documents that throw a flood of light on the circumstances in which they were written, or as histories that take stock of recent achievement and retrace the steps by which the present emerged from the past.

Many reports of royal commissions, parliamentary select committees, and departmental committees have already been mentioned in the text: they are therefore not repeated here. Nor can any detailed mention be made of the innumerable illuminating papers printed by learned, professional, and philanthropic associations and international conferences.

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