

# THE PRIVATE CITIZEN IN PUBLIC SOCIAL WORK

*By*

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*With a Foreword by*

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An Account of the Voluntary  
Children's Care Committee  
System in London

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THE PRIVATE CITIZEN IN  
PUBLIC SOCIAL WORK

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TO THOSE FIRST ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS  
TO WHOSE COURAGE AND DEVOTION THE  
LONDON CARE COMMITTEE SYSTEM OWES  
ITS EXISTENCE

## FOREWORD

THIS book is an excellent account of the advantages and difficulties of voluntary work in a sphere in which full responsibility has been accepted by the Local Authority. Such a book has long been needed, and will be welcomed by all voluntary Care Committees as making their work known, and will be read with interest by a wide public, who, it is hoped, may be inspired to help in the work.

Voluntary Care Committee workers have done a great social work in improving conditions of the children in London through the agency of the schools. They have been able to make friends with both parents and teachers, and, owing to their knowledge of home conditions existing in each particular locality, their help and advice is valuable and valued.

No one who has not followed the development of work in the London Schools since 1908 can realize what has been done by the voluntary workers, and that is what this book will tell them.

In the beginning of Care Work in 1908 there was suspicion in the minds of many parents of undue interference, but that has been overcome, thanks to the tact of Care Committee Workers, and also to the fact that the work is voluntary and that the workers come as friends and not officials.

The whole subject of the book is most interesting, dealing as it does with the well-being of children, socially and physically, for on the children depends the future of the Country.

ISABEL LAWRENCE

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When I came to the task of finding a publisher, I again experienced kindness. Mr. B. M. Headicar, of the London School of Economics, undertook the whole labour of approaching publishers on my behalf, and secured consideration which, as a quite inexperienced and unknown writer, I could not otherwise have hoped to obtain. Later, again through the kind offices of Mr. Pringle, the Voluntary Workers' Association of Children's Care Workers kindly agreed to purchase a number of copies of the book and also to arrange for the distribution of circulars to Care Committee workers. Without this assistance the publishers would probably have hesitated to risk producing the book, and I am glad to have an opportunity of thanking the voluntary workers, with whom I have already many pleasant associations, for their co-operation in my attempt to make known the part of the private citizen in public social work.

# THE PRIVATE CITIZEN IN PUBLIC SOCIAL WORK

## CHAPTER I

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL STATE AND THE SOCIAL INDIVIDUAL

DURING the last century the private citizen has acted consistently as the pioneer in social reform. It has been his part to awaken public interest and to stir the public conscience by experiments in social work and by the demonstration of social needs.

Outstanding individuals such as Lord Shaftesbury, John Howard, and Florence Nightingale have served the cause by focussing the attention of the nation on themselves, and have earned undying glory. The ordinary private citizen has been content not to be known outside his native town, and has confined his work to the support of some small local society for the amelioration of the lot of his fellow-townsmen. Isolated from others who have taken up their share in the common heritage of humanitarian interests, the citizens of one little place after another have set to work on the same lines to solve the same problems of ignorance, ill-health, or poverty.

In time, the local groups have learnt something of each other's doings, have recognized the common nature of their aims and difficulties, and have perceived the need for combined and co-ordinated action.

During the last fifty years there has been a remarkable increase in the number of National Associations of