

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

voluntary Societies. The efforts of these Associations to stimulate their branches or affiliated Societies and to fill up the gaps in the provision made have led to the conception of problems as national, and recently by an easy transition of thought to the demand for the assumption of public responsibility.

Until the latter years of the nineteenth century this transition would have been less easy. It is doubtful whether Dickens and his contemporaries cherished a warmer affection for the family of Tite Barnacle than for that of Squeers. Probably the philanthropist of the mid-nineteenth century, if driven to apply for help from a Government Department, approached it with feelings very similar to those of the curly-headed boy as he came within reach of Mrs. Squeers' brimstone-and-treacle spoon.

Of late years the distinction between the State and voluntary agencies has been obscured, and the social activities of Government Departments have been greatly extended. The volunteer no longer resists the temptation to apply for State aid, but when he embarks on some piece of pioneer work openly declares his hope that success in it will lead to the assumption of public responsibility.

There are still many persons who see in this tendency to welcome the intervention of the State a disquieting sign of social deterioration and of diminished initiative and self-sacrifice on the part of the private citizen. They consider that State activity inevitably leads to the predominance of bureaucracy and imperils the free and varied development both of the community and of the individual.

In considering whether this is a true criticism of present tendencies, the factors which have influenced the growth of the State as a social agent and the methods by which it exercises its functions must be taken into account. What have been the history of the State and of the philanthropist and what are the present relations of the State and the private citizen in the sphere of public social work? If it can be shown that the individual is more and not less conscious of his social responsibilities and that the State has ceased to look with contempt on the volunteer and has commenced to work with and through him, the extension of public responsibility may be a sign of public and private growth rather than of deterioration.

The Care Committee system which will be described in this book has its ultimate sanction in the extension of individual personal welfare through its means, but its wider significance and interest lie in the fact that it is an attempt to utilize the spirit of social service in the private citizen in a sphere in which full public responsibility has been accepted. If in one way it is dependent on the assumption of social responsibility by the State and the development of local government which characterized the nineteenth century, in another it derives its ancestry from an earlier conception of the right of the community to rely on the common acceptance of a personal obligation to perform some kind of unpaid service. What is the ultimate value and what the merits and demerits of personal social service in public work will best be estimated after the experiment has been described in detail. Here an effort will be made to show how far historical considerations and the present accepted methods of administration render its use possible.

Current economic doctrines and new industrial conditions led to the adoption of a policy of *laissez-faire* in the eighteenth century. But while it was commonly demanded that the State should relax its control in order that the individual might be free to develop trade and create wealth without interference from "meddling legislation", efforts were made to mitigate social evils by voluntary action. Private philanthropy led to the founding of hospitals, dispensaries, and schools, and a marked reduction in infantile mortality was brought about, partly owing to the better care and treatment of mothers and infants.¹ New *ad hoc* authorities were created by local Acts of Parliament to carry out special duties with regard to Lighting, Watching, Paving, and Cleansing. That such efforts were not wholly unsuccessful is shown by the fact that from the middle of the century until about 1815 the death-rate "probably fell progressively".²

How, then, did it come about that the State intervened and has now arrived at its present ubiquitous social activity? The after-effects of the Napoleonic Wars and the accentuated rate of growth of the population of the towns in the first half of the nineteenth century made the eighteenth-century position, with its dependence on philanthropy and private initiative, untenable, although the formal victory of *laissez-faire* was proclaimed in the repeal of the Statute of Apprentices and the abolition of the power of the Justices of the Peace to fix wages. If we turn to the social history of the nineteenth century we find that action was forced upon the organized community first, as in the Public Health Reform movement, because modern conditions were too complicated for the

¹ *Health, Wealth and Population, 1760-1815*. Buer.

² *Ibid.*

individual to act without unforeseen effects on his fellow-citizens—the attempts at sanitary reform in the houses of the well-to-do were actually a source of contamination of the water-supply of a large proportion of the citizens of London; and secondly, because, partly owing to the increase of social consciousness, there was a demand for comprehensiveness—as in elementary education—which was not met by voluntary effort.

The overcrowding of the towns, the defective drainage and water-supply, the infections arising from burial-grounds and the ravages of disease are too well known to need detailed description. Nor need it be discussed here precisely how far the heritage of the past, the individual efforts of the rich to promote the hygiene of their households, and the Industrial Revolution respectively, were responsible for them. With the Thames a “vast and stinking open sewer”, it was not wonderful that Londoners found it impossible to stay the infection of Asiatic cholera by segregation. Such practical difficulties probably outweighed any theories about the State and induced the citizens of the great towns to wish to apply the lessons of naval and military hygiene learnt in the wars to civil life, and to listen to such humanitarian public health pioneers as Dr. Arnott, Dr. Kay, and Dr. Southwood Smith when they urged the possibility of “Removing physical causes of sickness and mortality” by organized public action.

From 1848 onwards a series of Public Health Acts were passed, and the responsibility of the community for such essentials as main drainage and the water-supply gradually ceased to be questioned.

The Registration of Births Act, 1837, and the Reports of

the Medical Officers of Health from 1848 onwards, led to the accumulation of statistics and of information about sanitary conditions and national health on which it was possible to base further legislation.

The conception of the part to be played by the State in matters of health continued to widen, and in his Annual Report for 1868 Sir John Simon, Medical Officer to the Board of Health, was able to write as follows:

It would be difficult to over-estimate in one most important point of view the progress which during the last few years has been made in sanitary legislation. . . . Large powers have been given to local authorities and obligation expressly laid on them. . . to suppress all kinds of nuisance, and to provide all such works and establishments as the public health primarily requires; while auxiliary powers have been given for more or less optional exercise in matters deemed of less than primary importance to health. . . . The State has interfered between parent and child . . . between employer and employed . . . between vendor and purchaser. . . . Its care for the treatment of disease has not been unconditionally limited to treating at the public expense such sickness as may accompany destitution; it has provided that in any sort of public emergency, organized medical assistance, not peculiarly for paupers, may be required of local authorities.

From the collection of vital statistics and the provision of the machinery of health, the State advanced to the effort to prevent the spread of infectious disease by the provision of hospitals—a first incursion into a sphere which had for centuries been that of the philanthropist; later, it passed from the protection of the mass of citizens to the care of individuals and the prevention of individual disablement and inefficiency by State action commencing before or at birth, going on through childhood and adolescence, by means of the School Medical Service and factory

doctors' inspections, and continuing by means of the National Health Insurance scheme throughout the working life of the adult.

The movement was marked throughout by characteristics which have proved very influential in the further extension of the functions of the State. Belief in the ability of the organized community to help individuals by improving their material environment; a conviction of the social waste which must result from the continuance of conditions leading to individual disease, inefficiency and poverty; and insistence that public administration should be efficient were the sources of the sustained energy and power of the Public Health reformers and of their influence in other spheres of work.

It will be observed that, writing in 1868, Sir John Simon laid stress on the powers and obligations of local authorities. At this time the two factors of complexity of social needs and the necessity for ensuring comprehensiveness and efficiency of service were helping to bring about the transformation of the underlying principles and methods of local government.

Critics of public authorities to-day can point to instances of the abuse of the privileged position of elected representatives of government by a coterie and of apathy on the part of the mass of the electors. Even so, most people will admit that an advance has been made from the corruption and chaos which reigned during a great part of the nineteenth century.

Where the semblance of direct popular control by the mass of the citizens remained in the "Open" Vestry, it was too often discredited by turbulent meetings, "packed" by able and unscrupulous men such as Joseph

Merceron, who made himself the virtual governor of the fifty thousand inhabitants of Bethnal Green and practised jobbery of every kind for nearly twenty-five years, in spite of the fact that he underwent a term of imprisonment as a result of his roguery in the middle of his period of domination. In the "close" or "select" vestries, "rogue" often continued to "succeed rogue", and even in the exceptional cases where administration was honest and efficient, it was arbitrary and entirely divorced from popular control. The numerous *ad hoc* authorities which carried out the bulk of what is now called "Municipal Government" were often practically self-elected and reinforced their membership solely by co-option. Everywhere there was a confusion of overlapping rating authorities, each ignoring the existence of any other authority. London, of course, suffered under this state of affairs longer than the rest of the country, where some reforms were effected after the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 and the gradual renunciation of their powers by the various bodies of *ad hoc* Commissioners during the next twenty-five years. Even outside London, however, it was not until after the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894 had created the administrative County and had made the County Council and the District and Parish Council the units of local administration that it was clear what were to be the distinguishing marks of modern local government.

From our point of view certain of its characteristics are particularly important. Representative government has been firmly established in place both of direct popular control and the irresponsible sway of self-elected bodies. Local affairs tend more and more to be concentrated

in the hands of comparatively few authorities instead of many independent bodies dealing with sectional needs of the population. It follows that on the one hand it is easier for the State to combine decentralized administration with a measure of control and the enforcement of a minimum standard, while, on the other, there are increased possibilities of fostering local interest and pride in so far as there is an approach to the ideal that there should be "one body with the right to speak in the name of the whole and with the added duty of watching over the common interest" instead of "many authorities which are estranged from the people and distrusted because they are estranged". A last characteristic, which will be of the utmost importance when we are considering the relations of the ordinary private citizen with the organized community, is of course the creation of a class of expert salaried officials who act as the executive agents of the elected representatives of the people. How far the service of a bureaucracy must necessarily exclude participation in public social work by the ordinary private citizen depends partly on the degree of social consciousness and sensibility to which the majority of the people have attained.

Considerations of expediency and efficiency may fairly be said to have played a large part in the assumption of State responsibility for Public Health and in the reform of local government. The history of elementary education may be cited as an example of the influence of somewhat different factors in determining the relationship of the State and the volunteer.

As early as 1816, a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the "Education of the Lower Orders of the Metropolis" found that a "Very large number of chil-

dren" were without the means of acquiring instruction even in reading, writing, and arithmetic, although their parents were "commonly desirous" that they should obtain it. Even before this Lancaster had suggested in his *Improvements in Education as it regards the Industrious Classes* that popular education "ought to be a national concern". Up to the nineteenth century the education of the poor had depended mainly on the religious motives of philanthropists, and the inculcation of the "knowledge and practice of the Christian religion" had been commonly acknowledged to be its essential feature. With the formation of the rival Societies—the Royal Lancasterian Institution, which later became the British and Foreign School Society, and the National Society for Promoting the education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church—the acute stage of the struggle between the adherents of national unsectarian, and of denominational education set in.

It is interesting to note that the State first took action in 1833, not by superseding either Society, but by allotting conditional grants to both in aid of School buildings, and that these grants actually stimulated voluntary enterprise. In 1861 a Royal Commission reported that twice the sum contributed by the Government for education had been obtained from voluntary subscriptions. In 1870, Mr. Forster estimated, on the other hand, that only two-fifths of working-class children between the ages of six and ten years, and only one-third of those between ten and twelve years were in school.¹ When the national party won the day in the 1870 Education Act the aim of the Government was definitely stated to be, not to supersede

¹ *History of Elementary Education*. Birchenough.

the voluntary schools, but to "Complete the voluntary system and to fill up the gaps", and, as in 1833, the immediate result, due no doubt partly to dislike of the proposed School Boards—was a large increase in voluntary activity.

It is important here to observe that a fundamentally different conception of education lay at the root of at least some of the objections to a State system, and that to some of the "Voluntaryists" the question involved was not only that of specific instruction in denominational belief, but of the permeation of the whole of education by religion. This different conception has greatly influenced the continuance of voluntary effort which we shall have to consider when we come to an analysis of the present position.

Another factor which is worthy of note, as applying not only to elementary education, is the continual advance of standards of equipment and the consequent increase in cost brought about by the State assumption of responsibility. The School Boards found not only enormous gaps in educational provision, but in some instances a very poor standard of material provision, and, partly owing to their progressive improvements in the latter respect, the Voluntary Societies began to complain of "intolerable financial strain", and gradually fell behind in the proportion which they contributed to the national system. Their financial exigencies played a part in making it possible for the State to annex their schools for purposes of secular instruction in 1902.

There were practical reasons in other spheres which impelled the State on to ever-increasing activity. The growing tendency to large-scale, national and even inter-

national organization in industry, commerce, and finance furnished reasons for State control. The passing of the Limited Liability Act in 1855, and the extension of the principle to Banks in 1862, made "big business" possible, and subsequent developments such as the growth of the shareholding system and the substitution of Branch Managers for the old responsible private employers made it increasingly impersonal. Trusts, Federations of Employers, and Associations for fixing prices or regulating output affected the position of individual producers and consumers, and the Post Office, the Telegraphic system, and the provision of water, gas, and electricity, afforded an obvious sphere for public enterprise.

Thus it came about that owing to a medley of causes, which included the passionate, disinterested revolt of enlightened individuals against intolerable conditions of life for their fellow-citizens, the dictates of practical expediency and enlightened self-interest, the largeness and complexity of the social problems of the century, and the example of State activity afforded by such countries as Germany, men's attitude towards the State gradually changed. From grudging acquiescence in the necessity for regulation of the conditions of employment or the provision of drains, the nation passed to acceptance of the State as the natural provider for certain of its needs and the guardian of individual liberties against interests too large and complex to be subject to individual control.

In an attempt to estimate the vitality of the social instinct in a democracy, the state of social consciousness attained by its individual members is of the first importance. Judged by the accounts of the sufferings of countless children in mills, mines, and factories which are to be

found in the Reports of the Children's Employment Commissions, the general level of the social imagination and conscience of the mid-nineteenth century would not seem to have been very high. The history of the small class of children employed as chimney-sweeps seems to indicate that public opinion and common practice even lagged behind the measure of protective legislation which the unremitting efforts of philanthropists forced upon the State.

Fortunately there were forces at work which gradually increased the social consciousness, not merely of individual persons of a philanthropic turn of mind, but of the mass of the people. It might, in fact, be said that in England the modern social State and the social individual were the products of the same age and to some extent of the same causes.

A century ago little accurate information in social matters was available, but of late years the practice of issuing Reports in a form in which they can be read by the normally intelligent member of the community has rendered it easy for the latter to obtain exact information. Novelists such as Dickens, Kingsley, and Disraeli have awakened popular interest in social conditions, and public concern has been aroused by widely quoted researches of social students into the facts of poverty and unemployment. To-day many of the questions which once interested the philanthropist only are commonly studied and discussed by private individuals of all shades of opinion and all classes of society.

Again, religious and social movements among the middle classes have deepened their sense of social responsibility. The "cut of the Co-operative trousers", although

not pleasing to the eye of the man of taste, helped to bring home to him his individual responsibility for the lives of his fellow-citizens. Later in the century, as a "natural outcome of the social idealism of Carlyle and Ruskin", came the Settlement movement with its attempt to bridge the gulf between the privileged and unprivileged sections of society by "mutual acquaintance" and neighbourliness. The personal reports of acquaintances who had taken to "slumming" drove home to the well-to-do the fact of socially unsatisfactory conditions of life among the poor.

Perhaps even more far-reaching in results was the extension of social and political consciousness to the wage-earners.

In the Majority Report of the Poor Law Commission issued in 1909 one of the great social changes which have taken place since 1834 is stated to be the steady rise in the wage level of the skilled workers. During the latter half of the nineteenth century there was, despite periods of depression, a constant reduction in the hours of work and a fall in the prices of the necessaries of life. Growing numbers of people thus had leisure to think of other matters than their individual struggle for existence.

At the same time the fact that England changed from an agricultural to a manufacturing country, the consequent growth of towns and the increased facilities for communication all led to greater discussion of social questions.

In Methodism, in the building up of the great organizations of Co-operative Society, Friendly Society, and Trade Union, the wage-earners learnt the value of association and self-government. In the elementary schools

after 1870 the habits of good-citizenship were built up in children, many of whom had little opportunity of learning in their homes either "discipline, habits of order and cleanliness" or "self-respect".

Voluntary adult education and the growing penetration of the homes of the people by the printed word further widened the horizon of many workers, and the successive enlargements of the franchise and the building up of local government gradually increased the proportion of the members of the community who took a real interest in social questions.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the majority of private citizens were beginning to attain to a consciousness of individual responsibility and social power which a hundred years earlier would have been possible only in a small, privileged section of the community.

CHAPTER II

THE VOLUNTEER AS FELLOW-WORKER WITH THE STATE

A NUMBER of interesting questions arise out of the contemporaneous growth of State activity and of a socially conscious people. What, for instance, are the respective attitudes of the State and the ordinary citizen to-day towards co-operation in social enterprise? Is the citizen wholly content to depend on public provision and to leave to his elected representatives the direction of policy and the supervision of administration, or does he still possess sufficient independence and vigour to make independent provision where he thinks it advisable, and to wish to take a personal share in public social work? How far does the State on its part wish to make use of the services of its socially conscious citizens, and how far does it assume that the creation of an efficient, salaried bureaucracy renders the personal services of the private individual superfluous?

If we return to the consideration of elementary education, where, as we have seen, the service offered by the State appears to some persons at least to be quite distinct from that rendered by the voluntary, denominational Societies, we find that the present position affords evidence that the private citizen still has sufficient initiative and independence not to accept a publicly provided substitute for what he really wants. The Church of Rome has actually increased its provision of schools, and while there has been a decrease in the number of children provided for in Church of England schools, and more

markedly in those of other religious denominations, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the annual meeting of the National Society in 1928, was able to report that the Church had "not abated one jot of its effort" and to point to the fact that the Society had achieved a higher financial record during the last year than ever before as a proof of the truth of his assertion. On the other hand, wherever the provision made by the State approximates to the conception of education held by private individuals or voluntary Societies, the reason for continued voluntary effort has seemed less obvious and voluntary funds have tended to flow into other channels. Owing to this tendency and to the ever-rising standards of accommodation demanded by the State there was a nett decrease in voluntary provision between 1902 and 1922 amounting to over 2,000 schools and 1,000,000 school places.¹

Turning to Public Health, we find interesting indications of present-day tendencies both in the State and the private citizen. The provision of the mechanism of health is necessarily a matter for the expert, and the influence of Chadwick at the General Board of Health early led to the recognition of the need for professional workers. To-day, sewerage, drainage, the sanitation of dwellings and the enforcement of regulations as to food and milk are largely in the hands of local authorities and their paid officials. In the development of the newer health functions of public authorities in the care and treatment of individuals, on the other hand, existing voluntary machinery has been largely used and co-ordination rather than annexation has been the end in view. It is a signal tribute to the extent and efficiency of

¹ *History of Elementary Education.* Birchenough.

pioneer voluntary effort that it has been possible to make so large a measure of provision through its means.

Nevertheless the present time appears to be a critical one both for the voluntary hospitals and for the "Approved Society" system, by means of which the pioneer voluntary Friendly Societies have been used to form the framework of the national scheme of compulsory health insurance. The voluntary hospitals are now used and aided extensively by public authorities for the treatment of certain classes of persons such as school children suffering from certain ailments, tuberculous patients, and those suffering from venereal disease. They have also been affected indirectly by the National Health Insurance Acts, owing to which the number of persons attending the out-patient departments of General Hospitals declined considerably after 1911.¹ Neither of these changes is in itself necessarily prejudicial to the voluntary hospital system; rather they have relieved the hospitals of some of their financial burdens and have so far strengthened their position. Opinion is still strongly in favour of maintaining the voluntary character of the system, and the Voluntary Hospitals Commission in 1925 was able to speak hopefully of the prospects of adequate support from the subscribing public. The figures published by the British Red Cross Society show an actual increase amounting to 19·6 per cent in voluntary donations during the five years from 1922 to 1926 inclusive.² Danger may come with the increase in the opportunities for direct competition between public and voluntary hospitals when

¹ *Report on Health Administration in London*. 1919.

² See paper on *Social Work in Great Britain*, prepared for the use of the International Conference on Social Work, 1928. S. P. Grundy.

the Poor Law Infirmaries and other Institutions are transferred to County Councils and County Borough Councils. This danger has been recognized and to some extent provided against, however, by the provision for consultation contained in the Local Government Act of 1929.

Again, the desirability of co-ordination of all public health efforts has already been used as an argument for the nationalization of health insurance and its administration by a central department. While the efficiency of the administration of the Approved Societies in the interests of the 16,000,000 insured persons affected is acknowledged, there is in certain of the Industrial Societies a lack of real opportunities for control by the members, and perhaps because of this the old Friendly Society spirit of social service is here less apparent. On the other hand, proposals for a radical change have so far been strongly opposed and, in the older Societies at least, the system still offers opportunities for personal service and education in "affairs" to large numbers of insured persons.

In an age when new social needs are continually perceived, the persistence of vitality in the volunteer is perhaps best proved, not by the fact that he lingers in his former haunts, but by his willingness to undertake further pioneer work. In the same way, valuable though the association of the State and the voluntary worker in old-established enterprises may prove in providing an obvious sphere for voluntary activity, it may be only a temporary and accidental result of the former predominance of the volunteer, while their association in new enterprises goes far to prove that each is conscious of the value of co-operation.

As an example of voluntary pioneer work in the present century the development of Infant Welfare work may be cited. Like earlier movements, it owed its origin to voluntary effort. Beginning in Manchester and Salford as early as 1861, it remained mainly local until the beginning of this century, when a determined effort to establish its value was made by Health Societies in many places; in particular, valuable pioneer work was done in Westminster, St. Marylebone, and at the St. Pancras School for Mothers.

At an early date a Central Society was formed and consistently urged the better training of workers and the co-ordination of the work of the local Committees. Among the latter the desire for municipal aid soon arose, and some of the supporters of the work demanded that local authorities should assume full responsibility for it. The Notification of Births Act, 1907, brought about the closer association of the authorities with work for maternity and child welfare, and in London powers were obtained in 1908 for the Metropolitan Borough Councils to appoint women health visitors.

Public interest grew rapidly, and the circumstances arising out of the War led to a deeper realization of the value of infant life. The Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, stimulated both local authorities and voluntary Committees to greater activity, and a rapid growth in the number of Centres followed. In 1917 there were 446 voluntary Centres and 396 Municipal Centres in England and Wales,¹ while in 1927 there were 848 voluntary Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, all of which were publicly aided and worked in close co-operation with the

¹ *The Mother and the Infant*. Eckhard.

public authority, and as many as 1,727 publicly provided centres.¹ At the present time a feature of the movement is the growth in the number of rural centres, many of which are started by voluntary Committees and are taken over by the local authority when the need for their provision has been demonstrated.

The speed with which official recognition and public aid were accorded to the work is a sign of the increased willingness of the State in the present century to accept responsibility for new forms of social service. Another sign of the times is the rapid extension of paid professional work in voluntary and Municipal Centres alike. In the Report published by the National League for Physical Education and Improvement in 1910, it was stated that only two doctors, excluding those in the service of Municipalities, were paid for their services at Infant Welfare Centres. Salaried officers of any kind were said to be few, and voluntary helpers, who were employed in home visiting as well as in work at the Centres, were plentiful. To-day practically all the doctors are paid, and the home visiting is largely in the hands of paid Health Visitors, while volunteers are employed chiefly at the Centres in work of a non-technical nature, such as serving tea, selling dried milk, keeping records of names and addresses, and minding children while their mothers are at classes.

Social legislation in the early years of the century was marked by the provision for association of public authorities and voluntary agencies in the work of social service. Whether this should be regarded merely as a temporary expedient to ease the transition from private to public responsibility or whether it denotes that the

¹ *International Health Year-Book*, 1927.

private citizen is recognized as a permanent factor in English local government is not yet clear. One result has been that the practice has grown up of delegating the whole of the work involved in a particular service to recognized, aided voluntary Societies; owing to this practice a ring of non-official but semi-dependent bodies has been created around the various public authorities.

The advantages of this expedient in utilizing the experience already gained in voluntary pioneer work and diminishing the concentration of business and consequent stereotyping of methods in public offices are obvious. Excellent relations usually exist between the respective voluntary and public officials and the clear limitation of sphere of the voluntary society prevents overlapping. At the same time, while the recognized society remains free to adapt its methods to the needs of its special work and is thus far non-official, it is no longer wholly voluntary; not only does it depend increasingly on public funds, but the need for maintaining an unvarying standard of work in order to qualify for grants appears to accentuate the tendency, which, as we have seen, is common elsewhere to-day, to employ paid officers instead of relying on volunteers.

A few examples of delegation of work to such aided societies may be of interest. Up to 1924, the London County Council entrusted the work of finding employment for and supervising physically and mentally defective juveniles to two voluntary Associations, the London Association for Mental Welfare and the After-Care Association for Blind, Deaf, and Crippled Children, and made substantial grants in aid to both Societies; after 1924 the Ministry of Labour were responsible for the work in

London and continued the arrangement; recently the Committee on Education and Industry have recommended the extension of the practice of making special arrangements for defective juveniles "probably by co-operation with voluntary associations" to all areas. The Association for Mental Welfare also carries out certain other duties with regard to the supervision of defectives subject to be dealt with under the Mental Deficiency Act on behalf of the London County Council. In the same way the Metropolitan and adjacent Counties Association acts as the agent of the Council in carrying out certain duties under the Blind Persons Act of 1920, and the Invalid Children's Aid Association receives a grant in respect of work for children suffering from or likely to be affected by contact with tuberculosis. The London Education Authority also makes a grant to the Juvenile Organizations Committee in connection with its work in promoting facilities for physical training and recreation for juveniles. Education in matters affecting the public health can often be commended to the public by the persuasive methods of voluntary societies, and some authorities, including the London County Council, delegate some of their powers of disseminating information on such questions as the treatment of venereal disease and make grants to the societies concerned.

Another sign that public authorities are awake to the value of voluntary co-operation is the practice of appointing Advisory Committees of voluntary workers to act in close touch with executive officials. For instance, local committees are formed in every area in connection with Employment Exchanges and Juvenile Exchanges and Bureaux. The persons appointed as members of these

Committees are usually representative of some special section of the community, such as employers, workers, and educational experts. They not only review the state of employment in their respective areas, but do valuable personal work by means of interviews with individuals who seek help or guidance at the Exchange.

In the same way, the services of non-official experts are used by Borough Councils in London as members of Tuberculosis Care Committees. The primary aim of these Committees is "to give advice and assistance as circumstances dictate to enable the family (of a tuberculous person) to tide over the most difficult period, to maintain or, if lost, to regain, economic independence and to enable the patient to derive the fullest possible advantage from the medical treatment prescribed".¹ The assistance of Hospital Almoners, Charity Organization Society Secretaries, Invalid Children's Aid Association Secretaries and other trained social workers is obviously valuable in such work and is freely claimed and given. Nevertheless, the history of one or two Committees affords an illustration of the dangers which voluntary workers have to fear from official tendencies. It is an unfortunate fact that in a bureaucratic system unified control and uniformity of method appear to be necessary conditions of efficiency; it follows that some officials are tempted to look askance at the individual variations in the habits of volunteers, and, as a result, the active participation of expert and able social workers is sometimes rudely discouraged.

Another sphere in which private citizens are appointed to work as part of an official system is that of School

¹ *Report of the Medical Officer of Health for London for 1925.*

Management. In London the Managers are asked to advise the Council on alterations and enlargements of Schools, and on equipment and sanitary conditions; they check the Attendance Registers and their representatives act as members of Local Attendance Sub-Committees for the consideration of cases of non-attendance and of Children's Care Committees; they have a voice in the selection of the teachers, and may exert great personal influence in the Schools, where they are expected to "smooth down" the teachers' difficulties and encourage the moral and physical welfare of the children. On the other hand, the final decision on all important points remains in the hands of the Education Committee, who are responsible to the citizens of London, and it is accordingly sometimes difficult to induce individuals with the right personal qualifications to act as Managers.

So far, we have not considered the use of non-expert and non-elected ordinary members of the public as the executive agents of the State or Local Authority. The work of such private individuals for school children as the appointed agents of the London Education Authority will form the main subject of this book. It need only be noted here that, although there is a tendency in some places to restrict the use of volunteers to advisory functions, there are notable examples outside the field of work for children of the successful discharge of onerous executive duties by private individuals acting for the State.

During the War, for instance, volunteers carried the main burden of the great and varied work of Local War Pensions Committees, and only ceased work when the return home of discharged soldiers and the necessity

of finding suitable employment for them brought about the displacement of unpaid workers by paid officials. Again, the National Savings scheme depends wholly for the carrying out of detailed executive work on private unpaid citizens; financial help from public funds is limited to a small allowance for administrative expenses based on the membership of the respective Savings Associations, of which there are to-day over 20,000 in schools, factories, shops, and clubs. Complete control over and responsibility for their work has been ensured to the Associations and Local Committees, and the success of the voluntary scheme has been facilitated by the appointment of a special class of officials whose main function is to recruit and stimulate volunteers, and who are deliberately excluded by the Government Department which employs them from participation in executive duties.

Remembering the varied causes which influenced the State in its assumption of responsibility in different fields of social effort, it is not surprising to find that at present the division of sphere between official Departments and Voluntary Associations is seen less as a matter of principle than of convenience. Historical and local considerations have brought about a variety of methods of administration. Public funds are disbursed now from Whitehall, now by a local authority, now by a national or local voluntary association which makes use of the experience gained in its pioneer days as the co-partner of the State and the mediator of its power.

If we try to arrive at some estimate of current tendencies in the State and the individual from the examples which we have considered, we find that the increased

social activity of the State has not precluded the volunteer from pioneer effort or from continued work for the causes to which he devoted his energy before the assumption of public responsibility. On the contrary, voluntary co-operation has been invited in many of the ventures of the State, and the ordinary members of the public have been offered additional opportunities of social service. The response to the invitation to co-operate precludes the assumption that the spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to philanthropic causes is dead or that there is a general desire on the part of private citizens that social service should be given wholly into the hands of a bureaucracy. On the other hand, there is a growing professionalization of service even within the field served by voluntary agencies, and there may be dangers as well as advantages in the recognition and semi-official status of certain voluntary societies. Private enthusiasm tends to flag when it is placed in direct competition with State activity, and flourishes most when stimulated by responsibility, and when public aid is conditional on private effort. The natural desire of the public official to cover the field of his effort systematically and completely sometimes places the volunteer in a precarious position and may in the long run rob him of status and opportunities for public service. The future is not yet assured, but there is ground for hope that neither the assumption of State responsibility nor the evolution of the expert will be used to preclude the nation from securing the participation of private citizens in public social service.

CHAPTER III

THE CHILD IN THE TIME OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

IN order to understand the position when the voluntary Care Committee system came into being in London, it is necessary to consider what contributions social and educational developments between the Education Act of 1870 and the end of the first decade of the twentieth century had made towards the well-being of school children.

The proportions contributed to child welfare by the various elements of material environment and parental care, and by current social practice and ideas and public provision or legislation are still largely undetermined. Nor can happiness be adequately measured by any known standard. It is possible, however, to show what new factors there are in child life in London to-day which may reasonably be expected to conduce to the happiness and self-development of the children of wage-earning parents.

If an attempt is made to envisage London in the early days of the School Board, one of the outstanding features is seen to be the incredibly bad state of housing in many districts. Artisans' Dwellings Acts were passed in 1868 and 1875, and the Metropolitan Board of Works made efforts to arrange for slum clearance; voluntary Sanitary Aid Societies and Miss Octavia Hill and other philanthropists tried both to improve conditions and to build up higher standards of living in the minds of the people, but it was not till after 1890, when the Housing of the Working Classes Act was passed, that large schemes of re-

housing were embarked on. Unfortunately these schemes were not accompanied by the public recognition of the value of the type of social work advocated by Miss Hill, and in some sections of the people better housing did not lead to a changed outlook.

Not only did many of the children who attended the first Board Schools come from insanitary and overcrowded hovels where they lived under conditions which conduced neither to physical health nor to high standards of decency. They came also from homes where there was acute poverty. As can be seen from the Report of the Poor Law Commission in 1909, there was during the preceding fifty years a continuous movement from prosperity to depression and from depression back to prosperity, which precluded stability of income and security of the conditions of life among certain sections of the people. The present-day method of augmenting income in emergencies by compulsory insurance was of course non-existent, and bankside and other casual labourers and persons existing on outdoor relief had often incomes so uncertain or small as to leave them without sufficient means to maintain physical efficiency. Up to nearly the end of the century it was possible to see in the schools "semi-starved" children, "filthily dirty, sickly looking, with sore eyes and unwholesome aspects".¹

Even in school, their material environment did not always conduce to health. It was only gradually that the School Board was able to dispense with dark, cramped, and ill-ventilated buildings, and the formal order and regimentation of the children which were commonly

¹ *Life and Labour of the People in London.* (Paper on the Elementary Schools.)

considered essential, the lack of free play for natural, childish activities, the seating arrangements by which even children under five were placed stiffly in a gallery "rising one behind the other, so that every pair of eyes had the teacher full in view", cannot have been productive of physical vigour.

Recent researches¹ have led emphasis to be placed on the fact that maternal care is of even more importance for the physical well-being of the child than the direct influence of environment. Of the standard of such care in the poorer homes of London during the last years of the nineteenth century it is impossible to speak positively. It is possible, however, to deduce something of the attitude of the parents to various questions affecting the lives of their children. The following extract from the Annual Report of the London County Council for 1926 may be cited to illustrate the relations of school and parents in a poor neighbourhood in the early days of compulsory attendance:

In the early days the school was a battle-ground. The neighbourhood was at war with the school authorities; the children were at war with the teachers; and the parents took the side of the children. Physical violence was frequent; truancy was common. . . . The first lesson both parents and children had to be taught was to respect the law. That brought regular attendance, but by itself created indifferent parents and sullen children who resented the interference of the teacher. The next step was to overcome this indifference and sullenness and to show that the teacher was the friend of both parent and pupil. The teachers concentrated on giving the pupils a new outlook; on imbuing them with a knowledge and liking for the decencies of life; on teaching them to "Play the game"; and generally on character building.

¹ *Poverty, Nutrition and Growth*. Report of Medical Research Council. Special Report Series. No. 101.

In this way the opposition of the majority of parents was overcome, but for many years attendance was irregular and unwilling, and as late as 1891 averaged only 78 per cent as against 87 per cent to-day.

Again, contemporary observers and philanthropists such as Dr. Barnardo laid stress on the existence of a large class of uncontrolled, neglected children, many of them with no fixed abode, street arabs, such as the boy described by Lord Shaftesbury, who habitually made his bed in the roller in Hyde Park, for whom Ragged Schools and later Day Industrial Schools attempted to provide some education and control. There were children, too, not parentless or entirely cut off from their homes, who, late in the century, were given food in a handkerchief, and lived in the streets, coming or not to school at will, and who were sometimes lost for a week or so, living meanwhile by begging or pilfering.¹

Booth remarked—no doubt partly on the authority of the School Attendance Officers on whose reports many of his statements were based—that on the whole “kindness and affection” reigned in the homes, though it might be “careless kindness and ill-regulated affection”. On the other hand, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which received its Royal Charter in 1895, found many children who suffered at the hands of drunken and neglectful parents.

Moreover, there was the great evil of excessive child employment out of school hours. Many witnesses before the Inter-Departmental Committee, which inquired into the subject in 1902, spoke strongly of the injury done to girls who were employed without wages in the homes of

¹ *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Final volume.

their parents, and suggested that among this class of children were often found "the severest work, the longest hours, and the hardest conditions". Yet none of the witnesses could suggest a remedy, and it cannot, in fact, be claimed that this particular evil of parental oppression has yet been adequately dealt with.

Perhaps as a corrective to the blackness of this picture of child life, we may recall some of the individual happy homes, such as that in which the "Old Soldier" demonstrated her efficiency as housekeeper, wife, and mother, which Dickens drew in his novels, and which cannot have been without many parallels in real life. Not all—probably not a large proportion of—children in London were unhappy or ill-cared for, but there did exist in the lives of numbers of them evils which by now have been mitigated.

Social workers and teachers of the period may justly claim that some credit for the amelioration of the lot of children is due to their efforts. The teachers were early concerned by the problem of the underfed child, and in the early days of the Board Schools many of them provided bread and tea or coffee for the poorest of their scholars at their own expense. Mrs. Burgwin, the Head Mistress of Orange Street School, Southwark, obtained publicity for the question of school feeding by inducing Mr. G. R. Sims to write a series of articles in the *Referee* describing the lives of the London poor, and as a result of his appeal the *Referee* Fund was started, and a building known as the "Farm-house" was secured for use as a feeding-centre.

Gradually the children who attended acquired a liking for soup, porridge, and other food of a more nutritious nature than their customary fare, of which the staple

article was bread. An improvement in their physical condition was noticeable after they had been fed for a short time at school, and they actually seemed to be better in health during the winter months when school meals were given than in the summer when their parents were in a position to provide for their needs.¹

Other voluntary feeding agencies sprang up rapidly, and the School Board began to co-operate by providing covered playgrounds where meals could be served in some of the new schools, and also took an increasing share in the attempt to organize and co-ordinate the work of the voluntary societies. In 1889, when it was estimated that 43,888 children, or 12·8 per cent of the total number in the Board Schools,² were habitually underfed, a London School Dinners Association was formed by the amalgamation of six or seven of the largest agencies. The Association worked in close touch with the School Board, and formed a substantial local sub-committee to survey the needs of each district and to prevent overlapping or scarcity of funds.

Later, a Joint Committee on Underfed Children, consisting partly of members of the School Board and partly of representatives of voluntary feeding agencies, was formed to direct the work of feeding. At the same time, Local Sub-Committees consisting of Managers, teachers, School Board visitors, and one or more co-opted outsiders, were appointed for each group of schools where there was necessity for the provision of meals.

Unfortunately, the Joint Committee had no power

¹ *Report of the Special Committee of the School Board on Underfed Children.* 1895.

² *Report of the Special Sub-Committee of the School Management Committee on Meals for School Children.* 1889.

to enforce its suggestions on the local Sub-Committees, and was not always able to co-ordinate their work effectively, or to see that the diet selected for the children was suitable and that the most effective use possible was made of local efforts, some of which, indeed, sprang up spasmodically without its knowledge. Thus in Deptford, a Wesleyan Minister and his friend started, without reference to the Joint Committee, a scheme which lasted seventeen weeks, under which 14,000 children were given a breakfast at which the fare was invariably a mug of coffee with milk and a piece of cheese; the originator of this scheme stated in his evidence before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and School Feeding that he chose "this rather strange meal" because he was fond of cheese himself, and therefore wished that the children should have it. To his satisfaction, he found that "they always enjoyed it very much".

Here we must turn back for a moment to observe that many fresh forms of voluntary social work were coming into being in London. The recurrent distress from 1867 onwards had led to the formation of numerous charitable societies, and of an Association—which later became the Charity Organization Society, and which numbered Ruskin and later Barnett among its adherents—the main object of which was to organize and co-ordinate charitable effort. Largely owing to the zeal of members of this Society, the idea of constructive family case-work spread and was absorbed, later in the century, by new workers such as Hospital Almoners and Invalid Children's Aid Association visitors.

School Management and Relief Committees were often to some extent manned by workers from other Societies

and from the local Settlements, and some of them began to try to do constructive work in order to put the families of necessitous school children on their feet instead of remaining content merely to give dinners. Naturally there were many divergencies of policy and method among the Relief Committees. In some instances they were "dead letters"; the Managers' duty of visiting the homes of the underfed children was imperfectly fulfilled, and the selection of children to be fed was left to the Head Teachers, who did not even consult one another about children in the same family but in different departments in the school.¹ In others, such as that described by Miss Frere in her book on Children's Care Committees, very varied work was undertaken. Parents were helped to obtain boots and spectacles for their children from a Benevolent Fund; the mothers of underfed children were visited, and advice or warning was given where the cause of the difficulty was found not to be poverty but wrong feeding or laziness; parents of neglected children were supervised and convalescence and medical treatment were obtained where necessary.²

The conception of the welfare work to be done for school children continued to widen as the Board and the active Managers and Relief Committees learnt more of the children and their homes. Health was a subject specially commended to the consideration of Managers, and the teachers were required to furnish them with lists of "dull and delicate children" in order that they might "consult the parents and consider the condition of

¹ *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committees on Medical Inspection and School Feeding.*

² *Children's Care Committees.* Margaret Frere.

their homes". In their Annual Reports they were expected to give details of their work, including the provision of country holidays, provident funds, special measures adopted to help cases of sickness or poverty, and special plans for interesting the parents in the work of the schools.¹ Many Managers did excellent work in all these directions. Canon Barnett,² for instance, arranged meetings between the Managers and the parents of children at St. Jude's School, "to evoke mutual understanding", and invited the parents to "breaking-up parties", to entertainments arranged by the children and to "little shows of work" from 1873 onwards.

If we turn now from the actual work of the volunteers to current social theories, we find the emergence of two distinct schools of thought. On the one hand, we see the party led by the Charity Organisation Society, opposed to indiscriminate almsgiving, and preaching the doctrine that the supreme good lay in family economic independence both of the State and, unless in exceptional circumstances, of charity; on the other, the party which was influenced by the new literature of socialism and which began to demand the "Endowment of Citizenship".

Some reflection of the ideas of the individualists is to be found not only in the work of private philanthropists but in the inauguration of a more strictly deterrent policy by various Boards of Guardians after the issue of Goschen's Circular in 1869, in which Poor Law Authorities were urged to deal with destitution only, while it was suggested that the benevolent should confine their aid to cases of distress due to exceptional causes. On the

¹ *The Work of the London School Board*: T. A. Spalding.

² *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends*. By his Wife.

other hand, economic facts were against certain assumptions which at that time were considered fundamental in the individualist position. In particular, the assumption proved untenable that only those families which were socially unsatisfactory needed external aid, and that where there were no glaring faults of character it was uniformly possible for a family to provide by the economy of common spending, management, and saving for the needs of its young, sick, and old members.¹ As the Poor Law Commission pointed out, since 1834, when "The New Poor Law" was inaugurated,

Some phenomena, affecting the capacity of workmen . . . have developed themselves which were . . . unknown or unforeseen by our forefathers. Cyclical fluctuations due to the enlarged area of operations of our trade are apt to become less amenable to local or even national control. Changes in fashion, greatly affecting demand, follow one another more rapidly than heretofore, and the wider competition to which production is subject forces upon the manufacturer new processes and new mechanical appliances. All these causes tend to put out of employment temporarily or even permanently men of respectable character, who are willing to work, but whose work is not of the standard or type required.

The public would not be restrained from offering or from demanding from the State exceptional forms of assistance when periodic crises arose. Soup kitchens sprang up spasmodically; Mansion House Funds were raised, and in some degree accentuated the difficulties in London by attracting the unemployed from other districts to it in considerable numbers; the State also decided to take action, and in 1886 Mr. Chamberlain authorized Town Councils and other local authorities to

¹ *The Family*. Helen Bosanquet.

provide work for the unemployed which would not involve the stigma of pauperism. Probably the very insistence of the anti-State party that relief should be deterrent aided the movement to extend help from public funds to the unemployed outside the sphere of the Poor Law.

The battle raged fiercely round the school child. The meetings of the School Board became the arena of the combatants, and the reports of successive Sub-Committees on School-feeding showed the varying fortunes of the two parties. At one time, the policy of constructive case-work, including the provision of medical advice, or an attempt to help the breadwinner of the family to find work, where necessary, found favour; at another the "Point of view of the Children" was considered to preclude consideration of the "moral character of the parents". The sufficiency of voluntary effort and the duty of the organized community to make public provision of food for the children in the elementary schools were hotly debated.

It is more edifying to turn from this long drawn-out controversy—still undecided when the School Board came to an end—to the record of changes in the schools. At first inability to pay school fees—varying in London from one penny to ninepence a week according to the class of child educated in the different schools—provided a useful pretext for non-attendance. By the year 1889-90 about 20 per cent of the children attending the Board Schools had their fees remitted,¹ and after the Education Act of 1891 it was decided to make education free in all the London Board Schools. The same provision was

¹ *Life and Labour of the People in London*. Vol. iii. First Series.

made for the Voluntary Schools after the Education (London) Act of 1903.

A greater hindrance to progress was the Revised Code issued by the Education Department in 1862, under which the amount of Government grant was largely determined by the results of individual examination of the children in certain specified subjects. From 1880 onwards there were frequent complaints in the newspapers that "payment by results" was detrimental to the children, and in 1884 public concern was increased by the issue of a Report by Dr. J. Crichton Browne, which laid stress on the harm being caused by the system from the point of view of physical well-being. Many observers were of opinion that over-pressure was most detrimental to underfed and neglected children, and an additional impetus was thus given to the movement for school feeding. Gradually the requirements of the Code were modified, and the School Board were able to extend the provision for domestic and manual training and to allow individual children to develop at their own pace.

Between 1880 and 1890, the result of researches abroad into school hygiene and the institution of systems of medical inspection of school children at Frankfurt-am-Main, Lausanne, and in France began to excite popular interest. In 1890, the British Association made an inquiry into the mental and physical condition of London Poor Law and elementary school children, and in the same year the first School Doctor in this country was appointed by the London School Board. At first stress was laid on the material conditions under which the child was taught, especially on the school premises and equipment, but the Wiesbaden system, which was widely adopted in

Germany after 1896, and under which the CHILD as such was treated as the centre of interest, and even the most satisfactory school environment as only a means of welfare, was finally triumphant in England also.¹

In London, the general powers of the School Board under the Education Acts were held to cover medical inspection and additional School Doctors were soon appointed, but as a rule only those children were examined who seemed to the teachers to be ailing or who attracted the attention of the doctor as they filed past him. The work of the doctors was supplemented by that of School Nurses who were chiefly concerned with cleanliness and minor ailments.

The concentration of children in the schools necessarily drew attention to special classes among them. In London, even before the Elementary Education Acts of 1893 and 1898 with regard to blind, deaf, and defective and epileptic children, some provision had been made by the School Board and by pioneer voluntary effort. After the Acts were passed, additional Special Schools were opened and further discrimination made between types of defectives.

Special provision was made for delinquent children also. A series of Industrial and Reformatory Schools Acts from 1854 onwards had established the right of young offenders to receive treatment in Special Schools instead of by penal servitude or imprisonment. The Education Act of 1870 gave power to the School Boards to contribute to the cost of maintaining existing Industrial Schools or to provide such schools, and the London Board

¹ *Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1908.*

exercised its powers in both directions. In 1877, it established the Shaftesbury Training Ship as an Industrial School for Boys, and in 1897, the Gordon House Home for Girls. In the meantime the recognition of the advantages of reformatory or curative treatment of children and of criminals generally was becoming widespread, and received legal sanction in the Summary Jurisdiction Act of 1879, and the First Offenders Act of 1887.

Finally, we must note that as a result of the inquiries conducted by the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Employment of School-Children, the Employment of Children Act was passed in 1903. Under this, although the great evil of overwork in their own homes was not dealt with, certain general restrictions on child labour were imposed, and local authorities were given powers to make bye-laws to regulate the hours between which children might be employed, their maximum number of hours of employment, and the age at which they might commence work, to prohibit employment in occupations specially dangerous to health or morals, and to require medical certificates as a condition of employment. In London advantage was taken of this power, and, from this time onwards, the grosser evils of excessive employment of children by persons other than their parents were prevented.

Even such a slight survey as the foregoing will have shown the impossibility of generalizing about the children of London. The 1,000 London children who were found by the School Board investigators to be working for thirty or more hours a week out of school hours were a small proportion of the children attending the 112 schools from which they were drawn. The homeless

or errant street arab class, in spite of large contemporary estimates of its size, was at no time thought to be representative of the London child. The delinquent and defective children for whom the new legislation made provision were comparatively few. Nevertheless the efforts made to help all these special classes of children indicate a prevalent sympathetic attitude to the problems of childhood which might be expected to influence the welfare of the normal child favourably as and when occasion arose.

The improvement in material conditions, especially in housing and sanitation and increased "real" income almost certainly contributed to the welfare of the children of workers in whom there was a corresponding increase in "social competence". On the other hand, it is equally probable that, where there was "no desire for improvement commensurate with the opportunities offered", where "laziness, want of thrift, ignorance of household management, particularly of the choice and preparation of food, filth, indifference to parental obligations, drunkenness",¹ infected the parents, the children were no happier or better cared-for owing to the growth of family resources.

It seems probable from later investigations² that the haphazard and easy way in which some—although as we have seen by no means all—Relief Committees and other voluntary agencies granted school meals brought about a too ready dependence on external aid in certain classes of parents, and may have militated against child welfare in so far as it deadened their sense of responsibility.

¹ *Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration.*

² See *L.C.C. Report on Home Circumstances of Necessitous Children in Certain Selected Schools.*

Against these considerations we may set some important achievements. A half-starved child is unlikely to show zest for life or to derive advantage from education, and it cannot be doubted that life took on a new colour in the eyes of some of the children who were fed at school. To even more children the recognition of factors other than the academic in education and the freedom from over-pressure in school meant increased well-being and happiness. Moreover, the gradual diminution of parental opposition to compulsory education—an opposition which had involved a disharmony between two forces of much importance in child life—must have helped to assure the child of stability, unity, and order in his external environment and so conduced to his right growth. To these gains we may add the building up of the technique of social case-work, the consequent increased power to help families in distress, and the growing experience of problems of child life acquired by numerous voluntary social workers. Considering these things, we may, perhaps, without undue optimism infer that some factors making for the welfare of the normal child and the mitigation of evils affecting special classes of children had been evolved by the time the School Board gave place to the new local Education Authority.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILD AS FUTURE CITIZEN

“THERE is one force which all the armies of the world are not able to withstand, an idea whose day has arrived.” The first decade of the twentieth century brought with it the recrudescence of the idea of the CHILD as the asset and responsibility of the State. A number of factors conduced to this result. In the first place, owing to the concentration of children in the elementary schools, the public were forced to realize the prevalence of certain evils which previously had been assumed to be exceptional and therefore properly the object of philanthropic effort. At about the same time the doctrine of the State as social agent and power began to come to the fore, and it followed that many people perceived the magnitude of the need and the ability of the community to meet it almost simultaneously. Moreover, owing to recent revelations of the social evils of insufficient and unstable family resources, and to the allegations of national deterioration which followed on the rejection of large numbers of recruits as physically unfit during the South African War, the nation was concerned as to its health and social well-being, and was eager to take stock of its assets. The elementary schools offered the means of making a comprehensive survey and also a hopeful point of attack on existing evils. For these reasons official and public attention was concentrated on the child as future citizen.

What did the nation require in its citizens? One of the points which emerged most clearly from the discussions of the period was the importance attached to

physical health. Two official bodies, the Royal Commission on Physical Training in Scotland and the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, reported on matters affecting the national health in 1903 and 1904. Both Committees assumed the interest and responsibility of the State, and both came to the conclusion that the period of school life offered the "only opportunity for taking stock of the physique of the entire population and securing to its profit the conditions most favourable to healthy development".

They set forth an ideal of a people informed in hygiene, provided with the means of physical training and exercise, and with the environmental conditions necessary for health, and taught to make effective use of them; to achieve this ideal they saw that the immediate necessity was to bring the lower strata of the population up to the level of the socially competent, to induce them to "cast off the paralysing traditions of helplessness and despair", and to live up to the accepted standards of self-respect and efficiency.

Nor were there lacking members of the community who realized that the pursuit of this aim involved the development of certain moral characteristics in citizens. The nation needed not only a physically virile people conscious of the value of health, but one which accepted the obligations of family responsibility. The consideration of the "wide question of how far the State should go in relieving parents of their primary responsibilities" and of the best method of securing an "improved moral and physical state" in the children who were future citizens without impairing such responsibility was realized to be essential when schemes for social amelioration were under discussion.

The social importance of education was also increasingly recognized. In 1904, the Board of Education set out their conception of the aims of elementary education in the Introduction to the Code, and included among them not only the formation of character, but the creation of intelligent and observant citizens, fitted "practically as well as intellectually for the work of life", able to increase their knowledge by their own efforts after their school life was ended, and "upright and useful members of the community".

Fourthly, there was a growing realization of the importance to the nation of securing an industrially skilled population, capable of maintaining individual economic independence and security.

Private investigators and official Committees of inquiry found much in existing conditions which hindered the fulfilment of this ideal. There was evidence of the existence of a "submerged" and physically degenerate section of the people in which children were growing up neglected, under-nourished, with their physical defects unremedied, without the means of healthy recreation; nor could there be any doubt after the evidence collected by Mr. Cyril Jackson, the investigator into Boy Labour appointed by the Poor Law Commission, that numerous children were plunging in haphazard fashion into work which provided neither industrial training nor security of employment, and that "Unemployables" were in fact being manufactured by the methods of industrial recruitment from the population of the schools maintained at great expense by the nation.

The difficulties to be coped with were enormous, but the nation was encouraged in the effort to overcome them by

the acceptance of certain assumptions which conduced to a hopeful attitude of mind.

In the first place, eminent authorities asserted that "Those inferior bodily characteristics which are the result of poverty (and not of vice, such as syphilis and alcoholism), and which are therefore acquired during the lifetime of the individual, are not transmittable from one generation to another". Consequently there was every reason to suppose that improvements in physical condition might be effected by amelioration of external conditions in a very short time, and such a belief naturally stimulated action as regards the environment of the people. Again, the recognition of the value of statistics and of a comprehensive knowledge of questions affecting the national health was a spur to organized and systematic study. Above all, the growing conviction that the question of the welfare of children and adolescents concerned not only the parents but the State served to break down objections to public interference in their lives. As Mr. Jackson said in his report to the Poor Law Commission, "The waste of boys' brains, character, and strength is ultimately not only destructive of the individual, but a serious economic loss to the community".

As in the early Public Health movement, a sense of social power combined with a conviction of the social waste resulting from State inactivity, led naturally to a demand for social legislation.

On the vexed question of school feeding, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration had pointed out the "dangerous character of the doctrine that free meals are the necessary concomitant of free education". "Education", the Committee said, "is a

great social need which individual citizens are, as a rule, not able to provide for their children on a sufficient scale, but food, like clothing and lodging, is a personal necessity, which in a well-ordered society it is not inherently impossible for parents to provide, and the effort to supplement their deficiencies and to correct the effects of their neglect should aim, in the first instance, at the restoration of self-respect and the enforcement of parental duty."

Following on the report of the Committee, a special Committee was set up in 1905 and charged with the duty of ascertaining the position as regards medical inspection and school feeding, and reporting whether feeding could be better organized "WITHOUT ANY CHARGE ON THE PUBLIC FUNDS".

While the Committee was sitting, Boards of Guardians were empowered by the Relief (School Children) Order of 1905 to grant relief to the child of an able-bodied man without requiring him to enter the workhouse or perform the outdoor relief labour test. Where the failure to provide food was due to the habitual neglect of the father, provision was made that relief should be considered as a loan and recovered.

The Board of Education issued a circular suggesting co-operation by Local Education Authorities and a partition of the field between the voluntary feeding agencies and the Poor Law according to whether the need for meals was likely to be temporary or permanent or was the result of wilful neglect on the part of the parents.

Differences of outlook in Boards of Guardians and Education Authorities in some localities were at once made manifest, but before the experiment could be fairly tested the General Election took place, and shortly

afterwards, in 1906, a year of comparative prosperity, the Education (Provision of Meals) Act was passed.

By this Act the responsibility for school feeding was transferred to the Education Authorities. Power was given them to associate themselves with voluntary School Canteen Committees, and to aid them by furnishing facilities for the preparation and service of meals; where voluntary funds were insufficient to defray the actual cost of food, the Authority might apply to the Board of Education for sanction to spend money out of the rates up to the limit of a halfpenny rate. The test of the need for school meals laid down was the inability of the child by reason of lack of sufficient food to take advantage of his education. The parent was to be required to pay for school meals unless the Authority were satisfied that he was unable to do so "by reason of circumstances other than his own default". Neither the provision of meals nor failure to pay for them was to be a reason for disfranchisement.

The provisions of the Act are still the occasion of controversy, and many social workers, who believe that children can be helped effectively only by improvement in home conditions consequent on the raising of parental standards, remain averse to public provision for their needs in isolation from the general question of relief to their parents.

In the meantime the question of inaugurating a system of Medical Inspection was under consideration. The Committee which inquired into the position in 1905 found that forty-eight Education Authorities in addition to London had appointed School Doctors, and that some nursing work in the schools was arranged by voluntary

associations, but that there was no voluntary organization for Inspection. There could be no objection to State provision, therefore, on the ground that voluntary effort would be discouraged by it. The Report of the Committee was followed by the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of 1907, in which it was made a statutory duty of Education Authorities to examine EVERY child on or immediately before or after its entry to school and on such other occasions as the Board of Education might direct. The work was thus placed on a comprehensive basis from the start.

The Board of Education at once issued a Memorandum (Circular 576) stating their policy in initiating the work. They took a broad view of the subject, and insisted that the new service of medical inspection and school hygiene could not be divorced from existing medical and sanitary administration, but should be regarded as "an integral and vital part of the wider question of the health and physical condition of the nation". For this reason they recommended that the offices of School Medical Officer and Medical Officer of Health should be combined. They also insisted on the value of parental co-operation, and pointed out that "the increased work undertaken by the State for the individual" should mean that "the parents had not to do less for themselves and their children but more", and that one of the main objects of the new legislation was to "stimulate a sense of duty in matters affecting health in the homes of the people".

Following on the Administrative Provisions Act came the Children Act in 1908. The Probation of Offenders Act of the preceding year had already marked a further step in the process of making the treatment of offenders

curative, which was described in the last chapter. The Children Act not only recognized this principle, but established the fact that a distinction should be made between adult and child offenders, and that the latter should be protected from the danger of contact with hardened criminals. To ensure such protection, it was provided that separate Juvenile Courts should be established to deal with persons under the age of sixteen. The Act, which codified the provisions of previous Acts, was of course inspired by the common desire to enforce a minimum conception of child welfare. Its general effect was to give increased powers of dealing with neglect and cruelty, and to define certain conditions justifying the removal of the child from its home by a magistrate's order, as well as to accord special treatment to the juvenile delinquent. Some of its deficiencies as revealed in practice will be seen in a later chapter.

Meanwhile the problems of adolescence were receiving increasing attention. The Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration reported that they

were impressed with the conviction that the period of adolescence is responsible for much waste of human material and for the entrance upon maturity of permanently damaged and ineffective persons of both sexes. The plasticity of the physical organization, the power it possesses of yielding rapidly towards the degenerative or recuperative influences, appears to terminate at eighteen, and the records of the years preceding that age are in the great majority of cases decisive for self-improvement or the reverse. Unfortunately, it is a period of which too little account is taken. With the classes under consideration education in the ordinary sense of the word is over just when in its full significance it becomes most necessary. Parental direction is almost entirely absent, and in lieu of it very little supervision is exercised in any other quarter over physical or moral development.

A witness before the Committee stated that he did not believe that more than 5 per cent of the youthful portion of the industrial population were touched by any well-organized recreative agency out of school or working hours. Another witness was "impressed with the number of boys employed on errands and as messengers (by which means they begin to earn money younger) who have no technical training and therefore subsequently drift into the ranks of unskilled labour".

Mr. Cyril Jackson, in the course of his investigations into conditions in large towns, found that between 70 and 80 per cent of boys entered unskilled occupations on leaving school; that since 1891 the proportion of messenger boys had increased relatively to the total numbers of employed boys under fifteen years, and that the enormous growth of cities as distributive centres provided plentiful openings for boys in unskilled labour, so that boys could find employment of one sort or another within a few days of leaving school. Such employment often offered comparatively high wages but no training, and the temptation to leave one post to get higher wages in another was "almost irresistible".

In London some attempt was already being made to cope with the problem by means of voluntary Skilled Employment and Apprenticeship Committees, which devoted their efforts to placing suitable children in work which offered training and future prospects, and which took infinite pains to fit the work offered to the capacities and aptitudes of the individual child. Such Committees were not able to cover the field, and, as in other spheres where the State succeeded the pioneer voluntary worker, the demand for comprehensiveness was a determining

factor in the decision to make public provision for a social need.

It followed that when the Poor Law Commission recommended the establishment of a National system of Labour Exchanges, they recommended also that there should be joint efforts on the part of Exchanges or industrial experts, parents, and School Authorities to prevent boys from drifting into occupations certain to result in their becoming casual workers, together with increased facilities for technical education and physical training for the young.

The Labour Exchanges Act followed, and in 1910 the Board of Trade in consultation with the Board of Education issued special rules with regard to the registration of juvenile applicants for employment. Under these rules Juvenile Advisory Committees were appointed to give advice with regard to the management of Labour Exchanges in relation to juvenile applicants for employment, and in co-operation with any other body or persons or by themselves, to give information and advice to boys and girls and their parents with regard to the choice of employment.

Later in the same year, the Education (Choice of Employment) Act empowered Local Education Authorities to exercise similar powers with regard to the giving of advice to persons under seventeen years of age who were seeking employment. It was widely recognized that the employment of children was the culminating point of their education, and that "placing" was an educational rather than a wholly industrial function in the case of school leavers; in view of this some Education Authorities set up Employment Bureaux under their direct control;

others, including the London Authority, were content to co-operate with the Board of Trade and to use the juvenile departments of the Exchanges which had already been set up. Whatever the nature of the local machinery and administration, its provision marked the public recognition of the importance of the adolescent not merely as an embryo wage-earner, but as a future citizen.

Thus within four years the State's responsibility towards the child had widened to include in some measure provision of food, medical supervision, general care, and facilities for obtaining suitable employment; the parents had been forced to accept a kind of partnership with the community in the care of their children, and limits had begun to be set to the sacrifice of the child's chance of development in order to meet family needs.

What were the effects of this large body of legislation on child welfare? Was the conception of the child primarily as future citizen likely to prove detrimental to his individual growth on lines determined by his own peculiar needs? Was it a menace to his place in family life? Or was it wholly advantageous to him in that it secured him against some of the grosser evils of excessive employment, neglect, and cruelty and placed at his disposal expert advice on health and employment?

The answers afforded by history to these questions will, it is hoped, be found to some extent in the subsequent description of Children's Care work in London. That the child has derived some great material benefits and that his physical condition shows improvement as a result of the effort of the social conscience to improve his chances of right development is now generally acknowledged.

Before we turn to the history of the next twenty years for evidence, we must pause to note the immediate force of two criticisms on points of outstanding importance to the child. The first is that the new legislation meant an unparalleled intrusion into the home; the second that the intervention of the State involved the substitution of "wholesaling" for the individual methods of the social case-worker.

Here it is impossible to make a general statement which would be true of all sections of the child population. In districts in which casual labour was predominant, the Sunday dinner the only fixed standard in housekeeping, and the Relieving Officer, School Relief Committee Visitor, and School Board Officer, familiar figures, the new legislation introduced no new principle in the right of the representative of the community to intrude into family affairs. The novelty lay in the nature of the demands made on the parents and the new standards of child welfare set up. On the other hand, while by 1900 the school was an accepted part of the life of the people, the homes of skilled and stable workers were still comparatively immune from outside visitation. The families of railway-men, postmen, and policemen, and of skilled artisans of all kinds "kept themselves to themselves" and rarely looked for help other than that provided by Friendly Society or Trade Union. To such families the activities of the State especially with regard to medical inspection and treatment meant a new and startling intrusion into family concerns and homes.

The METHOD of the intrusion was, however, all important, and the full effect of it on the children can only be estimated when it is seen how far it placed the parents

in antagonism to the State and—as in the early days of compulsory school attendance—introduced an element of disorder and a conflict of authorities into their lives. Obviously, it was of the utmost importance to avoid an undue multiplicity of visitors and to persuade rather than to compel wherever possible.

In considering the second criticism also, methods of administration are the crucial point. “Wholesaling” and stereotyped methods are in fact two of the constant temptations of large-scale, official administration. It would not be surprising if it were found that public responsibility for the health of the school-child had caused undue emphasis to be placed on the marshalling of rows of spectacled infants with well-stopped teeth and well-nourished bodies in the class-rooms of the schools; nor if public provision for the employment of juveniles led to “placings” statistically imposing, but without much regard to individual differences and preferences.

As we have seen, the pioneer work of private citizens in many branches of social effort had been sufficiently valuable to secure a measure of participation for them when the State assumed responsibility. The Committee on Physical Deterioration had envisaged a partnership of legislative, administrative and philanthropic agencies in the work of social education, and in London such a partnership was actually arranged. This, together with the fact that the prestige of social case-work by 1910 was sufficiently high to lead to a demand that officials appointed to deal with the new services should have social interests and qualifications, sufficed at least to mitigate the dangers of wholesaling.

How did it come about that the London Education

Authority decided to entrust the work to voluntary Children's Care Committees, instead of dividing it between the paid staff of Attendance Officers, School Nurses, and teachers? The reason for the adoption of this policy must be looked for in the work of the Relief Committees and the Care Committees appointed in their stead for "Necessitous" schools from 1907 onwards. Despite many failures, the best of the Committees had demonstrated triumphantly the advantages of family case-work and of the treatment of the individual from the point of view of personality rather than in the light of his separate and sometimes conflicting needs.

The decision to extend the voluntary Care Committee system to all the schools of London, whether "necessitous" or otherwise, was arrived at in 1909 partly as a result of a Report prepared by the Council's two Organizers on the position as regards school feeding.¹ In this Report the Organizers recommended that social work for London school children should not be limited to the consideration of applications for meals, but should "include everything connected with the health and well-being of the child". Personal work was needed "in a far greater degree than the establishment of feeding centres on a large scale under official control", and "careful, regular, and sympathetic home visiting was essential".

Despite the devotion of many Head Teachers, neither they nor the Attendance Officers were necessarily qualified or selected primarily for social work; moreover, the departmental methods of some teachers, and the fact that the Attendance Officers' work often took them no

¹ *L.C.C. Report on the Home Circumstances of Necessitous Children in Certain Selected Schools.*

farther than the door-step were disadvantages in their use as the chief agents of the Council.

The work of the Care Committees also had many defects, and while the "standard of voluntary work was improving, it could not be entirely depended on either as to continuance or quality". Yet it was to the volunteers that the Organizers looked for a solution of the difficulty of ensuring constructive social work in the administration of the Council's new duties towards school children.

In order to strengthen the voluntary Care Committees and fit them to undertake the comprehensive task which they had in mind, the Organizers suggested that paid officers should be appointed in each part of London, whose function it should be to recruit, train, and organize volunteers and bring their work up to a more uniform standard.

The Council adopted the suggestions contained in the Organizers' Report; twelve "Assistants to Care Committees"—later called Organizers—were appointed, and in 1909 the new Committees were formed and entrusted, not only with the duty of applying to individual families the statutory provisions of various Acts of Parliament, but with all the work with regard to child welfare which naturally had its centre in the school.

In this way the exercise of the social power of the organized community was reconciled with the continued use of socially conscious private citizens who had gained experience during years of pioneer effort for the welfare of the child.

CHAPTER V

BUILDING UP THE MACHINERY OF CARE COMMITTEE WORK

NOT all citizens of London include the County Council among the blessings for which they offer thanks. Nevertheless, they recognize that it is the body which represents their common civic aspirations, speaks in their name, and acts on their mandate. When, therefore, legal effect had been given to some of the current ideals of child welfare, and the Council decided to use private citizens as its agents, it met with an immediate response to its appeal for volunteers. The body of skilled workers already built up by voluntary effort formed the nucleus of the new Care Committees; to these workers were added volunteers from many sections of the population. Not all proved to be willing to give practical effect to the dictates of their conscience by undertaking the requisite personal social work, but a large proportion of them proved their zeal by hard work which in some cases has continued up to the present day.

The Council had not only to focus the social ideals of private citizens, but to devise machinery by which voluntary workers could be guaranteed status and responsibility within the official system. The appointment of all members was made by the Education Committee and a threefold form of organization was adopted. Separate Care Committees were made responsible for the social work for individual schools; a Local Association of Care Committees was formed for each Borough for purposes of co-ordination, mutual discussion, and joint representa-

tions to the appointing authority, and for the raising of voluntary funds and the management of the feeding centres; and a Central Care Sub-Committee¹ of the Education Committee was appointed primarily for the consideration of Care Committee matters. In this way it was hoped that the essentials of localized interest and responsibility for personal social work, sense of corporate existence, and certainty of access to the appointing authority would be secured. At the same time the separate organizing staff, allied with the volunteers in social interest, and existing for the sole purpose of promoting the voluntary system, was designed to act as a bulwark between the Committees and the forces of officialdom.

In accordance with the rule of the Council that its paid officers should not be appointed as members of its Committees, it was decided that the teachers could not be considered eligible for membership of Care Committees, although their co-operation and presence at meetings in an advisory capacity were invited. This decision naturally excited a sense of grievance in some teachers who had played a leading part in school feeding in the early years of pioneer effort, while others were not convinced of the need for Care Committees for general welfare work in non-necessitous schools. For the most part, however, they loyally accepted the Committees, and their advice and help contributed enormously to their success.

Certain of the duties previously entrusted to Managers were transferred to Care Committees. It was arranged that any charitable funds raised in the schools should be sanctioned by them; the encouragement of thrift,

¹ Later replaced by the Special Services Sub-Committee.

co-operation with other agencies for helping the poor; the arrangement of recreation out of school hours, visiting for the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and the management of school boot clubs—except where the Managers had already initiated them and wished to continue to be responsible for their conduct—were suggested as means by which they might promote welfare. Officials and teachers were instructed to recognize and assist them, and in all possible ways they were given a privileged position in the schools. In 1910, the Council issued a Handbook in which the more important of their duties were set out and the principles which had inspired the most successful of the pioneer Committees were formulated, but no attempt was made to limit the work to the performance of specified functions.

The Education (Provision of Meals) Act was permissive only, and many Education Authorities contented themselves with making arrangements with voluntary agencies to continue their work. In London, voluntary funds were relied on until the end of 1908. In the spring of that year a special appeal was made to the public by the Chairman of the Council and the Lord Mayor, but only £12,000 was raised, and it proved necessary a few months later to apply for sanction to expend money out of the rates. In the Handbook the Council expressed the hope that funds from voluntary sources would still be collected, and encouraged Local Associations and Care Committees to make their own arrangements for feeding "subject to the usual conditions of inspection". A certain number of Committees resisted the temptation to apply for aid from the Council, but in London and in the country generally—despite some

notable exceptions such as Leicester—voluntary contributions were increasingly diverted to other purposes once the power of the Local Education Authorities to spend public money on feeding was generally realized. The effects of the Act, indeed, offered a signal example of the tendency of the public to leave financial responsibility to the State once they were assured that the object of their interest would not suffer by failure of effort on their part.

In the course of their work in connection with feeding, the Care Committees found many children whose lot could only be improved by sympathetic insight and sustained friendship with their parents. Sometimes a white-faced child suffering from severe malnutrition was found to be living and sleeping in an overcrowded and ill-ventilated room, and the problem before the visitor was that of arousing in the parents a desire for healthier conditions and of helping them to find other accommodation. Sometimes a little girl of ten or eleven years would be undertaking the care of a heavy baby and a little brother and sister under school age, and in addition earning a few pence a week by working for neighbours. Sometimes parents resented advice or refused information with the sarcastic remark, "The Council don't 'arf want to know a lot for a bit of dinner, don't they?"

Difficulties were gradually overcome as the parents came to know the visitors; the Care Committees also gained sufficient knowledge of individual families to enable them to discriminate between those who needed personal encouragement with or without school dinners or help from charitable agencies, and those who must be referred to the Guardians for more permanent and

greater relief, or who needed a visit from the Sanitary Inspector or a warning as to the penalties which might be inflicted under the Children Act when neglect was persistent. Whatever the mode of treatment, the ideal set before the Committees was that of constructive assistance in setting a family on its feet rather than the mere feeding of necessitous children. When the large number of cases dealt with is taken into consideration, it is not surprising that in practice they have not been uniformly successful in getting to the root of difficulties or overcoming the temptation to concentrate their attention solely on family incomes.

The stories of one or two families may show from what different causes the need for meals arises, and will also illustrate the methods used by the workers.

Mr. Goldsmith was a street flower-seller, a decent man, proud of his occupation, which was the traditional one of his family, and eager to discuss such mysteries of his craft as how to buy rose-buds and to coax them to the right stage to please customers. He had his regular clients, and his barrow was welcomed in certain streets. When all went well, he was a cheerful and sociable creature with a ready wit which was an asset to him as a salesman. But there were bad days and weeks when "the luck was dead against him", or when pouring rain made pedestrians unwilling to buy and carry flowers. Then his stock-in-trade would wither unbought and his capital disappear. Gloom enveloped him; he became morose, took no interest in the children's talk of school or the gossip which his wife brought home from marketing or Mothers' Meeting. He ate his meals without relish, and began to spend his evenings at the street

corner or in the public-house, where he declaimed against life and society. Worse still, he grew truculent, and when the Care Committee first came into contact with his family was serving a term of imprisonment for obstructing the pavement with his barrow and refusing to obey the police. His sentence was for a few weeks only, and his wife implored the Committee to give the children meals in order that she might "do a little cleaning" and avoid an application to the Relieving Officer. Dinners were granted, and by the time the man was released the Committee felt that they knew a great deal about his home and character. He himself in discussing his plans with the visitor said frankly that he had been a "fool". Only lack of capital prevented him from making a fresh start, and happily it proved possible to make him a grant from a voluntary fund to enable him to buy a fresh stock of flowers. He prospered, and in a grateful note informed the Committee shortly afterwards that he could now give the children their dinners at home once more.

In another case, the Honorary Secretary received a letter from a Hospital Almoner to say that the mother of a large family was recovering from a severe operation, and unable to cook for her children, while the father was "on short time" and unable to pay for help in the house or for school meals. Here the Committee gladly granted the dinners, and at the same time were able through the help of a voluntary agency to arrange for a widow who lived near by to be paid a small sum for keeping the house and children clean. It was also arranged with the Invalid Kitchens Association that special meals at a low cost should be provided daily for the mother until she recovered her health.

It will be observed that in neither of these cases did it prove sufficient merely to give school meals without helping the family in other ways.

In the work in connection with Medical Inspection and Treatment the Care Committees had to evolve a mode of procedure. It was early realized that if they were to co-operate with the School Doctors effectively they must be in close personal touch with them; voluntary workers therefore soon began to attend Medical Inspections.

The procedure at Inspections has altered little since those days. From the start there has been a good attendance of mothers. Usually chairs are arranged for them in the School Hall, where they sit with their children and talk to one another while awaiting their turn to see the doctor. In a smaller room near the Hall the doctor and nurse sit, while near by the Care Committee representative is stationed at a table with her papers. Usually the Head Teacher flits in and out, bringing in children and repeating to the doctor the observations of the class teachers on special defects, such as inability to see the blackboard or to hear what is said in class. One by one the mothers are ushered in, and while one child is examined and its mother is questioned about its ailments and apparent state of health, another child is undressed in readiness for examination.

In the days before the War the removal of clothes revealed some pitifully thin and badly nourished little bodies, which appeared "all skin and bone". Many children in the poorest districts were sewn into their clothes for the winter months, and it was necessary to use scissors to remove the layers of grimy garments in

which they were encased. Even then the mothers seldom objected to the examination of their children, and the children themselves rarely appeared frightened or averse to the procedure. Sometimes, it is true, an infant would indulge in a fit of nervous weeping, and the united persuasions of teacher, nurse, and mother would be required before it would open its mouth for the inspection of its teeth and throat or submit to the cold touch of the stethoscope. Other infants would approach the doctor with seraphic smiles and shyly offer him confidences about their wardrobe.

When no ailment was detected the mother would be dismissed with a reassuring word from the doctor, but where treatment or additional nourishment seemed necessary, she would be asked to "go to see the Care Committee lady" at her adjacent table as soon as she had dressed her child. Meanwhile the written report on the child's "Medical Card" was passed across to the voluntary worker, and often the doctor would whisper to her a word or two of explanation or suggestion, or amplify the remarks he had already made while conducting the examination.

Then a little shyly the mother would come forward; the worker would repeat the doctor's finding and in whispers, with an eye on the stethoscope, they would converse about possible methods of obtaining treatment. Sometimes the mother objected that she could not leave the younger children while she sat all day at a hospital, or that she could not afford to lose money by staying away from her work. Then the worker would try to find out whether there was any friendly neighbour or relative who could come to the rescue, and if the mother could

make no suggestions would promise to see what the Care Committee could arrange. At first objections to treatment were numerous, and the workers were often met with remarks such as: "Her father don't hold with meddling with her teeth", or "They'll fall out of theirselves, and I'm going to let them", or "I don't see nothing wrong with his eyes; I'm sure he reads beautifully". Minor ailments such as sores and running ears were regarded as inevitable discomforts which time could be left to cure; squints were the dispensation of Providence, with which, judging from the attitude of some parents, it would be impious to tamper. There were also a number of parents who retorted simply: "Whose child is he, mine or the Council's, I should like to know? When me and his father think he needs a doctor we'll take him to one, thank you."

The popularity of the School Doctors and their patience and tact in dealing with mothers who entered the medical inspection room in an unpropitious mood were great assets in the work of educating the parents. In the visits to the homes paid in the course of their work of following up inspection the Care Committees also patiently discussed individual objections, and tried to explain the simple laws of health. Some Committees organized Parents' Evenings and Lantern Lectures on Health, and the Council circulated through the schools a pamphlet entitled *Health Hints to Parents*.

Surprisingly soon some of the mothers, who had been hostile at first, changed their attitude, and by the time they were invited to attend the inspection of a third or fourth child who was entering or leaving school, many of them came up to the Care Committee table with smiling

faces and poured forth news of the doings of other members of their family. There were, in fact, two valuable assets in the possession of the Committees. They could rely on the existence of affection in the majority of the parents, and had thus only to build up new standards of welfare in their minds and not to cope with the harder task of creating a new motive for action with regard to their children. Secondly, their general welfare work gave them a privileged position in the homes and disposed the parents to credit them with good intentions and a genuine interest in the family fortunes. Despite these advantages they, of course, continued to find a number of parents who through prejudice, resentment, or apathy refused their co-operation.

The Committees were helped in their work by the provision of special facilities for the treatment of school children. Arrangements were made by the Council with certain hospitals, and the objections of private doctors and Provident Dispensaries to the direct provision of local facilities by the Education Authority were partially overcome as a result of voluntary initiative. Certain private doctors in Kilburn, Wandsworth, and Norwood formed themselves into local Committees, and arranged among themselves to serve on a Rota at School Treatment Centres on premises which they provided. In return, the London County Council agreed to pay the Committees for their services in proportion to the number of children treated for specified ailments, provided that they were given the right of approving both premises and doctors. The experiment was imitated elsewhere in London, and the scheme of "contracting out" treatment to voluntary Committees formed by doctors or other interested local

persons or agencies such as Settlements, which retained full financial responsibility for the maintenance of the centres which they initiated, became the basis of treatment work in London outside the recognized hospital departments.

Difficulties with regard to attendance at hospitals and Centres were partly overcome by the issue of vouchers or appointment cards to parents in order to obviate the inconvenience which resulted from an unregulated and varying flow of patients. Secondly, a scheme was devised, which is now an essential part of all arrangements for treatment in London, whereby an officer with social training—now called a Treatment Organizer—should be present at the Treatment sessions to interview parents, hear home difficulties, and prevent attendance from lapsing by notifying the Care Committees of failures to keep appointments, and any points of interest with regard to treatment. In this way the point of view of medical experts—as of administrative officials—was interpreted to the Care Committees by intermediaries, who were concerned to relate it to their social interests.

The effect of these arrangements was to emphasize the importance of the Care Committees as an integral part of the School Medical Service. It fell to them to apply for the vouchers both at Centres and recognized hospitals, and, since they were present at Medical Inspections and the reports of Treatment Organizers were all addressed to them, they were placed in the position of sole recipients of detailed information from all sources about individual children, and became the main link between the Inspecting and Treating doctors.

In addition, the duty of investigating and deciding

applications for the remission of treatment fees, which followed on the provision of the Local Education Authorities (Medical Treatment) Act of 1909 that payment should be enforced unless the Authority was satisfied that the parents were unable to meet the claim, was entrusted to them. A scale of income was issued for their guidance, but they were authorized to vary the amounts fixed by it in exceptional circumstances, and in a short time it was abolished, a small fixed fee was decided on, and the Care Committees were authorized to remit this at their discretion.

While the essence of the voluntary system was that education of the parents should obviate the necessity for compulsion, there were certain children who needed treatment so urgently that it was impossible to avoid official action when their parents would not yield to persuasion. In such cases, it was arranged that the services of a "Special Officer"—a specially selected Attendance Officer—should be utilized at the Care Committee's request. This Officer visited the homes and warned the parents of the provisions of the law and the probable consequences of further neglect on their part.

By an arrangement between the Council and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, it was agreed that the Society should take action under the Children Act where the Special Officers failed and the Care Committees still felt that pressure was necessary in the children's interests. In practice it was found that where the parents were obdurate in refusing medical treatment for their children, it was not always possible to bring the case before a Court, owing to the fact that a medical certificate from a private doctor in

terms contradicting the school doctor's report was produced. Apart from such cases, the arrangement between the Council and the National Society meant that the Care Committees had no part in deciding if and when prosecution was necessary once they had passed a case on for official action; from time to time Associations and Committees have recommended accordingly that the Council should assume direct responsibility for all prosecutions under the Children Act.

Cases of neglect afford an example also of the temptation which besets the volunteer to make a too ready use of official machinery when it is placed at his disposal. While many Committees fight shy of referring cases to "Special Officer" or National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, others too easily abandon their personal responsibility, grow impatient with neglectful parents, and have recourse to official coercion where only sustained personal influence and supervision in home and school can be expected to bring about a lasting change.

A typical case in which neglect was not sufficiently capable of definition to bring the parents within reach of the law or permit of any coercive action was that of Muriel Gibbons, a little girl of six, who came to school white-faced, nervous, with a fixed look of misery. Her mother complained that she was ill-behaved at home, had a violent temper, and refused to obey when asked to run on errands or help in the housework. She begged the teacher to punish her, and would not believe her statement that in school she was obedient, quiet, and spiritless, with no trace of temper, although backward because of lack of physical and mental energy.

Her home consisted of two rooms in a block of buildings near the school; it was exceptionally clean and tidy; the lace curtains and chair covers were startlingly white and stiffly starched, and there was a super-abundance of ornaments and pictures. The mother was respectable in appearance, plausible in speech, passionately devoted to her baby, but cold and severe in her manner to Muriel, about whose misdoings she talked volubly while the child stood by white and shrinking.

Morning after morning before school Muriel was seen dragging home heavy baskets of marketing, and the Committee suspected that she was a household drudge. It was difficult to ascertain the real reason of her mother's aversion to her. The Inspector visited the home for a time, but reported that there was no evidence of tangible cruelty; finally the Care Committee decided that they must trust to the formation of a friendship between the voluntary visitor to the home and the mother, as the only possible means of discovering where the trouble lay and bringing about happier relationships. They were rewarded for their patience by a report from the teacher to the effect that Muriel was beginning to look happier and that Mrs. Gibbons seemed more sympathetic with her.

Among the duties of the Care Committees mentioned in the Handbook issued in 1910 was that of helping parents to obtain suitable employment for their children on leaving school.

Visitors soon gained personal experience of the waste involved by the fact that children who were educated at the public expense passed direct from school to work "without guidance or expert advice"; they saw intelligent boys and girls leave school from the seventh standard,

full of hope and ambition for the future, and on visiting their homes a few months later found that they were running errands for a grocer round the corner, or in a factory in which no training was given, and there was no prospect of permanent employment; often the parents would remark that the children would like to attend evening class or club but were "too dog-tired" at night.

The need for machinery for fitting the work to the child was obvious. In working out a scheme of co-operation between the Care Committees and the Juvenile Advisory Committees, it appeared at first sight that the Council had only to put into touch with each other two bodies of officially appointed volunteers with a mutual interest in the child. The problem was in reality more difficult, because the functions of the one body were in the main advisory and of the other executive. The Care Committees actually collected the teachers' reports on each individual school leaver, discussed his future with his parents, and arranged for the personal supervision of the child outside his place of employment wherever this was required. When they came to exchange information with industrial experts, and to demand that a certain kind of employment should be found, they had to deal actually, although not in theory, with the paid officers at the Exchanges and not with the voluntary Committees.

These executive officers were fortunately full of social interests and personal devotion to the children, but their official status meant that they had to produce statistics and conform to prescribed methods. Their prime function was to advise and place children and their constant

temptation was to lose sight of the individual in the press of numbers. Their work was as yet in an experimental stage, and they had to struggle against the prejudices both of employers and of the better class of parent. Sometimes the volunteer with his enthusiasms, his disregard of official claims upon time and energy, and his demand that mountains of all kinds should be moved to help the one child in whose career he was engrossed at the moment must have been a sore trial. Close co-operation and mutual accessibility were achieved surprisingly often. Their advantages and the value of the Care Committees' friendly relationships with parents in their work of supervision may be seen from the following stories.

A visitor for a school in a respectable working-class district was well known to all the parents, and his visits to the home of Thomas Dixon were frequent. One day Mrs. Dixon came to him as he passed along the street and confided to him that Thomas on his return from work on the previous evening had confessed that he had received a week's notice to leave his employment, as money was missing from the office and suspicion had fallen on him. He protested his innocence, and the Care Committee visitor, who knew his reputation and that of his family, believed his story. He went to the Labour Exchange and persuaded the Juvenile Advisory Committee Secretary to place the facts about the boy's school character and family before the employer; the latter was impressed with the record of honesty; he agreed to withdraw the notice to leave, and instead to transfer the boy to another department without making public the suspicions against him in order to see whether the

thefts were continued in his absence, and whether the real thief would betray himself. Some months later nothing had yet transpired about the theft, but Thomas had proved his integrity in various small ways, and had begun to be regarded as a valuable employee on whom reliance could be placed.

Another story shows the value of the Care Committee's continuous association with families of children in employment which resulted from their medical and general welfare work for younger children still at school.

Mrs. Camden was a widow with a large family of small children, all of whom were delicate and seemed to need some form of medical treatment continually. For some time after the death of her husband she was in great financial straits; the Care Committee gave dinners to the children, and later, when the youngest child was old enough to attend school, helped the mother to obtain daily work. Whenever a visit to the Treatment Centre was needed, a member of the Committee had come to the rescue of the family, as Mrs. Camden could not afford to stay away from work, and in this way the Committee came to know the children, as well as their mother, intimately. George was the eldest boy; he was anæmic, under-sized, and backward. The School Doctor suggested that he should have milk in school, and when he was about to leave recommended that he should be placed in employment out of doors. He became a messenger, and the Care Committee introduced him to a club where he could spend his evenings, and asked the Club-Leader to keep a friendly eye on him. Unfortunately the other members of the Club came from superior homes,

and were of superior intelligence. Probably George felt his inferiority; he soon ceased to attend, and his younger brother, on one of his periodical visits to a Centre for dental treatment, vouchsafed the remark: "Our George is a bad boy. He won't come in at night, and my Mum says he's in with a bad set." George was seen and induced to return to the Club, but his attendances soon lapsed once more, and his mother informed the visitor that he had lost his work owing to inattention. The Committee decided that more time and attention must be bestowed on him individually if he was to be saved from degenerating into a "street loafer". They asked the Juvenile Advisory Committee to find him another post, and at the same time persuaded a young man living in the neighbourhood to take a personal interest in him and in one of his chosen adventurous friends. Mrs. Camden faithfully reported on his progress, at Medical Inspections or whenever a visitor called to see her. At first there were many minor delinquencies to relate, but after some months the Committee were encouraged to hope that a new start had been made.

Experience of friendly co-operation and help from the Exchanges gradually overcame some of the prejudices of Care Committee workers. Juvenile Advisory Committee officials learnt to appreciate the volunteer's qualities of enthusiasm and persistence, and to think less distastefully of his free and easy methods and tendency to disregard official requirements in the shape of paper reports. Increasing numbers of Care Committees agreed to co-operate with the Advisory Committees, and by March 1914, 786 out of about 900 possible schools were covered by the scheme.

By the outbreak of the War the official and the volunteer in London had settled down to a partnership in the various spheres of work for children and adolescents; if they were sometimes uneasy at being yoked together, the official had not yet turned and rent his fellow worker, nor the volunteer abandoned his part in public social work.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS UP TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

BY 1914 we see the child compassed about with experts—Inspecting and Treating Doctors, Nurses, Labour Exchange Officials, and Special Officers—with the Care Committee worker gradually obtaining recognition as a friend whose function is to introduce him to such part of the official machinery as his changing circumstances require from time to time. Apart from the evolution of such machinery as a result of the legislation of the years 1906 to 1910, what social and educational changes had impinged upon the child through his home and school?

The early years of the twentieth century were remarkable in that they brought with them the recognition of the responsibility of the State for provision for the common contingencies of life—old age, sickness, and unemployment—outside the realm of the Poor Law. The State had long recognized the maintenance of the destitute as a public duty, but had deprived those it aided of the rights of citizenship. Now it was to the citizen rather than to the pauper that public assistance was extended.

Compulsory Insurance brought to the poorer sections of the wage-earners something of the stability which skilled workers had already achieved through voluntary thrift; old age pensions increased their family resources, and after the Trade Board Act of 1909 the standard of life among the poorest home-workers was progressively raised.

What effect had these changes on the children? With their family income more secure, were they better cared for in their homes and less dependent on external aid? That the new social legislation had some immediate effect on the demand for school feeding seems probable from a study of the feeding statistics for London. Up to the year 1910-11 there was a steady increase in the number of children fed; after that year the numbers decreased until the outbreak of War, although owing to the extension of the custom of feeding throughout the year, instead of during the winter only, the number of meals given did not decrease accordingly. At the same time, other causes, such as the effects of the Coronation on the labour market in the year 1911 to 1912¹ probably contributed to the decrease at least as much as did Insurance and Trade Board Acts.

It was during the years immediately preceding the War that the overlapping of sources of public assistance became noticeable. In London, the child became the centre of controversy whenever Care Committees considered Poor Law Relief insufficient to meet his needs and granted school meals in addition. Precariously balanced between the two authorities, his position was not enviable, although his meals were usually continued while his elders argued about him. The Council made unavailing efforts in 1910 and again in 1911 to persuade the Local Government Board to agree that Guardians should be asked to repay the cost of meals given to children whose parents were in receipt of relief, but were obliged to fall back on negotiations with individual Boards of Guardians, only one of which—the Lambeth Board—was at

¹ *Report of the London County Council for 1913. Education.*

that time willing to make arrangements on the lines proposed.

Another problem arising out of the Act was the large number of children who received meals for years without interruption, and were thus a continuous charge upon the education rate. Such children often showed a marked improvement in physique, alertness, and activity after a period of continuous feeding, and it was difficult to decide—even apart from wider considerations of policy—whether these obvious benefits were in reality discounted by their semi-detachment from their families. In accordance with the usual practice in London, such cases were considered in the light of individual circumstances; no attempt was made to formulate any scale of income for use in determining whether or not meals should continue to be given, but in order to secure uniformity of action the Care Committees were required to refer them for special consideration by the Central Care Sub-Committee of the Council.

The Act of 1906 did not allow of school meals when the schools were closed, and many persons believed that the children suffered in health owing to under-nourishment during the holiday periods. In 1914 the agitation for holiday feeding was successful, and an Amending Act was passed which authorized meals at the expense of the rates, both during the usual school holidays and on other days when for any special reason the schools were closed.

In the same year the Board of Education made regulations under the Act, providing for Exchequer grants in aid of the expenditure of Local Authorities on meals. It is interesting to note as an example of the possible differ-

ence in effect on voluntary effort of national aid as opposed to expenditure from the rates that this provision led to the abandonment of the voluntary feeding scheme in Leicester.

One of the factors to be taken into account in determining grant was the extent to which the work of feeding was co-ordinated with that of the School Medical Service. The London Care Committees occupied a middle position between the two theories of selection for school feeding on a poverty and a physical basis, since, while they recognized that physical condition was a guide as to the need for feeding, their conception of the work as preventive precluded them from waiting for definite signs of physical suffering before granting meals.

What evidence was there of malnutrition among the poorer London children at this time? In 1910, the School Medical Officer for London estimated that 10·5 per cent of the children attending schools in poor districts suffered from this condition. Later, Dr. Thomas conducted an inquiry for the Council into the causes of the trouble, and found that in 43 per cent of the cases investigated it was due to poverty, in 19·2 per cent to tuberculosis, in 6 per cent to neglect, and in the remaining cases to a variety of other causes in the child or in its home.¹ From this analysis it was obvious that lack of food was not the only factor to be considered. Whenever, therefore, the School Doctors found a marked condition of malnutrition the Care Committees were asked to make special inquiries into the home circumstances, the suitability of the child's diet, the family history, the amount of sleep obtained, and any other special points which seemed to throw light on the causes of the trouble. Often it was

¹ *Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1913.*

found that school feeding was not the best method of helping, and that remedial work in the home or medical treatment had more beneficial effects. For some children cod-liver oil or milk was substituted for dinners at school or given in addition to them.

In this way the voluntary workers were used to aid the school medical service both in diagnosis and subsequent social treatment.

Another of their functions was that of interpreters to the parents of new forms of medical and educational provision, both for defective children and for children who were below the normal physical standard and unlikely to flourish in the ordinary school environment.

As early as 1907 the first Open Air School for delicate and anæmic children was opened, and in 1909 Open Air Classes in connection with ordinary elementary schools were started. Other forms of special provision included new schools for the myopic, for deaf and partially deaf and for mentally and physically defective children.

Meanwhile, under the Public Health (Prevention of Disease) Act of 1913, Local Authorities were given new powers of providing treatment for tuberculosis. The London County Council had already opened a school for tuberculous children at Kensal Rise under an agreement with the Committee of the Paddington Dispensary; and subsequently arrangements were made for the mutual exchange of information by School Medical Officers and Tuberculosis Officers and for the periodical examination of children in contact with or suspected of suffering from tuberculosis by school doctors.

As in the development of other new forms of social provision, the Care Committees in the course of their

visits to the homes were often called upon to explain the object and scope of the system to the parents and to induce them to co-operate in the work of the medical staff by improving home conditions and the care of their children. Sometimes a simple suggestion which resulted from a fresh mind being brought to bear on the family situation made all the difference to the welfare of a delicate child. For example, a Care Committee visitor found a mother anxious about her boy's night-sweats and cough, but without any practical ideas for ameliorating his lot. Discussion revealed the fact that he slept with a brother in a bed in his parents' room, which was noisy and airless, while a stronger child enjoyed the quiet of a little room with a big window. A little readjustment of sleeping arrangements and the assistance of a neighbour in providing a bed for one of the children enabled the delicate boy to have the little room to himself, and thus to rest undisturbed throughout the night.

In order that Care Committee members might co-operate effectively in the efforts of teachers and school doctors to secure that individual children should derive the maximum benefit from the growing diversity of public provision, they found that they needed an increasing knowledge of the educational system. The Council provided local offices for their use and that of the organizing staff in all parts of London. It was largely owing to the ease of access to the organizers which this provision ensured that it proved possible for voluntary workers to keep in touch with new developments and subsequently to interpret them in the homes of the children.

The work of interpretation was many-sided. Often conversations with parents revealed some physical

trouble or some special conditions in the home which made it advisable that special medical examinations should be arranged between the ordinary age-group inspections, and that a transfer to an Open Air School or some other change in the form of education or treatment should be planned without delay. In order to gain the parents' consent, the visitor had to be able to describe the régime of life at the new school, and to meet objections as to expense by displaying exact knowledge of the financial aid for fares and meals which the Council's regulations permitted.

Public provision of facilities for inspection and treatment continued to grow. The special importance of dental work for children was soon recognized, and in addition to the ordinary Medical Inspections by the school doctors arrangements were made for periodical examinations at the schools by the dentists from the Treatment Centres, who used the opportunity to give a lecture on the care of the teeth to parents who attended with their children. In 1913, the ordinary medical inspections of the age-groups was extended by the Council to Special Schools for Deaf, Blind, and Mentally Defective Children, and in April 1914 the Board of Education laid it down that the school leavers to be examined should include all children between the ages of twelve and thirteen, and those over thirteen who had not already been examined. In this way the obligations of Local Education Authorities as regards inspection were further defined and widened.

At the same time, the work of the Care Committees in London was facilitated by the growth of local resources for treatment. By the end of 1914 there were forty-two

School Treatment Centres providing for the needs of 99,000 children.¹ Cheap tram-fares to and from Treatment Centres were allowed by the Council from 1914 onwards, and the objections of the teachers to absence from school for purposes of treatment were lessened by the provision that attendance at a Centre should rank as school attendance.

Both social legislation and pioneer voluntary effort were directed towards provision for the needs of special classes of the people during the years before the War, and in this way further sections of the children were affected both through their homes and through subsequent developments in the schools. The Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 defined the various classes of defectives, gave Local Authorities power to provide guardianship and special institutions for defectives other than those in attendance at Special Schools, made the provision of the latter obligatory instead of optional, and for the first time recognized moral defect as a form of mental deficiency. The general social work of the Care Committees for the families of school children was thus facilitated by new possibilities of dealing with imbeciles, feeble-minded persons, and moral defectives in homes where proper control and care could not be given, although the requirement of proof that defect had existed from birth or from an early age gave rise to difficulties, and it proved necessary to widen the scope of the Act by further legislation in 1927.

The Care Committees were relieved of the responsibility for the after-care of mentally defective children from the Special Schools by the decision of the Council

¹ *Report of the London County Council, 1915-1919.*

to use the services of the newly-formed voluntary London Association for the Care of the Mentally Defective¹ for the work of placing in employment and supervising such children. The advantages of securing specialized individual treatment in placement work for defectives were obvious; the disadvantages of the break in their care when they left school, owing to the transfer of responsibility to another body, were equally apparent; they were mitigated by the device of mutual representation of the two bodies of voluntary workers on each other's Committees, by means of which school social work was to some extent linked up with After Care.

Other difficulties in organization arose out of the wide areas from which children were drawn, the fact that they were often drafted from Junior to Senior Schools in the middle of their school career, and the necessity of keeping work on their behalf linked up with the main stream of Care Committee work and especially with that undertaken for their brothers and sisters at the ordinary elementary schools. These problems have not yet been everywhere solved, but in some instances the device of dividing the area from which children come and apportioning districts to the respective members of the Committees, together with schemes of mutual representation of the Committees for Junior and Senior Schools or even of Joint Committees have proved most successful.

From the start the Care Committees found that patient and long-continued work in the homes was essential. While the mothers often cherished a special affection for the defective members of their family, many of them

¹ Now London Association for Mental Welfare.

were themselves of a low grade of intelligence and ability, and it was correspondingly difficult to induce them to agree to suggestions for medical treatment, improved home control and home management. Poor physique and special physical defects often accompanied the mental disability in the child, and school milk, the treatment of adenoids, poor vision, or minor deformities were necessary before profit could be gained even from the curriculum of the Special Schools. The enforcement of continued school attendance until the age of sixteen often excited resentment in parent and child, and in addition there were sometimes serious problems of conduct. Worried parents complained that their boy or girl wandered away from home, showed immoral tendencies, lied or stole, or was subject to strange fits of passion and outbreaks of violence.

Enterprising teachers and Care Committees tried to encourage suitable children to take part in normal social life by joining some recreative organization such as a Boys' Brigade or attending a Play Centre, and such activities were found to have a striking effect in stimulating the minds of children of a fairly high-grade of intelligence. Others became the butts of the normal children, or were oppressed by the sense of their own inferiority, and for these some Committees formed special Clubs. The parents were often pathetically grateful for interest in a mentally defective child, and the children themselves were wildly excited by a party or excursion such as commonly diversified the lives of their brothers and sisters at normal schools. Care Committee members, who witnessed the simple pleasure of defective children and their parents at a school Christmas

party as they threw coloured balloons across the hall or gazed with rapture at the tables decorated with the paper flowers, which they themselves had made, were compensated for the special difficulties of their work.

Many of the children had little chance of developing at home. George Crabbe, for instance, lived in one basement room which smelt so offensively that even the most experienced social worker hesitated to enter it. His mother was to all appearance feeble-minded and quite incapable of making more than a spasmodic effort to improve the home conditions. The father was a casual labourer more often out of work than in it; and church workers and charitable societies despaired of helping his ever-growing family of mentally defective children. George's eldest sister was in an Institution, and two younger children were attending Special Schools. George came to school dirty and ragged, and his mother paid no attention to requests that he should be washed and his clothes mended; indeed, on one occasion she sent him to school with the message that "if Teacher wanted him washed she could do it herself". He was miserably thin and delicate and the Care Committee gave him school dinners on the doctor's advice. In spite of dirt and rags he was not unattractive; at school he was docile and pathetically grateful for kind words and friendly encouragement. After repeated efforts to stir a desire for improvement in his mother's sluggish mind, the Committee at last came to the conclusion that they must ask the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to send their Inspector to the home, and as long as his visits continued Mrs. Crabbe was induced by fear of the law

and of the neighbours' remarks to make some slight effort to keep the children clean.

Robert Warren came from a very different home. His father was in regular work and his mother was a good housekeeper and fond of her children. Both parents were much distressed when Robert was sent to a Special School, and at first denied that he was in any way abnormal. Then he began to wander away from home, and at times showed signs of a violent temper. The Leader of a neighbouring Boys' Brigade was induced to accept him as a member, and he made great efforts to live up to the ideals placed before him. For weeks he would be obedient and helpful at home and at school; then would come a lapse in self-control, a fit of passion, or absence from home until brought back by a policeman late at night. Finally he was found to be stealing small articles from the street-stalls, and his distressed parents were persuaded by the Care Committee that it would be in his interest to let him go to an Institution for Mentally Defective Boys.

Such were some of the cases arising at the Special Schools for Mentally Defective children. Care Committee work soon brought to light another class of child which was particularly in need of help. Workers for all types of schools found that there were a small number of children who were the victims of indecent assault—sometimes in their own homes, but more frequently in the streets or in open spaces where they were accosted or enticed by the offer of sweets or pennies. It was often impossible to track down the offender or to obtain sufficient evidence of his guilt to enable legal action to be taken. There were a few boys and girls, too, who were found to be

morally depraved and a pernicious influence in school and home and among their play-fellows in the street. It was necessary to send many of both classes of children away from home, at least temporarily; even where no physical harm had been done, a child often suffered a severe nervous shock from attempted assault or indecent exposure, and a change of scene and fresh interests were advisable in order that it might forget what had happened before a permanent impression was left on its mind.

Yet there were, as a rule, no public funds available to enable Care Committee workers to arrange either a holiday or prolonged physical or moral treatment away from home. Care Committees made efforts to meet the need by obtaining help from Church funds and voluntary agencies, but at best the necessity for raising money occasioned a delay which was detrimental to the child, and sometimes it proved impossible to meet the cost which would have been involved by satisfactory treatment.

To meet the need, a number of members and one or two officials of the London County Council formed a voluntary Central Children's Rescue Fund Committee, which, while working in close association with the public educational system, was independent of official procedure and could act swiftly without waiting to hunt for precedents. From this Committee, Care Committees could rely on obtaining prompt and generous help whenever cases of child molestation came to their notice, and sufficient local voluntary funds were not available. Gradually also the Committee and their Honorary Secretary—one of the Organizing staff who voluntarily gave her services—accumulated valuable experience of foster-mothers and Homes suitable for special types of children,

and became a consultative body to which local workers could appeal for advice. Between the formation of the Committee in 1912 and the end of 1914, no less than 379 cases where children were concerned were reported to it.

One example will serve to illustrate its work. Norah James was ten years old. Her mother had married a second time, and was mortally afraid of her husband, William Temple, a bully and drunkard who ill-treated her unmercifully, and who was seldom in employment for more than a few days at a time, owing to his insobriety and quarrelsome nature. His one good point seemed to be his affection for Norah and her small sister, Helen, but even this appeared a crime when Mrs. Temple came weeping to the Care Committee office and said that she had discovered that her husband was in the habit of assaulting Norah while she was out at work.

The man was sentenced to a short term of imprisonment, and Norah was sent to a voluntary Home by the Rescue Committee. On Temple's return his wife was convinced that Helen also was in danger owing to his immoral tendencies, and begged the Care Committee to arrange for her to join her sister. She could offer very little towards the cost of her maintenance, and it was obvious that Temple neither could nor would assist, and that if Mrs. Temple's request were granted a heavy burden would be placed upon the Fund for years to come. Nevertheless, it was decided that the responsibility must be accepted provided that the man's assent could be obtained. At first he proved obdurate, but money was scarce, and financial pressure and the persuasions of the Care Committee worker led him to yield at last.

Mrs. Temple wept copiously when she left the little girl in the care of the organizer, who had agreed to see her off, while her husband swore and bullied her unmercifully. Yet it must be recorded to his credit that when he had departed the six-year-old Helen took from her pocket a necklace of blue beads, and said: "Daddy bought these for me from a man outside the public-house."

While the Care Committees were thus using their privileged position within the educational system to discover new needs and devise means of providing for them, changes were taking place in the current conception of education, which became ever more varied and less formal. Instruction was no longer confined to the class-room. Visits to the parks, nature-study, organized games, visits to Picture Galleries, folk songs, and ballads, dancing at Summer festivals, School Journeys and educational visits became increasingly frequent.

A psychologist was appointed in the Education Officer's Department in 1912, and in 1913 was said to be in touch with a considerable number of teachers who were carrying out investigations on different subjects. There was in many schools increasing attention to psychology and child nature, and in the senior departments an increasing amount of educational research.

Efforts were made also to increase the facilities for evening education by re-organizing the Evening Institutes. In 1913 these were divided into Junior Technical and Commercial Institutes, Senior Commercial and Women's Institutes, and Care Committee workers and Juvenile Advisory Committees constantly urged children to attend them immediately on leaving school.

Outside the schools there was a continued association of the Education Authority, not only with Care Committee workers who acted as interpreters of its aims and actions in the homes and continued to do pioneer work in providing for special needs, but also with other voluntary agencies, notably in the field of recreation.

The Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of 1907 gave power to assist voluntary agencies providing recreation for children, and to make direct provision of facilities where necessary. The London County Council co-operated with established voluntary Societies such as the Children's Happy Evening Association and the Evening Play Centres Committee, and allowed them the use of the schools without charge. It also recognized, from 1908 onwards, voluntary Vacation Schools—the first of which had been organized in London in 1902 by the pioneer effort of the Passmore Edwards Settlement. So successful were these Schools that in 1910 the Council decided itself to maintain two additional ones. These were held in Battersea and Victoria Parks, and were continued in subsequent years. In addition, playground centres were conducted both by the Council and by voluntary Associations.

In this recreational work the Care Committees frequently co-operated. They were asked to select, in conjunction with the School Doctors and teachers, the children who were to be allowed to attend the publicly maintained Vacation Schools in the Parks; they also visited the homes of these children and ascertained which were necessitous, in order that advantage might be taken of the offer of the Ragged School Union to provide meals from their voluntary funds where necessary.

If we try to estimate the significance of the various developments in the educational system we cannot fail to note certain features of enormous importance to the child. Not only was education tending "to look increasingly at the social problems of physical deterioration, underfeeding, impoverished homes, and unsuitable employment",¹ but it was opening out before the eyes of the poorest children new vistas of nature, literature, and art, taking note of their need for healthy recreation and so fostering their fuller growth. At the same time it was laying stress "on the need for treating each child as a distinct personality, with capacities and idiosyncrasies of its own", and showing "how closely related are the physical, mental, and moral aspects of child life".² In the schools, at least, wholesale and undifferentiated methods of treatment were beginning to be discredited. Against these achievements must be set the fact that, while the influence of many teachers was a powerful antidote to a narrow, materialistic view of life, it was fortuitously and not by reason of the official methods of selecting the school staff that the factor of personal contact with teachers permeated with a religious spirit was often present in the children's lives.

¹ *Report of the London County Council (Education) for 1910.* ² *Ibid.*

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR

DURING the high tension of the War, the problems of the child and the adolescent were seen in accentuated form. After the early days of difficulty about separation allowances and juvenile unemployment, a period of material prosperity set in. The children were better fed and clothed than ever before, but the atmosphere of many of their homes, and, in the poorer quarters, of the courts and streets, was one of feverish excitement, and the thirst for sensation was intensified among the less educated parents. When air raids came, the rush to the nearest Tube station and the hours of sleeplessness and suspense in small, crowded, and airless spaces naturally had a bad effect on the children. Nervous symptoms were manifested in them in 1916 and 1917, but fortunately in most cases were temporary only.

The employment of the mothers, the absence of the fathers, and the double-shift system by which two sets of children were accommodated in certain of the schools meant additional freedom from control. Increased employment out of school hours involved an undue physical strain on some children; for others the curtailment of social work and of opportunities of wholesome recreation owing to the absorption of volunteers in other forms of national service meant increased opportunities for mischief and the development of delinquent habits.

The School Medical Service proved increasingly difficult to maintain as the War went on and the demand for Doctors and Nurses grew more insistent. In April 1915

a decision of the Board of Education that all children between the ages of eight and nine should be examined in addition to entrants and leavers came into effect; but already many Education Authorities were being forced to relinquish the comprehensive inspection of children even in the age-groups previously provided for, and to substitute for it the inspection of "ailing children" only.

In London strenuous efforts were made to maintain the service, and the complete examination of the children in the age-groups was given up for a few months only; there was even a growth in the numbers of children presented for special examination outside the statutory requirements. Nor did the arrangements for supplying medical treatment suffer so much as might have been expected. By December 31, 1918, the Treatment Centres were providing for 75,878 more children than at the end of 1914.¹ The claims of the School Medical Service had been shown to be "sufficiently valid and obvious to secure the maintenance of an irreducible minimum of its working".

On the other hand, the task of "following-up" Medical Inspection became more and more difficult. Many voluntary workers took up some form of service more directly connected with the War, and, while others, not previously engaged in social service and unable to undertake the more strenuous forms of War work, joined the Committees in the belief that they might thus serve the nation, the nett result was a large decrease in the total number of Care Committee members. The employment of the mothers of many children away from home made the

¹ See figures in *Report of London County Council for 1919 (Public Health)*.

task of the remaining workers in arranging for the children to be treated harder than ever before, and by 1918 it had proved necessary to supplement the voluntary system by the employment of paid nurses to visit the homes and arrange for the treatment of children from thirty-seven schools. The Council continued, however, to regard the system as essentially a voluntary one, and in the same year decided to appoint twelve additional Assistant Organizers, not to supplement the work of the Care Committee members, but to recruit new members and to build up the depleted Committees.

The effects of the prevailing conditions on adolescents were even more marked and probably more detrimental than those on children. Boys were able to earn extraordinarily high wages in munition and engineering works, while girls took their places in the Post Office, and as messengers or errand boys, and also entered such trades as woodwork and the metal industries side by side with the boys.

The general effect of the changes in the occupations of juveniles was on the whole to decrease the opportunities for training. Some young persons obtained increased responsibility by early promotion, but as a rule there was an increase in the amount of routine work and the tendency to substitute "Labourers" for "Learners" was even more marked than before the War. Even those firms which desired to take learners found it difficult to obtain them when boys could so easily obtain higher wages for uneducative work. Juvenile Advisory Committees found many instances of boys already in apprenticeships or work with prospects giving them up because their friends and younger brothers were earning so much more in

munition factories. "It is safe to say", stated one London Juvenile Advisory Committee, "that about 85 per cent to 90 per cent of the children in this district are entering absolutely non-educative employment attracted thither by the desire for higher and still higher wages."

After 1917 the instructions to the Dilution Officers of the Ministry of Munitions that they should keep boys off work in which they were likely to earn very high piece rate wages led to the discharge of some thousands of boys below military age. The attitude of these boys in steadfastly refusing to take work at a lower rate than they had obtained as munition workers, and their general lack of discipline, showed what difficulties might be expected in dealing with adolescent workers at the end of the War.

The Committee on Juvenile Employment said: "It is difficult to resist the conclusion that a strain has been put on the character of young persons between fourteen and eighteen, which might have corrupted the integrity of Washington and have undermined the energy of Samuel Smiles. Many of them have left school prematurely. Some have become, in the absence of their fathers, the chief wage-earners of the family. Many are earning wages twice or more than twice as high as they would have obtained before the War, and the story of the boy who met his father's attempt to assert parental authority with the retort, 'Wait to talk till you have earned as much as I earn,' is hardly a caricature of the immense accession both of earnings and importance which has come, sometimes for their misfortune, to lads of sixteen and seventeen."

Under these conditions juvenile delinquency increased

enormously, and as early in the War as 1916, the Home Office reported that in London the number of juvenile offenders had grown from 1,304 to 2,005, and that taking the large towns as a whole there was an increase of nearly 50 per cent in charges of assault, wilful damage, and gambling.

Various efforts were made to meet this situation. A special Boys' Section was established under the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Munitions. The Home Office appointed a Juvenile Organizations Committee—which was afterwards transferred to the Board of Education—representative of the leading voluntary organizations and Government Departments dealing with children and young persons. This Committee approached some prominent worker among the boys and girls in every town of any considerable size with the suggestion that a Conference should be called with a view to forming a local Committee. There was a considerable response to the appeal, and many local Committees were set up. Their objects were to consider, among other matters, (a) "What steps could be taken to attract boys and girls to become members of clubs or Brigades or other similar organizations; (b) the possibility of transferring a boy or girl from one organization to another, when this seemed desirable; (c) the steps to be taken to prevent overlapping; and (d) the strengthening of the weaker units; (e) the difficulty of obtaining officers; (f) the difficulty in securing the use of school premises as club-rooms or play-centres."

In December 1916 the Board of Education, in Circular 975, expressed their approval of a suggestion made by the Home Office that Local Education Authorities

should be invited to assist the principal organizations of Boys' and Girls' Brigades or Clubs by allowing them the use of School premises in the evening; and in August 1917 Regulations for Evening Play-Centres were issued, and it was agreed to make grants in aid. As we have seen, the London Education Committee had already co-operated with voluntary agencies which provided evening recreation.

Meanwhile, in London, the scheme for After-Care was revised in the light of the experience gained. Provision was made from 1915 onwards for the extension of the practice by which children about to leave school were interviewed individually with their parents at terminal After-Care Conferences convened at the schools by the Care Committee Honorary Secretaries. At these conferences, the Head Teacher, a representative of the Care Committee, and, wherever possible, the Secretary of the Juvenile Advisory Committee were present. Efforts—often unavailing in view of War conditions—were made to persuade parents and children to have some regard to training and future prospects of employment as well as to present wages in choosing work, and to continue their education and their connection with Clubs and Sunday Schools, wherever the hours of work and the physical strain involved allowed of it. At the same time, the Care Committee discussed the question of future supervision, and indicated on the School leaving form what person—whether a member of the Committee or an outside social worker connected with a local agency such as Club or Sunday School—should be asked to keep in touch with each child who was considered to need further guidance other than that afforded by his parents.

The Organizer in each district was entrusted with the duty of keeping elaborate records of the placing and supervision of individual children, and of obtaining half-yearly reports from the supervisors selected by the Care Committees. The subsequent insistence on the periodical filling in of forms was in some cases uncongenial to the volunteers, and in some quarters even created a prejudice against the Council's scheme as being little more than a system of "paper" reporting. Despite this, much valuable "real" supervision was achieved, and there is no doubt that the reporting system helped to prevent some workers from losing sight of individual children and their needs.

The scheme provided for a visit to the home by a Care Committee member before the After-Care Conference, in order that the parents might be given some preliminary idea of the possibilities open to their child, and that the Care Committee might supplement their knowledge of the family and thus avoid undue questioning of the parent at the more public Conference.

Unfortunately the growing lack of voluntary workers during the War years made it difficult always to arrange for this preliminary visit or for the supervision of the children after they had left school. Special supervision for boys at Woolwich Arsenal was, however, arranged by the Care Committees and Head Teachers in Woolwich, Greenwich, Lewisham, and Deptford, in 1915, and in the following year was extended to other districts and to girls engaged in munition work. Throughout the War period the Care Committees everywhere struggled to keep in touch with as many as possible of the former pupils from the elementary schools.

In 1917 an official of the Board of Education reported on the scheme. He found that a great measure of success had been attained, but that in certain parts of London there was comparative failure owing to shortage of Care Committee members or lack of co-operation between the Care Committees and the Juvenile Advisory Committees. He observed also that the scheme differed from others under the Choice of Employment Act, in that advice was not given to the parents or children by officers of the Local Education Authority, but by voluntary Care Committee workers. Once the After-Care Conference was over, the placing of individual children in employment through the medium of the Exchanges was left in the hands of the Juvenile Advisory Committee Secretaries, on whose discretion there was little check except where the voluntary Care Committees kept in touch and on their own initiative continued to press actively that their original recommendations should be given due weight when vacancies were offered.

Although the Council had remained faithful to the voluntary system, there were signs that the social work of the volunteers was not everywhere adequately appreciated by the official experts either on the educational or industrial side. Both Juvenile Advisory Committee Secretaries and Head Teachers suffered from over-pressure of work during the War, and neither always made time to be present at After-Care Conferences, although the parent and child suffered from the consequent lack of expert advice on industrial matters and of guidance based on school experience. In 1918, as a result of the criticisms of the Board, a further attempt was made to improve the working of the scheme, and a

greater measure of official co-operation and help was secured for the voluntary workers.

The War permitted of little social development, but some schemes were inaugurated during which it increased and diversified the work of the school Care Committees. After 1915, work in connection with tuberculosis was further developed by the appointment of interim tuberculosis Care Committees at the dispensaries. From this time onwards, not only did the Tuberculosis and School Medical Officers exchange medical information, but the School Care Committees had necessarily to be in constant touch with Tuberculosis Committees with regard to social conditions. Often when they learnt that there was tuberculosis in the family of any child the School Care Committee would make special arrangements for it to be included in a holiday party or would suggest to the doctor at the school that it would benefit by school milk. Sometimes school dinners were granted while the mother of a family went to a Sanatorium, and friendly oversight over the home and children was maintained while she was away. Sometimes it was necessary to protect a child from the misguided affection of a consumptive parent. For example, a father who was too ill to benefit by a further stay in a Sanatorium and was unwilling to leave his home, showed a passionate affection for his eldest son, a boy of thirteen years. He was a man of uncontrolled temper, and his wife, cowed and worn by trouble, was so alarmed at his violence when she remonstrated with him that she dared to report that he was insisting that the boy should sleep with him, only after extracting a promise from the Tuberculosis Officer that no official visitor should be sent to see him. The Tuberculosis

Committee turned to the School Care Committee for help, in the hope that when their visitor was in the home on business connected with the other children, he might be able to point out the risk of infection to the father without arousing suspicion in his mind that his wife had made any complaint. In many other cases the constant intercourse between the School Care Committees and the parents of school children which arose out of the multiplicity of their points of contact with them placed them in a privileged position when a crisis in the family affairs arose.

In 1918 another disease became prevalent. Encephalitis lethargica, or "sleepy sickness", attacked a considerable number of adults and children. The causes of the disease were obscure, and its after-effects on physique, mind, and character were peculiarly distressing. The Care Committees were asked to co-operate with the School Medical Service in investigating cases. They found the parents as a rule only too eager to help them by telling them of the home conditions, first appearance of the trouble, its treatment, and later on of the apparent after-effects. They discussed each child affected with the teachers, also, and were thus able to send in full reports including more than one point of view to the Public Health Department. Children affected were kept under special friendly observation, and sometimes there were strange symptoms to report after the need for treatment was considered at an end.

In the acute early stages of the disease the hospitals admitted patients for treatment, but the cases of children suffering from after-effects were specially distressing, because for some years there was no means of securing

residential treatment for them except in the Poor Law Infirmary. It was partly as a result of continued pressure from the Care Committees that the Council subsequently arranged with the Metropolitan Asylums Board that one hundred beds should be provided at the Northern Hospital, Winchmore Hill, for children under fifteen years of age who required observation and treatment.

Inexplicable lapses in conduct and breaches of the law occurred in some children who had suffered from an attack of the disease. In such cases the Magistrate at the Children's Court had to decide—without much guidance at first from the medical profession—whether the child's previous good record justified the assumption that his misdemeanours were due to his illness. It was not until 1927, when the Mental Deficiency Act was amended, that it was possible to certify as defective children and young persons whose deficiency was attributed to disease.

A piece of Care Committee work which arose directly out of the War was the supervision of War orphans. In 1919 the London County Council agreed to co-operate with the London War Pensions Committee in the care of these children, of whom there were about 600 in London. Periodical reports on each child were obtained from School Attendance Officers and Care Committees. The great majority of the children were living with grandparents, aunts and uncles, or other relatives, and were found to be happy and well cared for, when the Care Committees visited their homes and conferred with the teachers about them. Sometimes difficulties arose owing to the application of a child's pension to the maintenance of its foster-parents and their family during a

temporary period of illness or misfortune; there were even cases where the guardian of a War Orphan applied for school meals for it on the ground of poverty; here the Care Committees had a difficult decision to make, since the advantages of an assured place as a member of a happy and united family might often outweigh the material benefits to be derived from the full use of the pension on the child's legitimate needs; their action, as usual, varied according to the circumstances of individual children.

War Orphans received special consideration at After-Care Conferences when they were about to leave school. A representative of the War Pensions Committee was invited to attend the Conference to give advice about such children, and precedence was given to their applications for certain posts in the Post Office and elsewhere. Often the Care Committee visitor did useful work before or after the Conference in persuading the child's guardian to take advantage of the fact that the pension was continued up to the age of sixteen and to allow him to have a further period of education or some specialized training instead of starting to earn at once. A boy who had not reached the seventh standard would be kept at school another year, or a little girl, who would otherwise have gone into a factory or workshop, would be sent to a Trade School.

Certain points of interest in the history of the relations of public authorities and volunteers and of the State and the child emerge from this survey of the War period. The nation even under War conditions continued to pursue physical health and to act, at least in part, on its perception of the intimate connection of social and

medical questions by bespeaking the assistance of the social worker in dealing with the new classes of the people of whom it took cognizance. The voluntary assistance of private citizens enabled the State to use individual methods and recognize individual differences in its work for the families of serving and disabled men and for the parentless children left dependent on it. Without such assistance from very large numbers of volunteers, it would have been impossible to do more than administer a flat-rate scale of allowances.

The national use of the volunteer on an unprecedented scale to some extent prejudiced the success of the voluntary Children's Care system. But while some other Local Education Authorities discarded the voluntary ideal, in London the Council regarded its use of paid workers as its executive agents as a temporary expedient only. It even ventured to ask the Care Committees to accept fresh duties, and was justified in its reliance on private citizens by their ready response.

The War also meant that some evils which constantly affect the lives of a comparatively few children were brought into prominence by their extension to larger numbers, and socially conscious citizens were thus roused, as they had been at the beginning of the century, to demand that the State should accord to the child a further measure of protective legislation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHILD AND RECONSTRUCTION

THE formation of the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1917 for the purpose of co-ordinating the work of Government Departments and stimulating schemes of reconstruction was significant of the attitude to the State and to social problems induced by the War. The ordinary private citizen had grown used to bureaucratic control, and expected the State to make plans for his welfare. He was acutely conscious also that social relationships and conditions of life before the War had not been satisfactory, and was correspondingly eager to discard "the old ways, the old abuses, and the old stupidities".¹ He demanded a new world in which men should be well housed, their children cared for in infancy, during their school days, and on their entry into employment, and their status in industry secured and dignified.

The official Committees set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction found reason for optimism in the sense of responsibility for the juvenile manifested by the employers who gave evidence before them. It seemed that the conception of the boy primarily as a "little wage-earner" was at last giving way to that of the "workman and citizen in training", and that the nation and the employers were beginning to realize that the training and prospects of the adolescent were not matters which private individuals could be allowed to determine at their own convenience.

¹ *Report of the Consultative Committee on Adult Education.*

At first material conditions made it easy to put ideals into practice. The whole world needed a fresh stock of commodities after the Armistice, and from 1918 to the winter of 1920-21 prices and wages rose steadily.

The Education Act of 1918 was the great constructive effort of the national conscience to make Reconstruction a force in the lives of its future citizens. For the child at school it meant an uninterrupted period of education up to the end of the school term in which he attained the age of fourteen, instead of freedom to leave on the day of his fourteenth birthday. Neither local bye-laws nor the demands of industry were allowed to break into or curtail this period, although the fact that children from henceforth left the Elementary Schools simultaneously at fixed dates four times a year only involved a clash between educational and industrial interests, and has been the object of attack by a section of the employers and by the administrative officials of the Ministry of Labour, whose task has been complicated by it. Teachers, on the other hand, are almost unanimously in favour of the retention of the present arrangement, and the educational arguments in its favour have been strengthened by the adoption of the policy of an organized course of post-primary education for every child from the age of eleven onwards on the lines advocated in the Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent.

The Act also extended the powers of the Local Education Authorities to promote the health and social welfare of the school child by facilitating physical training, camps, holidays, and forms of recreation. It recognized—as the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act had done in

1907—the value of co-operation with voluntary agencies in such work and provided further possibilities of aiding them financially. The London County Council accordingly recognized the Joint Council of London Juvenile Organizations Committees as a consultative Committee to advise it with regard to facilities for social and physical training, and made a grant to meet the salary of its Organizing Secretary.

The London school child was provided with his first officially maintained Camp School in 1919, when the King's Canadian Residential Open Air School at Bushey Park was opened. The buildings, together with about eight and a half acres of ground, were offered to the London County Council after the War by the King for use as an Open Air School for delicate and anæmic London children who needed a temporary stay in the country under medical supervision. Boys were chosen by the school doctors and the Care Committees were asked to persuade the parents to let them take advantage of the offer.

At first parents and boys were not always ready to respond to the invitation. East End boys who had never been farther west than the Bank, Bermondsey boys who knew no part of London beyond Tower Bridge or the Elephant, were sometimes alarmed at the thought of going away from home for a month. Even when the boys arrived at Bushey and found the Park open for them to roam in, a stream and bathing-pond available, rabbits, ducks, and other pets to look after, and exciting visits to Hampton Court or Kew Gardens to diversify their days, homesickness attacked some of them. As they went on their rounds, Care Committee visitors would be hailed

by anxious mothers, who had received a letter to say that Jack or Tom wanted to come home; he "didn't like the food" or he was being "put on by the other boys". In the wide spaces of the Park, or in the long dormitories loneliness would overpower boys who through all their ten or twelve years of life had played in a busy street and slept in an overcrowded room with their family around them. Then, too, there were boys from better-class homes, some of whom were "spoilt darlings" and resented commands to make their beds or clean their boots, and who ran away at the earliest opportunity.

In time, however, as the boys returned and spread the news of entertainments and expeditions, complaints and homesickness grew less frequent, and boys who had been to Bushey one year clamoured to be allowed a second visit. They came back brown and heavier in weight, and boasted to their parents that they were "Bushey boys" and "knew how to do things, they did". Gradually through them and through the girls who went to the Residential Open-Air Schools at Margate, St. Leonards, and elsewhere from 1920 onwards, new ideas of healthy living were introduced into many homes, and the horizon of some of the parents was gradually widened.

To get the children ready for the expedition cost the Care Committees as well as the parents much trouble. The outfit needed was simple, but even though night-shirts—unknown in many homes—were provided at Bushey when necessary, there were slippers, a second pair of socks and change of shirt to find, boots to be re-soled, and handkerchiefs to be improvised. Often the Committees had to ask for help from local charitable societies in order to supplement the parents' efforts.

A few parents paid the full charge of ten shillings a week, but the vast majority of the boys came from homes where poverty rendered this impossible. The Council left to the Care Committees the full responsibility of assessing payments, and did not even limit their discretion by issuing a guiding scale. Many factors in addition to actual present income were taken into account; sometimes the family had not yet recovered from the effects of a long spell of unemployment; sometimes there was illness in the home; sometimes payments were already being made for another child in a Convalescent Home or Residential School. Many Committees were already familiar with the family resources through the work of the School Bank, War Savings Association, or Children's Country Holiday Fund Committee, and their assessments were based on such knowledge and on their familiarity with the family character and history as much as on the parents' "offer" or their own *ad hoc* inquiries. Mistakes were made from time to time, but discontent among the parents has been comparatively rare, and, as a rule, the knowledge which they have acquired of the impartial character of the Care Committees has sufficed to convince them of the justice of their assessments.

For the adolescent, the Education Act meant a compulsory period of further part time education and public supervision. In London, the first Day Continuation School was opened in January 1921, for children from fourteen to sixteen years of age. About 15,000 young persons were affected, and it was proposed that after two years young persons from sixteen to eighteen years of age should be brought into the scheme. Education was to be of a general character for the juveniles between

fourteen and sixteen, and to have a vocational bias during the last two years of the course. Physical training was compulsory under the Act, and provision was made for the medical inspection of the children admitted during the term before they left the elementary school and subsequently at the Continuation School. The importance of securing the help of the Care Committees in "following-up" Inspections and caring for the general welfare of individual children, as well as the necessity for linking up the work at the Continuation Schools with existing methods of After-Care supervision was recognized, and the Associations of Care Committees were asked to nominate a number of their members to undertake the Care work for each Continuation School.

Great difficulties were experienced by the Council with regard to staffing, equipment, and arrangement of the curriculum; moreover, many of the young persons affected were aggrieved at being required to attend, especially when they had left the elementary schools some months earlier, and problems of discipline were at first acute.

The Continuation School might of course render a service to all its pupils in keeping watch over their physical health and training and developing their intelligence during a further period of systematic education. Its social value was perhaps greatest to those juvenile Ishmaels who from disposition or by reason of their early fortunes were the potential enemies of their fellows and of the community. There may be even in Homerton High Street or Camden Town some few striplings who with Wordsworthian ardour slip away from the company of other boys to watch the frosty stars. There are unfortunately

more boys and girls who belong to no Club or "pack" because a hard infancy has disposed them to find every man's hand against them, and to be ready not only to ward off, but to anticipate blows. It is the sole pride of such a child that he "can fight" his fellows and the world. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, if he is turned out of Play Centre, Scout Company or Club, even if for a short space a friendly Care Committee worker inveigles him into attendance. He remains an unhappy "lone hand" or becomes a nuisance and a menace to the neighbourhood as a member of a band of hooligans like himself outside the organizations of the respectable.

The staff of the Day Continuation Schools set out to woo these surly and suspicious swains. As far as possible they adopted the individual methods of treatment which the Juvenile Organizations Committee in 1920 had advocated as the only means of securing "individual results" in delinquents; they tried also to give to each individual "unclubable" not only a friend but a localized habitation. To this end they developed varied social activities, related their class teaching to local history and geography, kept the school buildings open at all hours, and charmed parents and hobbledheys alike by appearing in their best array at school concerts and shows of work. That they forged a new link with society for some individuals who had failed to respond to church or club and awoke enthusiasm in boys and girls, who a few months earlier had hurled the inkpots through the windows, is in itself a sufficient proof of the value of the experiment to the child and to the nation.

The Continuation Schools rendered yet another service

to the adolescent by bringing about a more intimate co-operation between his industrial and educational advisors. The practice which grew up in London of holding the Juvenile Unemployment Centres on the premises of the Continuation Schools was probably not conducive to the prestige of the latter, but the arrangement by which an officer of the Ministry of Labour used the Continuation School as a branch office of the Juvenile Exchange went far to overcome the prejudices of parents and children, and helped to ensure—as far as contemporary industrial conditions allowed—that account was taken of educational capacities and training, and of individual differences.

In this as in other developments in the educational system during the reconstruction period, the Care Committees through their school and After-Care work were closely concerned. They shared to the full the hopeful atmosphere engendered by the Education Act. From the time of the Armistice onwards strenuous efforts continued to be made to augment their membership, and by 1920, although it was not yet as great as in 1914, it was steadily increasing and there were as many as 4,500 active volunteers at work. The social conscience of Londoners thus kept pace with the advances of the State, and was not content that the achievement of its ideals for the child should be left solely to officials. The services of the School Nurses who had been employed at a number of schools during the War for following-up medical inspections, were gradually dispensed with, and in 1920 the volunteers produced a tangible proof of their zeal by securing the highest percentage of successful treatment ever yet achieved.

CHAPTER IX

ECONOMY AS A TEST OF VALUES

WHEN in the winter of 1920 to 1921 severe economic depression set in, the ideals not only of the Reconstruction period but of the previous twenty years were put to the test. What effects did the policy of public retrenchment have on the voluntary system? How far did the conception of the child as future citizen avail to safeguard his physical, mental, and social welfare?

The War had so far stimulated concern about the national physique that the maintenance of the School Medical Service was ensured; indeed the Board of Education even intimated that they would be prepared to entertain proposals for its gradual improvement and its extension to secondary schools and other places of higher education.

In London when the work was inspected by the Board in 1922, the scheme was found to be working "well and successfully" not only in certain localities but everywhere. Unemployment, an increased charge for treatment, and infectious disease in the homes of the children to some extent affected attendances at the Centres, but "except in the case of dental work, the volume of treatment secured for every type of school defect" reached the normal estimate, and even exceeded it in most categories. Medical Inspection included not only the routine age-groups, but also special cases and re-examination. The presence of "large groups of mothers" at Inspections was cited as a proof that the work had secured their sympathy and interest, and the Board noted that "the

main burden of the work of 'following-up' was undertaken by voluntary workers".

The number of Care Committee members continued to grow steadily if slowly, and they showed their concern for the health of the children not only by their persistence in the work at school and in the homes under the most depressing conditions, but also by trying to cater for some of their special needs, during the years when the Education Authority were forced to retrench. For example, Treatment Centres, where in-patient treatment for tonsils and adenoids could be given, were built at Woolwich and Highgate as War Memorials by voluntary workers. The efforts of the members and supporters of the Federation of Children's Rescue Committees led also to the opening of Coldharbour House, Waddon, the first Home in England to provide prolonged in-patient treatment for little girls suffering from venereal disease. Often these children were excluded from school for long periods, and had neither the stimulus of cheerful surroundings and mental interests nor the regular medical treatment which was essential for their recovery. At Coldharbour House they were given both treatment and education, away from the overcrowded slums where they had contracted the disease as a result of infection or criminal assault, and lived happy, natural lives in a bright, home-like house in a lovely garden. In spite of the need for economy, public recognition and financial aid were soon accorded to this piece of voluntary pioneer work.

Meanwhile the Education Authority supplemented its provision for special forms of in-patient treatment by making arrangements with the Metropolitan Asylums

Board for the admission of school children suffering from trachoma and other eye diseases such as ophthalmia and interstitial keratitis, or needing mastoid operations, to the Board's Homes at Swanley and Downs. It also made very thorough arrangements for the special inspection and out-patient treatment of children suffering from ear trouble, and for the continued medical supervision at an After-Care Clinic maintained by the Metropolitan Asylums Board of children discharged from Downs after an aural operation.

Some indication of the amount of work imposed on Care Committees in assessing the contributions of parents of children sent to Metropolitan Asylums Board Homes under these special arrangements, keeping in touch with them during the children's absence and supervising them on their return, is afforded by the statement in the *Report of the School Medical Officer for 1925* that between 1921 and 1925, 718 children had been sent to Swanley alone. Where, as often happened, a prolonged stay away from home was needed, only constant personal explanations and persuasion induced many of the parents to allow their child to take full advantage of the course of treatment offered.

When, in 1924, it was possible to make a tentative return to the policy of developing social and educational provision, and the London County Council prepared a three years' programme to take effect from April 1925, the physical needs of the children received generous consideration. Facilities for treatment were extended, further medical services were planned in connection with Open Air Schools, and provision was made for the resumption of the systematic medical examination of

children immediately before leaving school, which had been temporarily abandoned and for which Care Committees had since continued to press.

The School Medical Service also kept abreast with the latest developments of medical interest. From 1924 it co-operated with hospitals and voluntary organizations in their intensive campaign against rheumatism, and the Care Committees were called upon to help by supervising rheumatic children. When special provision was made by the Council under an agreement with the Metropolitan Asylums Board for the in-patient treatment of such children in 1926, the Committees not only assessed the parents' payments, but assisted in the work of research into the social and environmental causes of rheumatism by obtaining detailed information about the homes, sleeping arrangements, hours of rest, and forms of exercise of the children. Even after a child had returned from in-patient treatment there was much for the Care Committee visitor to do in ensuring suitable conditions in the home and continued medical supervision at a local Rheumatism Clinic or elsewhere.

For example, a little girl came back from in-patient treatment and the Care Committee were notified of her discharge in order that they might visit her home; they found that her mother went out to work, and that the child, who was not yet considered fit to return to school, was left alone all day and had only such meals as her limited skill and strength enabled her to cook for herself. The family had only two small rooms, and out of kindness allowed the child of a neighbour, who had even less accommodation, to sleep with Vera. The consequence was that she spent the night in a cramped, unnatural

position on a sofa-bed which was quite insufficient to contain two persons. Since the bed was in the family sitting-room, she was unable to go to sleep until a late hour of night. The Care Committee visitor persuaded the mother to get her neighbour to make other sleeping arrangements for the little visitor, so that Vera might at least have a bed to herself; the bed was moved temporarily to the second room, and the parents went to sleep in the sitting-room; later when the hospital doctor allowed it, a holiday organization was induced to make special arrangements to send the child to a specially selected foster-mother in the country until such time as she was judged fit to return to school.

The Care Committees were naturally not satisfied to treat specific defects in the children while they went insufficiently fed. In the early days of the depression the number of children who were granted school meals increased greatly. At the same time the general sympathy with ex-service men and, perhaps, in some quarters fear of the social consequences of their disillusionment made the nation eager to provide for their needs without recourse to the Poor Law. A situation thus arose in which "uncovenanted" Insurance benefits, masking an element of relief, together with expenditure on school meals, carried a large part of the burden resulting from industrial depression.

Early in 1922, however, the position was changed by the fact that the Mond scale of relief was issued, and it was provided in the accompanying regulations that all means available to all members of the household, including school meals, should be taken into account in determining relief. Following on this, the Council

instructed the Care Committees not to give school meals in out-relief cases except strictly within the limitations of the Provision of Meals Act.

A little later the Board of Education definitely restricted the amount of expenditure on meals which might rank for grant, and the Council decided to meet the situation by issuing more stringent feeding regulations. In spite of discontent on the part of some of the voluntary workers who felt that the probable physical benefit to the children outweighed all other considerations, holiday feeding was discontinued, and meals were restricted to either breakfasts or dinners, with milk in addition where the School Doctor specially recommended it on the score of delicacy. The Care Committees were instructed also to refer the parents to the Guardians, where children had been on the dinner list for more than six months.

It is a signal proof of the loyalty and discipline of the voluntary workers that, although the whole burden of carrying out these changes and interpreting them to disheartened or demoralized parents fell on them, they neither disregarded the new instructions nor gave up their work. No doubt the fact that the Council, while not consulting them beforehand, yet made efforts to secure their sympathetic co-operation both individually through the organizers and at a meeting of workers, somewhat eased the situation. As a result of the change of policy, the number of children receiving dinners in London fell from 22,000 at the beginning of the year to little more than 8,000 at the end of it.

The enthusiasm of the voluntary workers received other checks. Although the general sense of the value of education mitigated the effects of the economy cam-

paign in the schools, it was decided that those parts of the Education Act of 1918 which involved additional expenditure must be suspended. Local Education Authorities bordering on London had not yet instituted the Day Continuation School system, and children from their areas were thus free from the obligation to attend Continuation Schools, and had an advantage over the London children in applying for work with certain employers. When 29 per cent of the young persons enrolled at the Day Continuation Schools were out of work and entered on the "live" registers of the School Employment Bureaux,¹ it constituted a real grievance that boys and girls from outside areas should thus steal a march on them. Moreover, the very efforts of the teachers to make the curriculum attractive to the pupils caused some parents to feel that the instruction given was not sufficient to outweigh the more solid good represented by the wage of an adolescent member of a family of which the father was too often out of work.

The new Council which was elected in 1922 had no option but to bring the system to an end, and the Compulsory Continuation Schools were closed in the summer of that year. The change meant that there was once more a gap between the School Medical Service which ended at the age of fourteen, and the National Health Insurance scheme which commenced at the age of sixteen. The juvenile was thus left without physical inspection or public facilities for medical treatment for two critical years in his life. Many social workers felt also that with the Continuation Schools was abandoned the most hopeful means of supervising and guiding the adolescent during

¹ *The Day Continuation School in England*. E. A. Waterfall.

his perilous journey to adult citizenship. To such workers, the fact that eleven Day Continuation Schools, at which attendance was voluntary and the advantages of which were soon realized by the better class of parents, were saved from the wreck was a comparatively small compensation. It was, in fact, the children who least needed social supervision who attended the voluntary Continuation Schools.

At the same time, the experience gained in the Juvenile Unemployment Centres, which were revived at the invitation of the Government during the economy period, provided an added proof of the "marked change in character, outlook, and behaviour" which could be brought about even in reluctant young persons by a period of educational supervision. Unfortunately the problem of securing regular attendance in the majority of the boys and girls affected was not solved, and paucity of numbers made it necessary to close most of the Centres.

Yet another opportunity arose for asserting the paramount importance of the educational ideal during adolescence. As a result of the confusion and friction which had resulted from the system of dual control with regard to Choice of Employment and After-Care, an inquiry was made into the position throughout the country and a Report issued by Lord Chelmsford in 1921. In accordance with the recommendations contained in the Report, Education Authorities were called upon to decide whether they would accept the full responsibility for advising juveniles, placing them in employment, and carrying out duties with regard to Unemployment Insurance benefit for young persons between the ages of

sixteen and eighteen, or whether they would leave the work entirely to the Ministry of Labour.

This was a question which intimately affected the work of the Care Committees, who were deeply concerned by the lack of openings for training or suitable employment and the fact that at After-Care Conferences boys and girls had to be advised to accept work without prospects rather than remain unemployed. Both at Conferences and in their visits to the homes, the mental, moral, and physical effects of unemployment and unsuitable employment were brought home to the Committees, and they felt no doubt as to their continued responsibility for children whom they had known and worked for through their school life.

Yet while the Education Authority continued to use their services, it appeared at this stage to have no conception of the value of seeking their advice, nor indeed of their moral right to be consulted before a decision was made. The voluntary system was apparently conceived of as having exclusively executive functions. Naturally many workers were aggrieved when, after an unsuccessful effort to obtain special sanction for the existing scheme of co-operation to continue, the Council announced that they had decided not to exercise their powers but to leave the work to the Ministry of Labour.

Nevertheless, although this opportunity of re-introducing the conception of educational supervision into the life of the adolescent was lost, the work of the volunteers during the past ten years had brought about a recognition of the value of relating After-Care supervision to social work for school children and developing it on individual lines determined by character and home

circumstances. Owing to this recognition—due to the continued association of the private citizen with the work of public authority—an agreement was arrived at in 1924 between the Ministry and the Council. By this the Ministry undertook full responsibility for the placing and “industrial supervision” of juveniles, while the Council agreed to ask the Care Committees to continue to obtain School-leaving Forms from the Teachers, to hold After-Care Conferences, and to undertake all visiting of the homes and general “Social After-Care”. The Industrial After-Care provided by the Ministry was to be carried out by means of: (1) invitations to juveniles to come to “Open Evenings” at the Exchange; (2) the use of voluntary organizations such as Boys’ Clubs and Brigades; (3) arrangements for visits by Exchange officials to firms at which boys and girls were employed. Where as a result of contact between juveniles and Exchange officials or Juvenile Advisory Committee members, it appeared to the latter that a special home visit was desirable, it was arranged that the services of the Care Committee visitors should be available.

At this stage it was officially recognized that the Care Committees must be consulted and a series of Conferences between officials and volunteers was held at County Hall. It was arranged that official records of placing and supervision should be abandoned, and the Committees were left free to keep such records as they thought fit and to make their own plans for supervision. One effect of the change was the accentuation of the tendency, already apparent in some of the most effective Care Committees, to substitute concentrated and constructive work for children who specially needed it for the more

widespread and sometimes less "real" supervision formerly attempted.

With the inauguration of the new scheme fresh consideration was given to the question of increasing the effectiveness of the After-Care Conferences. The essentials were agreed to be friendliness and informality, the presence of competent advisors on continued education and employment, adequate knowledge of the child's character, attainments, and home conditions, and a clear explanation to the parents of the objects and final recommendations of the Conference.

The following description of a Conference, held in a school in a poor district soon after the new scheme was inaugurated, will serve to show the usual procedure in interviewing parents and children, and the kind of child chosen for special social supervision by the Care Committee.

The Chairman, Honorary Secretary, and the two members of the Care Committee, who had visited the homes of the school-leavers beforehand were present; in addition, the official representatives from the Exchange, Evening Institute, and District Organizer's Office, and the Head Teachers (Boys' and Girls' in turn) attended. All the parents except one, and most of the children, were already personally known to the Care Committee members; the atmosphere of the Conference was therefore most friendly, and both parents and children were at their ease.

Seven boys and eight girls were interviewed, and thirteen out of the fifteen parents attended. Each School-Leaving Form was read aloud by the Chairman, together with the visitor's report, and home, health, educational attainments, and character, were discussed before the

parent and child came in. The Honorary Secretary was a worker for a neighbouring Mission, and one of the most interesting features of the discussion was the way in which her local knowledge of the children and their homes amplified and corrected the "characters" on the School-Leaving Forms. It was cheering, as the Exchange representative remarked, to find that one or two boys who were models of quiet obedience in school had enough initiative to be regarded as "Little Devils" in the neighbourhood.

When the parents were interviewed, the advantage of the preliminary home visit was apparent. Most of the mothers who attended had talked over their child's future with their husbands, and had also taken steps to obtain medical treatment where the boy or girl had not completed it earlier in their school life.

The father of one boy, whose school and "neighbourhood" character indicated the need for a firm hand, came up to say that "since the lady called" he had obtained application forms for admission to a Training Ship. The boy beamed with joy at the prospect of going to sea, and the Head Master and Committee readily agreed to help in the filling up of the forms and to support the application.

Only one or two children had already obtained work, and the remaining parents welcomed the offer of help from the Exchange. After a discussion as to the kind of employment for which each child was best fitted, the Evening Institute representative advised the parents about further education, and all but one mother agreed that it was desirable. In the one case where there seemed to be a doubt about it in the mind of parent and child, it

transpired that the real objection was that the father liked the whole family, including his wife, to be in bed by nine o'clock; it was finally agreed that the Care Committee worker should make an effort to persuade him to make an exception in favour of nights when Evening Institute Classes were held.

One mother promised to go to see the Day Continuation School and to try to give her daughter a period of training there before sending her out to work.

Only five children were selected for special supervision. One was a boy of low intelligence and poor physique on whom the Committee had already spent much effort. One was a tubercular girl whose mother wished to consult the Committee again when she left the Sanatorium, and on whom it was agreed to obtain a special medical report before she thought of employment. Two were boys of somewhat unstable character, although of attractive appearance. One of these had a mentally defective sister, and said confidentially to the Honorary Secretary: "You know my sister. I can't come to the Club because of her." On further inquiry, it proved that the real objection to attendance at the Club was that he preferred to go with his sister to the "pictures" on Club nights.

The fifth child selected for supervision was not present at the Conference. The Care Committee, however, knew the family circumstances well. The father was said to be dying of cancer, and the visitor reported that the little girl was waiting on him and trying to nurse him. Arrangements had been made by the Committee for the District Nurse to attend on him in future, and it was hoped that Dorothy might be able to go out to work instead of

spending all her time in her wretched home surroundings. The Exchange representative undertook to make a special effort to find suitable employment for her as soon as she was free to leave school.

Under the existing co-operative arrangements the cleavage between social and medical work for school children and that of the Employment Exchange officials and voluntary After-Care workers is probably less pronounced than in some schemes of Choice of Employment work under Education Authorities. On the other hand, while credit must be given to all concerned for zeal and good-will, certain disadvantages in the existing joint schemes are apparent. Exchange officials are not always alive to educational considerations. Head Teachers still compete with them in "placing" children in employment, and when dissatisfied with situations found through the Exchange are probably less ready to seek explanations and redress than they would be if they were working with colleagues under the same authority. The lack of direct relations between schools and employers hinders mutual understanding of the requirements and aims of school and industry, and renders it more difficult to arrange to commence the initiation of the child into industry while he is still at school.

Again, while both industrial and social supervision appear to be increasingly well carried out, and the number of visits paid by the officers from the Exchanges to individual firms on behalf of Juveniles is increasing steadily, there is little doubt that the social supervision of the Care Committees would be even more valuable than it is at present if they had further opportunities for learning industrial conditions.

While Juvenile Advisory Committees endeavour with some success to lure boys and girls to report their progress at the Exchanges and Care Committees devote unstinted time and energy to individual work for selected ex-pupils of the London schools, it cannot be denied that together they touch only a small proportion of the adolescent population.¹

How far can it be assumed that supervision is sufficiently provided for the remaining Juveniles by local voluntary agencies and voluntary continued education? A student of conditions in almost any part of London cannot fail to note with wonder the variety of voluntary effort to promote the development of the child's personality. Up to about the age of thirteen the child appears to take advantage of this effort, but at After-Care Conferences child after child reports that he has "left off" attending Church, Club, or Scout Troop. Whether this denotes that there is something lacking in the provision made or is merely a sign of a new phase in the development of the child it is difficult to decide.

At this stage, the Education Authority begins to bid for a share in his leisure time. At After-Care Conferences he is urged not only to continue or resume attendance at Sunday School and Club, but also to continue his education at Evening Classes. The fact that when he has obtained employment he frequently has very little leisure is usually ignored.

It is interesting to note that a sign of the better understanding and co-operation of public authorities and

¹ See "*Malcolm*" *Report on Education and Industry*, where it is estimated that, taking the country as a whole, only 20 per cent of the total number of young persons are placed through the medium of the public Exchange.

voluntary agencies to-day is to be found in the sphere of work for adolescents: it is increasingly frequent in London for the Heads of Evening Institutes to seek to develop their work as part of that of the voluntary agencies, and for the latter to welcome teachers provided by the Council for evening classes held on voluntary premises. On the other hand, where such co-operation is not arranged, the old battle rages between the partisans of State and voluntary provision. The former blithely issue leaflets describing L.C.C. Evening Classes as "The Rock on which to build"; the latter feel that membership of Church or Club supplies a less shifting foundation for the life of the adolescent than class instruction of itself can do; nor does the attempt of the educationist to gild the academic pill with dances and social entertainments persuade the voluntary agency that the State can safely be left to cater for all the needs of the growing boy or girl.

In the meantime, the adolescent largely disregards both parties. Inquiries made in London in April 1925 revealed the fact that over 66 per cent of the children who left the elementary schools during 1923 and 1924 had not subsequently been in attendance at Evening Institute or any sort of Club or recreational organization, while of the comparatively few school-leavers who enrolled at the Institutes a large proportion ceased to attend within a few months.

Since the abandonment of the compulsory Day Continuation School system, the adolescent has gone his own way to a great extent and in many instances has once more been dependent solely on his home for moral influence and control. The significance of this of course depends on the quality of the home. Experience has shown that

for unemployed boys and girls at least some social supervision and organized occupation is generally necessary, while to all adolescents educational and industrial guidance may be helpful. Bearing in mind these considerations, Local Associations of Care Committees were for the most part in favour of the proposals of the Malcolm Committee¹ for the institution of a Working Certificate system coupled with an obligation to attend an Unemployment Centre when required.

How far the adoption of such proposals would conduce to real supervision, how far it would increase the danger of losing sight of individual differences in the press of numbers would probably depend partly on the extent of the influence of social workers on the official machinery. That the scheme was put forward was a sign that the social conscience was not satisfied with the position of the adolescent. The contrast between the ever-growing provision made for the physical and material needs of the school child and the failure to take effective action to help him when he has left school is indeed one of the most striking features of the post-war period.

Throughout this period the voluntary Care Committee worker has continued to find in the child at all stages of his growth an inspiration which the uncertainties of public policy have not dimmed; when public provision has failed, the volunteer has built on the foundation of personal relationships with parents and home, and because he has so done has convinced the public authority that he is an indispensable asset in social work, although he has not yet been conceded the full status of advisor and partner.

¹ *Report of Committee on Education and Industry*. Part 1. 1927.

CHAPTER X

THE POSITION OF THE LONDON CHILD TO-DAY

SINCE the Care Committee system was adopted, twenty years of effort have been devoted to the London child. Is he better cared-for to-day, nearer to freedom from terror, moral deterioration, and physical disability? Are the various elements which go to make up his personality receiving their due measure of nourishment in his three-fold environment of home, school, and neighbourhood? Have the ideals which were adopted for the future citizen in the first decade of the century been realized, and have they been found sufficient?

In the life of the normal child the home—if the term is taken to include both material surroundings and family relationships—is the most lasting and constant factor. First, then, how is the London child housed to-day? The number of houses and tenements provided since the War by the London County Council alone was 32,297 up to October 6, 1928, or nearly four times the number of dwellings provided before 1915. To these must be added the provision made by the Metropolitan Borough Councils, philanthropic societies, and private builders. On the other hand, no social worker in London can fail to know that there continue to exist undesirable and insanitary cottages, damp, dirty, and verminous dwellings, and houses which contain a separate family in every one or two rooms. Instances are not lacking of parents who have maintained high standards and of children who have grown up to be competent citizens even in such surround-

ings, but there are probably even more instances of socially deplorable effects of bad housing on the physique, standards of decency, and methods of recreation of children and adolescents.

What have been the effects of re-housing on the extensive new Council housing estates? Care Committees, taking advantage of their privileged position as accredited agents of the Council, have worked hard to win official recognition of individual circumstances and to obtain accommodation on these estates for families handicapped by ill-health and insufficient space. What have been the results? In many cases, the gain in happiness and health is obvious; the improved nervous condition of the mother and the new opportunities for the elder children to spend some of their leisure pleasantly at home have revolutionized the home atmosphere and the family mode of life. In other instances, where families have been drawn from slums where standards were low, workers, who have called on them in their new homes, have found few signs of increased maternal efficiency or improved child welfare; the new kitchen has been in no less confusion than the former one-roomed home, the children as black or blacker than when they played in the streets of Bethnal Green or Somers Town. Even so, there are of course advantages in new interests and in healthier neighbourhoods; just how far these advantages are affecting the physical condition of the children even where there is no improvement in home care, probably only a close examination of the medical and educational records of individual children before and after re-housing would reveal.

For children in many parts of London, home life

perpetually overflows into the street; there the family carries on its disputes, gossip, games, and interviews with alien intruders into its affairs in the presence of interested neighbours. In other parts the population of the elementary schools is drawn from respectable suburban districts, and as far as possible is kept within the bounds of the home in its out-of-school hours.

Overcrowding and the distressing lack of open spaces leads many even of the most careful mothers to allow their children to seek recreation in the streets. There they find adventure at the tail of a passing cart, where, admired and envied by other boys, it is possible to travel long distances before the driver discovers that he has a passenger. When this diversion fails, a guilty thrill can be obtained in certain districts by thefts from the stalls when the owner's back is turned, or by a voyage of discovery in forbidden warehouses and yards, or, best of all, by a bathe in the canal. Water, whether provided by the Serpentine, a canal, or a leakage in the road, is an irresistible attraction; the schools all teach the art of swimming; its popularity may be seen from the story of the little boy of six who saved another smaller urchin from drowning in the canal and proudly asserted afterwards that he "wasn't afraid" because his big brother had taught him to swim across the bed.

Children are not left to their own unaided devices as regards occupation for their leisure hours. Local Agencies invite them to join Clubs, Play Centres, Bands of Hope, Companies of Girl Guides or Boy Scouts, and numerous other organizations. The Care Committees also use their freedom to experiment by devising a variety of means of improving local conditions. Sometimes they struggle

to obtain the use of an open space for the children of a particular district—occasionally even in direct opposition to the official schemes put forward by the London County Council—sometimes they provide a lending library; sometimes they encourage children to use the Public Children's Library and help to arrange readings at it; sometimes they are responsible for Clubs and Play Centres or for organized play in the fresh air in the summer holidays. For example, in the summer of 1928, the Islington Local Association of Care Committees arranged to take a hundred children, who lived nearly two miles away from any open space, and who would not otherwise have a holiday away from home, to Hampstead Heath daily throughout the school holidays. A paid, trained organizer was appointed by the Association—which depended wholly on voluntary subscriptions for its funds—and Care Committee members were asked to assist by playing with the children and supervising their meals and their journey to and from the Heath.

Despite all the efforts of social workers, out of the life of the streets spring many temptations to delinquency, which are not always overcome even when the parents' standards of morality and home control are high. When, on the contrary, parents are lax, it is not surprising that children appear before the Juvenile Court. One illustration of the evil effects of a combination of overcrowded home, inefficient parents, and a neighbourhood full of excitements may be given.

A family living in one basement room in London consisted of the father, a washer-up at a restaurant, whose work kept him out until a late hour at night, a delicate and somewhat fretful mother, a boy of thirteen who had

been placed on probation three years ago after a course of stealing from the street stalls, a boy of eleven who was said by his parents to be out of control, and who had recently been expelled from a Boys' Club for his unruly behaviour, and William, a witty little boy of nine, who had learnt to reap a harvest of pennies by telling stories and imitating various types of men for the amusement of the theatre queues. His mother smiled and expostulated feebly when he boasted of his exploits, but did not scruple to use his gains when occasion arose; his father, after his first appearance in the Police Court, commanded him to "stop those monkey tricks", but he was not at home in the evenings to enforce his commands, and in any event a lively boy could not be kept in one small, dark, and insufficiently ventilated room throughout the evening. William, therefore, invented fresh performances, and even trained a smaller boy to help him by keeping watch for the police while he entertained his audience. He was small, sturdy, and vivacious, and the waiting queues of people found it amusing to watch him strut before them, jerking his head round constantly to see that his lieutenant was at his post and that no enemy was near. In spite of his watchfulness, he was caught a second and yet a third time; he committed some small thefts also, chiefly for the pleasure of outwitting the shopkeepers from whom he stole, and his family history made it seem advisable in his interest that he should be sent to an Industrial School.

How far is it possible to deal with potential or actual child delinquents in a manner likely to conduce to good citizenship on their part at a later date? Mr. Clarke Hall attributes the great decrease (from 1,047 in 1916 to 186

in 1924) in the number of children charged at Old Street Juvenile Court in part to the growing efficiency of the welfare work of the London County Council.¹ This decrease is not confined to the East End. There is no doubt that in all parts of London children are saved from appearance before the Courts by the preventive work of the School Care Committees in their homes and of the many social agencies which offer some alternative to the streets as their place of recreation.

When an offence against the law has once been committed, the careful assembly of facts in the possession of school, home, and Care Committee, and their consideration by the Industrial Schools Section of the Special Services Sub-Committee help to ensure treatment based on the individual needs and circumstances of the offender. A possible source of weakness lies in the frequent lack of personal consultation between the Industrial Schools Officer, who represents the Council in Court, and the Care Committee. It sometimes happens that even where the point of view of the volunteer is founded on long acquaintanceship, it is not given full weight. An extension of the practice by which Probation Officers sometimes discuss cases with interested Care Committee members before they are finally decided in Court would also be of assistance in diagnosis and in the formulation of a plan for treatment. The written reports of the Committees for the consideration of the Industrial Schools Section, although they may be valuable, cannot take the place of such personal contact between the various persons concerned in the child's welfare.

Families do not pass out of the Care Committees

¹ *Children's Courts*. W. Clarke Hall.

circle of acquaintances when one member of them is sent away. The need for medical treatment, for school meals and for after-care of the older children continues and is used by the Committees as an opportunity for an attempt to improve home conditions before the erring member returns. The advisability of releasing children on licence is considered periodically, and when this question arises the Care Committees are again consulted; sometimes, in anticipation of this moment, parents can be persuaded to try to move into a better neighbourhood, so that the temptation of old and bad associates may be removed; sometimes the elder boys and girls can be helped to form friendships of a less anti-social nature, and the atmosphere of the home can be altered through their means.

In such ways, the combination of full information from official sources and the old and non-official acquaintance-ship with the family which the Care Committee enjoy as voluntary agents of the Education Authority are made to serve the delinquent child, and work is attempted which is of a more intensive nature, and lasts over a longer period than would be possible if it were necessary to rely wholly on a paid staff handicapped by limited time and official status. Unfortunately it is the weakness as well as the strength of the voluntary system that varieties of method and standard can exist in it, and not all Committees live up to the ideals set before them by the most devoted and enterprising workers.

Present-day thought tends to lay stress on neglect as a cause of delinquency in children. The young offender is often recruited from the unsatisfactory home. Care Committee workers have sought consistently both to rouse and

educate parents to a new vision of their responsibilities, and to improve the housing conditions and general environment of individual families in order to make it more possible for them to care for their children adequately. Often personal persuasion has been of more lasting benefit than the threat of the law. In other cases the Children Act has been found inadequate and the volunteers have done useful work in helping to make known its deficiencies, and urging its amendment in official and unofficial circles.

Recent proposals¹ have been in the direction of bestowing greater powers and imposing more definite duties on Education Authorities, and of extending the protection of the State to young persons up to a later age. At present a child may be living in the worst possible surroundings "without proper guardianship being exercised by the parents", or a young person may be entirely out-of-hand and in moral danger, and the law be powerless to intervene if the social worker fails. Lack of funds also makes it difficult to commit children to the care of the relative or other person most suitable to receive them even if they are removed from home.

One or two stories will illustrate some of the difficulties of succouring the neglected child at the present time.

Vera Tooley came from a home in a crowded part of London. Her mother was suspected of keeping a "bad house". She was known to be living with a man who was neither her husband nor Vera's father, and there was evidence that he had had several predecessors. Both Mrs. Tooley—to give her her courtesy title—and her "husband"

¹ See *Reports of Committees on Young Offenders and on Sexual Offences against Young Persons*.

were heavy drinkers, and on one occasion Mrs. Tooley had been taken to the Workhouse Infirmary suffering from delirium tremens.

Vera was said by the neighbours to be unkindly treated; she stood for hours outside the public-houses on cold, winter evenings while her parents drank within, and learnt bad language and witty repartee from the frequenters of street and public-house; her mother delighted to tease her in order that she might see her stand up for herself; she encouraged her also to tell ready lies, and to practise small thefts when the stall-holders in the streets were busy with customers.

To the Inspector of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Mrs. Tooley said contemptuously that she "knew the law" and was well aware that he could not touch her. The Church worker was turned from the door, and complained afterwards that Mrs. Tooley pursued her down the streets with laughter and ribald remarks whenever they met. It was only after repeated efforts that the Care Committee prevailed on her to allow them to send Vera to a foster-mother in the country in order "that she might get away from the rude children in the neighbourhood", to whose influence Mrs. Tooley insisted on attributing the adverse reports on the child's behaviour which constantly reached her from the school.

Muriel was fifteen. Her father had a cat's-meat shop, and her days were occupied in selling cat's-meat and delivering it to customers. She had no opportunities for recreation or further education, although at school she had been a leader among the girls, good at games and quick at her lessons. She was thoroughly bored and

disgusted with her life, and ready to accept any form of diversion.

She made the acquaintance of a young man who was attracted by her pretty face and lively conversation. One day her parents reported to the Care Committee that she had disappeared from home. She returned after two or three nights, and owned that she had been staying with her "gentleman friend". Her parents were lax in their ideas of supervision and morality, but for the time being they were alarmed by this exploit. Had the law allowed them to charge a girl of fifteen with being beyond control they could at this time have been persuaded to take the step without much difficulty. As it was, they agreed that Muriel should be sent to a Training Home. Before the arrangements could be completed they changed their mind; Muriel was too useful in the cat's-meat business for them to wish to dispense with her services; all that the Worker could do was to persuade them to allow her to spend her evenings at a Club. Soon her attendances lapsed, and she complained that she could not get away from the shop in time to reach the Club. There seemed every likelihood that once more she would be driven to seek entertainment with chance acquaintances in the street.

Fortunately the Worker had acquired some influence over her, and by arranging to take her on expeditions whenever opportunity arose kept her moderately content. Gradually she began to wish to leave the unsavoury neighbourhood in which she lived, and at last herself persuaded her parents to let her go to a Training Home.

There are unfortunately many cases where persuasion is not so successful, and where unofficial efforts do not avail

to remove a child from danger or avert a tragedy. Rhoda's mother had married a second time. Her husband was employed in night work, while she went out by day as a cleaner. Rhoda was thus left alone in the house with her stepfather between morning and afternoon school, and after school until her mother's return at six o'clock. She complained to her mother that the stepfather wandered from his bedroom unclothed and behaved indecently in front of her. The mother dared not repeat the child's remarks to her husband as he was given to violent fits of temper, especially when he had been drinking.

The home was obviously unsuitable for Rhoda, but there seemed no way of securing her removal from it. Eventually Mrs. Graham was persuaded to send the child to an aunt who lived out of London, but in a few weeks' time the Care Committee heard in School that she had been brought back, and in response to protests Mrs. Graham insisted that her husband had turned over a new leaf; she was obviously afraid to make any further arrangements, and all that could be done was to keep the home and child under as close supervision as possible.

While the parent with low standards is a fruitful source of misery and deterioration among children, there are many signs that London parents generally are attaining higher standards of material well-being—partly as a result of the work of the Education Authority and its agents, the Care Committees, in awakening them to the existence of new aids to welfare. Of the 4,145 pupils from the Elementary Schools who spent a holiday away from London in 1926, 1,722 were sent away through the unaided efforts of parents or relatives. Respectable artisans who desire for their children more than the necessities

of life often supplement the instruction given at school by lessons from private teachers in music, dancing, or other accomplishments; such children are well-clothed, taken in many instances to private dentist or doctor when treatment is required, and lack no material elements in their well-being.

With rising standards has come a greater degree of co-operation with Care Committees in their work of promoting physical and social welfare. Some proof of this is afforded by the fact that, taking London as a whole, 64·4 per cent of the parents of the children medically examined in 1927 responded to the invitation to be present at the Medical Inspection. The percentage was as high as 88 in the case of the entrant infants, and the falling off at later Inspections appears to be due not so much to indifference on the part of the parents as to the fact that the older boys in particular "hate to have their mothers dancing attendance on them at school".¹ The actual work of escorting children to Treatment Centres is almost universally left to the parents and it is only in very exceptional circumstances that the Care Committees are asked to fill their place or are willing to do so. Parents' attendances at After-Care Conferences also are very good, and it is becoming common for those who cannot attend to feel that it is incumbent on them to send a note to the Committee to explain their hopes or plans for their children.

The fears that legislation on behalf of children would weaken parental responsibility do not seem to have been justified in London as far as ordinarily careful and affectionate parents are concerned. The function of the

¹ *Report of the School Medical Officer for London for 1927.*

Care Committees in the better-class homes is more and more that of friendly advisors who reveal facilities for promoting child welfare as and when required, and it is probable that, so far as common physical and social needs are concerned, this rôle of the "friend in the background", who leaves the initiative in seeking help to the parent, is the one which the Care Committee worker of the future will most usefully take upon himself.

Excessive kindness and weakness of discipline are indeed the worst evils which many London children have to fear in their homes. An eloquent commentary on the prevailing attitude towards their own and their neighbours' children which characterizes the London working-class parent was provided during the General Strike, when Trade Unionists who were attempting to speak from the steps of the Town Hall mildly allowed the little boys of the neighbourhood to hold up their meeting by playing and shouting around them.

There are some indications not only of rising parental standards of child welfare and of increased parental co-operation in efforts to promote their physical well-being, but of an actual increase of parental efficiency. The most remarkable of these indications is perhaps to be found in the decrease in infant mortality between 1910 and 1928—a decrease which cannot be altogether accounted for by improved medical methods, since it has unfortunately not been accompanied by a corresponding decrease in maternal mortality. That such an increase in efficiency has affected the children at a later age as well as in their babyhood seems in the highest degree probable. The observation of social workers, in London at least, as well as official reports with regard to improved nutrition,

cleanliness and greater willingness to obtain medical treatment, bear out the remark of the School Medical Officer in his Report for 1927 that London children generally are better cared for than ever before.

In so far as the Care Committees have conduced to this result, the qualities of elasticity in scope and method, freedom to experiment and to criticize defects in law, administration, or official action which are peculiar to a voluntary system have played an important part. The volunteer has not always lived up to his opportunities. Overwhelmed with numbers, or dispirited by the super-human nature of the task of changing not only standards but personality in parents, he has often passed on to care for another family, leaving unsatisfactory home conditions unimproved, and problems of defective character unsolved. It is to his credit that when the next occasion for intercourse has arisen out of one or other of the child's manifold needs, he has continually returned to the attempt to bring help, encouragement, and a new stimulus into the home. It is to his credit also that his relationships with parents have never been stereotyped, but continue to vary and develop in accordance with the variations and changes to be found in different types of parent.

CHAPTER XI

SOCIAL WORK AS AN ADJUNCT TO EDUCATION. NEW AIDS TO HAPPINESS

ALTHOUGH Care Committee work owes much of its growth to developments in the educational system, it has been regarded up to the present almost exclusively as a branch of social service, whereas in America the social worker for school children is considered as having primarily an educational function.¹

Of recent years, largely owing to the work of Dr. Cyril Burt, the London County Council Psychologist, many London teachers have begun to realize that the real cause of poor scholarship may be social, and that failure to attain to the normal standard may not be due to sub-normal intelligence but to conditions in the home or other causes outside the direct control of the School.

A few Care Committees in various parts of London are now acting as pioneers in work for backward and maladjusted children on lines similar to those developed by the Visiting Teacher in America. Such experiments involve an intimate and constant association of the social worker and the teacher, and a readiness to undertake patient and intensive work in home and school over a long period without any expectancy of immediate results. Fortunately the voluntary system secures to the Care Committees both a footing in the schools and freedom from official requirements to prove the value of their work statistically.

The Committees have found that the social causes of

¹ See *The Visiting Teacher Movement*. Oppenheimer.

backwardness include poor attendance, poor health, over-work out of school hours, nervous strain due to defective relations with parents, late hours, and unhealthy "neighbourhood" influences. Simultaneous action in home and school, and co-operation with other social agencies have availed in some cases to bring about a gradual increase in happiness and scholastic efficiency. The arrangement of a holiday, membership of a Girl Guide or Scout Company, the explanation of possibilities of educational advancement previously unknown to the parents, and the stimulation of interest in the Class Teacher, have all been used to promote a co-operative attitude in child, school, and parent.

The children concerned have come from homes of varying standards, but as a rule have responded most where the mother has been of good intelligence and has co-operated actively in the Care Committee's efforts.

The stories of three children who derived benefit from intensive treatment and the stimulation of interest in education in their parents will illustrate the methods used.

Thomas was the son of a casual dock-labourer; his mother was overwhelmed by the cares of the family, and seemed perpetually depressed. Most of the children were delicate and under-nourished. The Care Committee sent the elder boys to the King's Canadian Open Air School at Bushey, and gave the other children school meals temporarily while the father was out of work; they made great efforts to cheer the mother by making her feel that they were ready to befriend her when need arose. In time, she began to feel that it was more possible to carry on, and had a little energy to spare from the effort to

cope with material needs. She began to take an interest in Thomas's progress at school, and to encourage him to work hard at his lessons. The Care Committee gave him free cod-liver oil and malt, and as his general physical condition improved and the home atmosphere grew more cheerful and stimulating, he ceased to be noticeably backward at school.

The second boy, John, came from a more prosperous home. His mother had spoilt him all his life; she "coddled" him at home, took no interest in school activities, and discouraged him from taking part in them. The Care Committee visitor pointed out the bad results of this method of bringing him up, and the value of games and play with other boys in developing self-reliance. The mother was intelligent and quick to see the point; after a time she began to treat John differently, to talk to him about the doings of his school-fellows and to encourage him to think that he might take part in them; he developed a new interest in school, and very soon showed increased alertness and zest for life.

The third boy also came from a good-class home. He was very backward, and his mother showed no interest in his school progress. The visitor suggested that she should help him with his reading, backwardness in which accentuated his difficulties with other subjects. At first Mrs. Green said that she had no time to spare; but she was persuaded to go through the family time-table, and a few minutes were found after tea-time when she and William might read without interruption. She then brought forward the objection that she did not understand the method of phonetic spelling in use at the school; the visitor explained this to her, and finally produced a

book containing brightly coloured and exciting pictures. The mother and boy read right through this; difficulties were gradually overcome, and the Head Master reported a new interest and general improvement in William's school work.

Intensive work in the homes sometimes leads to the conviction of the need for expert psychological diagnosis and guidance. Most social workers have read Dr. Burt's book on *The Delinquent Child*, and are familiar with the varieties of case with which he deals. One case referred to him by a Care Committee will be described here in order to show the part played by the Committee in preliminary inquiry and subsequent following-up, and the possibilities of alternative methods of treatment provided by the educational system.

Geoffrey Lucas was ten years old. At a Medical Inspection the School Doctor found that he was suffering from the after effects of chorea, and was still very nervous and unable to control his movements. His Head Master demanded his exclusion from school, and gave a vivid description of the trials of his teacher and fellow-scholars owing to his irrepressible conversation in class and his habit of pinching and sticking pins into the boys who sat near him.

The Care Committee worker, Miss Chatwin, reported that Geoffrey's mother had died when he was born, and that his father had married again about three years afterwards. The present Mrs. Lucas seemed a sensible woman, who was anxious to do her best for her step-child but quite unable to manage him; she said that he stayed out late at night, and had recently stolen some money from her and gone off to the country. She knew little

of the history of his babyhood, but said that at the age of four he had been knocked down by a cart when crossing the street and had received "a nasty knock on his head." No permanent injury seemed to have been done, but soon afterwards he began to stammer and, a little later still, had a bad attack of chorea. Since then his stepmother's time had been largely occupied in taking him to hospitals, and recently to a stammering class; she said plaintively that but for his demands on her she could go out to work and supplement the small family income. There were no other children in the family. The home consisted of one room; frequent moves were made—involving Geoffrey's transfer from school to school—but Miss Chatwin had so far been unable to ascertain the reason why a settled home could not be maintained; the father was in regular work as a builder's labourer, and seemed to be a man of considerable intelligence and initiative.

The Care Committee decided to obtain reports on Geoffrey's medical history and present physical condition from the various hospitals where he was known, and in the meantime to cultivate his acquaintance and that of his parents. He was a handsome boy with dark hair and large, dark eyes, regular features, and a frank and friendly expression. On subsequent visits to the home, Miss Chatwin got to know him quite well, and he sometimes volunteered to accompany her on her homeward journey; at such times he talked incessantly, describing adventures on the buses, conversations with other boys, including their remarks about the girls they had met, and the books he had read. *Robinson Crusoe* had made a deep impression on him, and he described scenes from it vividly. In all his stories he was the hero, and he obviously

wished to convey the impression that his life was one of adventure, and that he was equal to any situation. Looking Miss Chatwin full in the face as he talked with an engaging smile, sometimes tripping over his words in his haste to complete his story, he made an attractive and entertaining companion.

It seemed obvious that two factors in the problem which he presented were the hopeless attitude into which his stepmother had sunk through long and fruitless efforts to cope with him, and his own incapacity or unwillingness to co-operate with the school authorities. After consultation with parents, School Doctor, and teachers, the Committee decided to send the information which they had gathered in to Dr. Burt, and to ask him to see Mrs. Lucas and the boy.

One result of the first interview with Dr. Burt was that Mrs. Lucas decided to make a fresh start with Geoffrey once a definite scheme of treatment was laid before her. She promised to co-operate by supplying him with the means of recreation at home, taking him to the Park in the evenings, and seeing that he had sufficient time in bed; she also agreed to the suggestion that he should be transferred to a small Open Air Class, where he could have individual attention and open-air treatment under close medical supervision.

The Care Committee obtained a promise of co-operation from the teacher of the Open Air Class also, kept in touch with Mrs. Lucas in order to encourage her from time to time, and tried to make Geoffrey realize their interest in his progress by lending him story-books and conversing with him when occasion offered. For a time all went well. Then almost simultaneously stepmother

and teacher announced that it was impossible to bear longer with the boy. Untruthfulness, spitefulness, disobedience were discovered in him at school, and the culminating annoyance to the teacher came when in response to a threat of punishment he said: "If you talk to me like that I shall speak to Dr. Burt." At home, he was restless, slept badly, and crowned his misdeeds by inventing a story of his father's death and his mother's consequent misery, which called forth a wreath and a letter of condolence from his Sunday School teacher. His father was justifiably annoyed at being heartlessly described by his son as "dead and cold on his bed", and both parents urged Miss Chatwin to try to send the boy away.

Dr. Burt was consulted again, and suggested a holiday in the country in order that he might enjoy fresh interests instead of dwelling on his own ailments and hospital attendances. Miss Chatwin felt that it would be unfair to a foster-mother to saddle her with Geoffrey, and on the suggestion of the teacher, who thought it would do him good to mix with older boys whom he could not bully, the Head Master of the Residential Open Air School at Bushey was asked to admit him and give him special supervision; the experiment was a success; he behaved well while he was away, and his stepmother had a much needed rest and was encouraged once more to make an effort to help him. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to a larger Day Open Air School where he was with older boys than those in his former Class; since then both his health and behaviour have improved, and there seems ground for hope that his future will be less chequered than was once anticipated.

Facilities for psychological examination are now avail-

able in special Departments at various London hospitals and at the Tavistock Clinic. At Maudsley Hospital special arrangements have been made for school children suspected of suffering from incipient mental disorder to be examined and, if necessary, admitted to the wards for observation and treatment. In such cases the Care Committees collect the same kind of information as to the child's previous history and social conditions as in cases for Dr. Burt and, as usual, keep in touch with the parents while expert treatment is being obtained.

In addition to hospital facilities there is a movement to establish Child Guidance Clinics for the examination and psychiatric treatment of children on lines already adopted in Canada and the United States. A Child Guidance Council has been formed in this country to promote the treatment of difficult and delinquent children, and to bring before the public the need for making an individual study of such children. The London County Council are in close touch with its work, and have agreed to recognize a Clinic established by it in London at the expense of the Commonwealth Fund and to allow the School Medical Officer to refer children to it, subject to the consent of their parents or guardians.

The Jewish Health Organization of Great Britain have also established a Clinic in Whitechapel which is open to all children irrespective of race or creed. The staff of this Clinic at present consists of doctors with special psychological experience, an expert responsible for carrying out mental tests and a social worker. So far a large proportion of the children dealt with have been referred by School Doctors and Care Committees, although some have been sent to the Clinic by Hospital

Doctors, Probation Officers, Children's Workers, and Head Teachers.

Children are referred on various grounds; usually more than one kind of delinquency or abnormal behaviour is noted in the same child. Stammering, nervousness, enuresis, masturbation, lack of concentration or attention, truancy, violence, sleep-walking, moral delinquency, wandering or being out of control, may any of them be the main element or a subsidiary one in the problem which a particular child presents.

It is obvious that some of the traits in question are present in many children who can be dealt with without reference to Clinic or Psychologist. In America, the work of the Visiting Teachers obviates the necessity for reference to a Clinic in numerous cases, and the development of intensive personal work, such as that for backward children already described, should bring about a similar result in England. In any event, the intimate knowledge which Care Committee workers often possess must be a great asset in the task of discriminating between the children who need specialist treatment and those for whom a cure lies in an adjustment in the home which can be best brought about by an old acquaintance and friend of the family.

The Care Committee's old-established friendship with parents should also be a valuable asset in that it may be used to bring about understanding of the aims and methods of the Clinic staff, without which it is unlikely that attendances will be continued or the mother's outlook on life and her family—often the main cause of the child's trouble—altered.

With the work of the Whitechapel Clinic the local

Care Committee workers are intimately associated; they report on the information already in their possession, and often conduct any supplementary inquiries which are necessary before a diagnosis of the trouble can be made; the Care Committee worker concerned in a particular case attends the Conference at the Clinic, and renders a useful service there by correcting from her more intimate and long-standing knowledge the impressions made at *ad hoc* visits by the Clinic workers to the home or by the parent and child to the Clinic. The individual characteristics of each child—and to some extent the respective predominance of the directly psychological element and that of social adjustment in the scheme of treatment—determine how far further attendance at the Clinic, action by the Care Committee or other social agency or direct action by the Clinic social worker shall be utilized subsequently. To co-operate effectively, the Care Committee worker, of course, needs an appreciation of the importance of the mental outlook of parent and child, and of their characteristic methods of weaving their individual experience into their plan of life.

One more attempt to make psychology serviceable to the school child may be mentioned. Although the ideal that on leaving school children should be placed in employment which offers opportunities for training has long been accepted, and some Juvenile Advisory Committee officials and the voluntary Skilled Employment Committees in particular have taken infinite pains to prevent misfits and waste of ability by discovering the precise kind of work for which individual juveniles are fitted, it cannot be claimed that the capacities of the majority of London school leavers have been scientifically

analysed. Often, indeed, little more is attempted at After-Care Conferences than a rough discrimination between children fitted for clerical, skilled, manual, and unskilled work.

The National Institute of Industrial Psychology has recently set out to analyse the capacities of individual boys and girls in a number of schools in London; the teachers have been given permission to co-operate, and tests of general intelligence and of manual dexterity, as well as attempts to estimate personal factors, such as self-confidence or adaptability, have been made. An officer of the Institute has been present at the After-Care Conferences in order to inform the Care Committees of the kind of work indicated by the tests, and efforts are now being made to follow up the children's subsequent careers and to compare them with those of untested children. In this the Institute is working in close co-operation with the Juvenile Advisory Committee concerned and its officials visit employers in company with those from the Exchange.

It is too early as yet to estimate the value of such specialized vocational guidance. Even apart from the justification of its particular methods by results, if it leads to a more widespread detailed consideration of individual differences in juveniles and to a closer study by industrial experts of the personal qualifications required in particular occupations, it will be of great value to the adolescent. It is interesting to note that in this experiment, as in social work for backward children and in the child guidance movement, the initiative comes from the volunteer, who is freely accorded scope for pioneer work within the public educational system.

The test of the value of psychology in work for school children is of course its ability to improve individual children's chances of happiness. The experience of child guidance experts,¹ of enlightened parents of normal children, and our own memories lead to the conclusion that there are certain universal essentials for happy childhood: a sense of security, freedom to grow, and sympathetic companionship. The child at first inevitably looks to his parents to supply these essentials, and in so far as psychological methods can educate them to realize his needs and at the same time dispose him to co-operate in efforts for his good, they make an important contribution to child happiness. There are, of course, dangers to be avoided. If parent or child is regarded primarily as a "problem" rather than a friend, if the spirit of scientific inquiry leads either to feel that his intimate personal relationships are being dissected, the "heart of his mystery" plucked out, in order to "demonstrate" psychological facts, incalculable harm may be done.

The history of social work in this country and the association of the non-specialist Care Committees with the expert psychological worker encourage the hope that a sense of individual values and human significance will prove a sufficient safeguard and make psychology a source not only of knowledge but of happiness.

¹ See *The Problem Child at Home*. Sayles.

CHAPTER XII

TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

FORMERLY, and indeed in some schools to-day, condign punishment would have awaited Barbara, the little red-haired girl who stood on her head in the School Hall just as her Head Mistress was describing her methods of discipline to the Inspector; but, fortunately for her, her teacher was of a tolerant disposition, and contented herself with a request to the Care Committee to talk matters over with her mother and attempt to find out the cause of her increasing wildness and instability of character.

Not only is there a growing tendency in the schools to treat school crimes as symptoms of home troubles, but sympathy is shown with the "dull" and "slow" child whom neither the efforts of teachers nor the social work of Care Committees can bring up to the educational level of his fellows; ridicule and attempts to "smash" the difficult child by the methods of domination are rare. The visitor to the elementary schools is struck not only by the brightness of pictures and flowers but as a rule by the alert and eager faces of the children.

The normal London child appears happy in his school life. If he stays away from school, it is usually because his home or personal circumstances compel his absence, not because he wishes to play truant. The habit of school attendance is now "thoroughly ingrained", and the work of the School Attendance Department becomes yearly more and more a branch of social service.¹ Indeed, the

¹ *Report of the School Medical Officer for London for 1927.*

School Medical Service is one of the main causes of non-attendance, since the vigilance of teachers, Care Committee workers, and School Doctors leads to the detection of a large amount of disability and to the consequent exclusion of children from school for considerable periods. The Care Committees have a peculiar interest, therefore, in such children, and often keep them under constant supervision in order that their attendance for treatment may not lapse, and that the necessary reports from Hospital Almoners or other treating agencies may be forthcoming from time to time for the information of School Doctors. The co-operation of the Committees in improving home conditions, diet, or sleeping arrangements is increasingly sought by Attendance Officers, and they are often able to help by discussing medical recommendations with the parents and persuading them of the importance of following the advice given on seemingly trivial points.

Care Committees are officially linked with attendance work by the provision that Local Associations shall appoint a representative on each local Attendance Subcommittee. This representative selects cases of non-attendance which seem to present some social problem and refers them to the appropriate Care Committee. Often a difficulty arises when the mother of a family of little children has to take a child to hospital and keeps an elder boy or girl at home to look after the babies during her absence. The Care Committee visitor usually finds her genuinely sorry to interrupt the child's education, but unable to think of any alternative plan to meet her difficulties. Here the advantages of the Committee's knowledge of the social resources of the neighbourhood

are apparent. Sometimes it is possible to arrange to send the little ones to a neighbouring crèche; sometimes a talk with the mother results in arrangements being made with an aunt or neighbour to supervise them; occasionally the Committee are able to suggest some woman whom they know to be trustworthy and who is willing to undertake the responsibility. For example, a Committee who were in a quandary about a case where there seemed no possible means of arranging matters, heard through a neighbouring Settlement of a woman living near by who had recently lost her own baby and was eager to have charge of her neighbour's child for an afternoon a week. The two mothers were introduced, and pity on the one side and desire to help on the other soon brought about a friendship between them. In another case, typical of many, the mother was herself ill and a daughter of twelve was kept at home to nurse her, as she refused to have a stranger in the house. The Care Committee visitor called in the evening to see the father, and pointed out that Annie's education was being cut short, and that she was too young to have the responsibility of looking after a mother who was so seriously ill. In the end the patient's sister was induced to come to stay with her, and Annie returned to school.

Parents generally show an increasing appreciation of the advantages of education, one sign of which is the tendency among those whose circumstances permit of it to allow their children to remain at school after they are legally free to leave.¹ They show little sign of a corresponding increase of intelligent interest in the

¹ See *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent.*

curriculum. Although many good results have sprung from the institution of a national system of elementary education which is both free and compulsory, it has had the unfortunate effect of weakening the status and influence of the parents in the schools. Unaccustomed for years to being regarded "as other than an obstacle to the designs of the State",¹ they still think of the processes of education as a mystery which must be left to experts. The Education Act of 1918 marked a great advance, in that "Parents" in each area were ranked with "other persons interested in Education" who were entitled to express an opinion on the scheme which each local Authority was required to prepare. Elementary school teachers have tried to make them acquainted with the work of the schools through personal intercourse and such devices as "Open Days". Care Committees have carried the news of school developments to the homes. Yet only a minority of parents appear to have formulated any ideas on curriculum or methods of teaching as apart from a verdict on the personal characteristics of individual teachers. Here and there a parent expresses an opinion about a particular subject of study or mode of teaching—script writing, for instance, is sometimes commented on unfavourably as a bar to future employment—or an individual, such as the Communist father who objected to the mode of teaching history in his children's school as a glorification of "Kings and Queens", maintains his right to criticize, but for the most part, parents are passive as babes in the hands of Education Authority and teachers.

This state of affairs tends to perpetuate a divorce

¹ See *The Children of England*. J. J. Findlay.

between the interests of home and school, which is unfavourable alike to the full development of the school child and to the cause of further education after school life. Slowly and partially the breach is being closed by the experience of life inside the schools gained by parents in the capacity of Manager or Care Committee member. The mother of a family of school children who gives up the short afternoon hours which represent her sole period of freedom from the claims of house, husband, and children to Care Committee visiting, the postman who rushes hungry from his official duties to act as Honorary Secretary at a Care Committee meeting are missionaries of education and child-welfare to their neighbours. Parents, whose lips are closed, when an official visitor or even a volunteer of a different class calls on them, discuss school problems freely with their peers, once they are assured of their devotion and discretion. Not all of the less educated Care Committee members have learnt the latter virtue; not all are able to answer satisfactorily the frankly put question: "Why do you give up your time to this work?" When they have passed these tests they are in many respects the most valuable servants the Education Authority and the child can have.

How do the teachers appreciate the medley of persons who have been given the official right of access to the schools as Care Committee members? Is a voluntary worker, whose grammar, pronunciation, and spelling are erratic, whose signature is "*Mrs. X.*", whose sympathies tend to be with parents of unacademic views, as welcome as the tactful and gracious West End worker, or the charmingly dressed "Young Conservative", who incon-

gruously eats sandwiches on the bus in order to snatch time for Care Committee work?

Social and intellectual snobbery are not dead, but their state of health is less rude and blatant. In many schools the Care Committee member, whatever his social status, is assured not only of politeness but of warm and generous appreciation.

It might be expected that Head Teachers who were the pioneers in social work for the children of the elementary schools, and who still do valuable personal work in persuading parents and children to obtain medical treatment and acting as their friends and advisors in countless ways, would resent the pre-eminence and authority of the Care Committees as the social agents of the Council. This attitude exists, but in a small minority of teachers only. Generally speaking, it is true to say that London teachers have learnt that their efforts—often departmental and usually limited by the prior claims of educational administration and practice—cannot replace constructive social work in the children's homes.

It is impossible to speak too highly of the courtesy and ready co-operation which most teachers extend to their School Care Committee. At all times they are ready to discuss the difficulties of their pupils with members, or to interrupt their work in order to ascertain whether one child is wearing his glasses, why another has not brought the money due for his school milk or dinners, or how a home difficulty discovered by the Committee appears to be affecting the health and well-being of the children.

As a rule, Care Committee Honorary Secretaries, to

whom the school inquiries are often delegated by the other members of the Committee, try to avoid undue demands on the time of the teachers by fixing some special day and time for their visits to the school; sometimes they are given the use of the teachers' room, where they keep their papers, interview parents and children, and are available when the teachers wish to consult them.

Most Head Teachers not only second the Care Committees' efforts to secure medical treatment and to advance the general welfare of the children by referring cases to them and consulting with the Honorary Secretaries regularly, but also attend the meetings of the Committee. Here, as at After-Care Conferences, they play an important part. They attend in an advisory capacity only and, like other officers of the Council, have no vote, but in practice their intimate knowledge of the children influences the decision on most of the cases under consideration. Many Committees have as standing items on their Agenda, "Reports from Head Teachers on cases of long-standing difficulty" and "Special cases referred by teachers". In this way they ensure that chronic cases are reviewed periodically and that teachers are reminded to refer new cases at an early stage. Few teachers now regard attendance at Care Committee meetings as an interruption of their proper work, and few Care Committees are content that they should be present only when some special difficulty arises. Where they do not attend regularly, the loss is great.

There is a more common loss in that many Care Committee workers have comparatively little direct contact with the Class Teachers, and the latter rarely have an intimate knowledge of the facilities for helping children

in ill-health or trouble of any kind. It is not uncommon at present—in spite of the opportunities for gaining knowledge of Care Committee work given at a few London Training Colleges—for a newly promoted Head Teacher to be entirely ignorant of the procedure for obtaining treatment or school meals and of the powers and constitution of Care Committees.

Most of us still regard the Head of our old School with some awe as well as with affection. Head Teachers continue to exercise an undisputed sway and to enjoy a peculiar prestige within their sphere. That so many of these autocrats should have freely conceded to the volunteer his place in their world, and should turn to him for advice and assistance, is a proof that the London Education Authority built the Care Committee structure well, and were justified in their belief in the voluntary worker's adaptability, persistence, and ability to use an undivided responsibility.

In one small part of London education the Care Committee system has not held its own. In the Central Schools the Care work is performed by a special Sub-Committee of the Managers which usually has its own Honorary Secretary, and holds special meetings to conduct Care Committee business. Unfortunately, such meetings are often treated as little more than adjuncts to the Managers' meetings which they usually precede, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the lack of independent status of the Care Sub-Committee sometimes leads their work to be regarded as an incidental and comparatively unimportant function of the Managers. Certainly it does not always compare favourably with that of the ordinary Elementary School Com-

mittees. Yet there are special difficulties in many of the lives of Central School children and the common restriction of Care work for them to routine work in the comparatively rare cases where treatment is refused or an assessment for Bushey or Margate is required is not justified by their home conditions.

The prospective raising of the school-leaving age lends a special interest to the problems of the elder children at the Central Schools as indicating the kind of school social work which will be required in the future. The story of Annie Lambert will illustrate some difficulties which are to be expected in dealing with adolescents who are acquiring a new self-consciousness and power to determine their own future, together with new moral and material standards and needs.

Annie's mother wrote to the Head Mistress to say that she must remove her from school at the age of fifteen instead of letting her continue her course for a further year. She was doing well at the Central School, and the Head Mistress felt that it would be greatly to her disadvantage not to have a further period of education there. She interviewed the girl and Mrs. Lambert, and was puzzled to find that Annie, who had appeared very fond of school, now expressed an earnest desire to leave. Neither she nor her parents pleaded poverty as a reason, and a tentative suggestion that they might obtain a maintenance grant if their circumstances necessitated it was not welcomed.

The Head Mistress asked the Care worker to visit the home in order to try to discover the real difficulty. At a first visit the worker made very little headway, but on a second occasion she found Annie alone, and after

some conversation elicited from her the fact that her parents did not really want her to leave school, but that she could not bear to attend in shabby clothes. Her mother had therefore been going out to work in order to provide her with an outfit, but she was not strong, and Annie's conscience revolted against letting her continue her exertions; yet she was not willing to sacrifice her vanity and had accordingly decided that to leave school would be the easiest way out of the difficulty; she had made her parents promise not to divulge the reason for her decision to the Head Mistress or the visitor. Fortunately the latter understood something of the feelings of girls of Annie's age; she forebore to smile or to chide, but pointed out all that was being sacrificed by her decision, and finally offered to supplement her outfit from that of her own daughter of the same age. When Annie's mother returned home she was astonished to be greeted with the news that all was settled, and that she was to give up her work although her daughter would complete her course at the Central School.

The history of another little girl at a Central School may be told in order to illustrate a different kind of problem. Grace was a clever child, whose parents were poor and for whom a maintenance grant was made by the Council. Suddenly there was a falling-off in her work at school; she began to look worried and ill. Her mother reported that she spent long hours at home in conning lessons, and was bitterly distressed because she could not keep up with the other girls in her class. She developed nervous habits, slept badly, and had bad dreams. Her Head Mistress expressed the fear that she would not be strong enough to complete her course. The Care worker per-

suaded her mother to take her to hospital, and the doctor there recommended a long holiday. Grace was opposed to this because she thought that she would lose yet more ground at school. A long talk with the worker, in which the relation of bodily and mental health was pointed out, induced her to withdraw her objections, and it was arranged that she should go to Margate for six weeks.

While she was away the visitor discovered that the family were poorer than had been imagined, and that Grace had not been getting sufficient nourishment at home. Her parents were under the impression that it was impossible for Central School children to have school dinners, and were both surprised and grateful when the visitor announced that the Sub-Committee had offered to arrange for Grace to go to the Cookery Centre for her mid-day meal on her return from Margate, provided that they would pay a small proportion of the cost.

Not only have Selective Central Schools been developed in London, but experiments have been made in organizing Senior and Junior Elementary Schools with a specially arranged curriculum in the Senior Department. In this way something has been done to attain the objects of the changes recommended in the Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent. As a rule, the method has been to reorganize two adjacent schools, and to provide "Post-primary education" for the children from both of them in the Combined Senior Department. Such reorganization has of course necessitated changes in the Care Committee organization in order to avoid overlapping in home visiting and assistance. So far, the system has proved adaptable to local needs, and voluntary workers have made the changes necessary to

ensure that children should continue to be treated in relation to family circumstances instead of departmentally according to their place in school.

If the voluntary system has in this way proved its adaptability to changing educational needs and ideas, the Council on its side has continued to give proofs of its sense of the value of Care Committees as its executive agents. As an example of this appreciation may be adduced the recent decision that the expansion of facilities for Open-Air education shall be coupled with the appointment of a separate Care Committee, with fully independent status, for every new Open Air School.

CHAPTER XIII

RELATIONS WITH OTHER SOCIAL AGENCIES

THE Care Committees to-day are recognized throughout London as the social agents of the Education Authority, and the intimate association of the social welfare of the child with his educational progress has brought them official status. Owing their origin to the same growth of social consciousness in the community and the same conception of social case-work which led to the rise of other voluntary agencies in the last half of the nineteenth century, they are not divorced in interest or method from the main stream of voluntary social work. They thus occupy a central position, and are able to use for the benefit of the child both the sympathetic co-operation of other volunteers and the varied provision and official machinery of the public authority.

Outside the sphere of the London County Council there exists in London a network of social agencies, each dealing with some special aspect of social welfare; statutory and voluntary bodies deal with the relief of distress, health, infant welfare, recreation, education, thrift, housing, and problems left over from the War; everywhere, in addition, Churches, Chapels, and Missions try to leaven social endeavour and to uplift the people by bringing the influence of religion to bear on them.

Voluntary social agencies outside the sphere of official social service sometimes find occasion to complain of secretiveness and an exclusive spirit in public bodies and their officials. The Care Committees are saved from the

hindrances to their work which might otherwise result from such official tendencies by their semi-official status, and the fact that where difficulties arise the Council's Organizer is at hand to act as the medium between them and outside public authorities.

Where the conception of family social case-work holds the field, it has led to the breaking down of barriers between different types of workers and agencies existing for differing specific purposes. Some of the initial credit for this must be given to the system of Mutual Registration of Assistance, inaugurated in London by voluntary effort, through which workers learnt to exchange information about families in whom they were interested, and were thus placed in a position to pool the resources available for helping them. At first the usefulness of this system was thought to lie chiefly in bringing about the detection of the habitual beggar and the prevention of overlapping. It is significant of a change in social workers' trend of thought that comparatively little is now heard of this side of the question, and that stress is for the most part laid on the additional possibilities of helping in a constructive manner which are opened out by the scheme.

The attitude of social workers towards their clients is changing in another way also. In the days before the end of the War the re-establishment of economic independence was often the great end in view. Now, while family independence is still recognized as a great good, the fulfilment of personality is considered as even greater. Then, skilled social workers searched the past of those they aspired to help in order to ascertain whether there was any weakness of character, any failing such as drink or immorality, which rendered it probable that help

would be unavailing. Now, there is a tendency to look at the past actions and relationships of individuals chiefly in order to find those traits and associations on which their redemption may be built.

From this enhanced sense of the paramount importance of personality has sprung a perception of the need for understanding and sympathetic co-operation on the part of the person to be helped. The social worker has thus achieved a more intimate relationship with his clients. Some examples of this new attitude may be seen in writings such as those of Mr. de Schweinitz, the Secretary of the Family Society of Philadelphia,¹ or in one or two "Occasional Papers" recently published by the London Charity Organization Society.²

Care Committee workers can hardly fail to be influenced by these tendencies in the world of social work around them. Two stories will illustrate the different effects on child welfare due to the presence or absence of a co-operative and understanding attitude on the part of the parents. It will be observed that the efforts of the Care Committee were equally thorough and well-intentioned in both instances, but that the results were entirely different where personality and the mentality of the parents and child were studied.

John Thompson, a mentally defective boy of fifteen, was kept away from school because his mother was ill. The Care Committee visitor knew the parents, and had always found them friendly; on hearing from the Head Master of Mrs. Thompson's illness, she hurried to the

¹ See *The Art of Helping People Out of Trouble*. De Schweinitz.

² See *The Plays of M. Jean Sarmant and the Case of Kane*, by the Rev. J. C. Pringle.

home to offer sympathy and help. She found Mrs. Thompson sitting in the living-room looking very white and ill and nursing a tiny baby. John was busily cleaning the floor, and was obviously enjoying his task. He rose to his feet smiling, and beamed with pride when his mother expatiated on his skill and competence as shopper, cook, and nurse. "He can wash and dress the baby like a mother!" Then school was mentioned, and his face fell. His mother expostulated volubly: "I've told the School Board man I want him here. What's a great boy like him want with school? They say he can't do sums. He gets the change all right when he goes to do my errands. I'm sure he's got sense enough." In vain the visitor urged the advantages of special training in hand-work which would help the boy to get a living later on; in vain she offered to get a Home Help to come in daily to do the housework and look after Mrs. Thompson and the baby while he went to school. When the Attendance Officer delivered an ultimatum, a reluctant consent to this arrangement was extorted, but in their hearts neither boy nor mother was convinced.

A few days later the visitor called again. Mrs. Thompson, looking more ill even than on the last occasion, was sitting huddled in a corner while a strange woman—the Home Help—was energetically tidying the room. "I wish I was in my bed," said Mrs. Thompson. "I feel that queer, but I can't go and leave HER about the place. I wish John was here to look after things."

Soon the Help was ignominiously dismissed, and John was once more kept away from school. Further persuasion proved useless, and the Attendance Committee decided that the law must take its course. After a sum-

mons, school attendance was resumed, but Mrs. Thompson refused an offer of further help in the house.

Meanwhile, John's mind, slow to acquire a new idea, but tenacious of it when acquired, had been deeply impressed by the apparent unfairness of the law. He had heard his father and mother discuss it with bitterness; he knew that many boys of his age were free to leave school; moreover, he had tasted the joys of competence, and resented having to return to baffling and as it seemed to him useless school tasks. Previously he had been docile and friendly. Now he was resentful of discipline, refused to make any effort to learn, and was finally punished by a reluctant Head Master for gross impertinence. It was difficult for the Care Committee to avoid the conclusion that their failure to persuade parents and boy of the reasonableness of the law and its enforcement had had evil effects which far outweighed the material benefits which they had tried to ensure.

The story serves also to illustrate the fact that protective legislation tends to bear most hardly on persons of low-grade mentality or education and the need for a sympathetic friend who will spare time and pains to explain new social standards and legislation. This is perhaps one of the most important functions which the Care Committees have to perform in the homes of children whose parents have not reached the normal standard of the community.

The case of Freda Snow is a striking contrast. In it success came because the willing and intelligent co-operation of parent and child was considered the first essential. The Police Court Missionary was sitting in her room at the Police Court one morning, when a respectably

dressed woman with a determined expression and somewhat hard manner appeared, holding by the hand a pretty little girl of eleven and a frightened boy of nine. She explained that on the previous evening the children had stolen five shillings from the chimney-piece and had run away from home with it. They had made their way to their grandmother, and the latter had brought them home early that morning. Their mother had thereupon brought them to the Police Court without waiting to give them any breakfast in order that they might be punished.

The Missionary interviewed mother and children separately. The mother complained that Freda was disobedient and insolent, refused to help in the housework, had even taken her little brother and the baby to the Park for a whole day at a time contrary to express commands to stay in the house, and had now crowned her misdeeds by stealing money and running away. The little boy, she said, was weak and easily led astray by Freda, but not naturally naughty.

When the children were interviewed alone, Thomas burst into tears and would say nothing, but Freda looked defiant and declared that she was not sorry for what she had done, and that she "hated" her mother, and wished she could "run away for good". The Missionary could do nothing to change her attitude. She cautioned her that another theft might lead to serious trouble, and persuaded her mother to take her home again and wait to see whether the fright of being taken to the Police Court would do her good. Later, she rang up the Care Committee office and asked that the School Care Committee should make Mrs. Snow's acquaintance, and try to improve her relations with the children.

The Care Committee member to whom the case was entrusted went first to the school to consult the Head Mistress about Freda's character and ability. She learnt that she was sometimes disobedient and impertinent in school, and that a few weeks earlier Mrs. Snow had asked that she might be kept under special supervision. She had been moved into another standard, and since then had given no trouble; she seemed fond of her new teacher, and went out of her way to pay her small attentions. The Teacher found her attractive, and reported that she was quick and intelligent; her school-fellows also liked her, and followed her lead readily. Thomas, on the other hand, was described by his Head Master as somewhat backward, quiet, and wanting in energy, timid, and not always strictly truthful.

The Care Committee visitor next called at the home. Mrs. Snow complained bitterly of the trouble Freda caused her, and showed no sign of affection for her, although she was demonstrative towards a younger girl of six. The visitor gathered from her conversation that she expected Freda to do a great deal of housework, and frequently left her at home in charge of the younger children while she and her husband went to see friends or to the "pictures". "I see that Dolly loves to hug you," said the visitor at length. "Do you ever kiss Freda?" "She's too old," said Mrs. Snow. "And besides she doesn't deserve it."

Then Freda was seen alone by her mother's permission. She talked freely about school, her teacher, and her favourite school-friends. "My mother won't let me go to the Play Centre with the other girls," she said. "She keeps me in to mind the house. She won't even take

me when Dolly and Thomas go shopping with her. I have to stay and clean the kitchen floor; she isn't fond of me."

Having obtained some insight into the child's point of view, the visitor went back to Mrs. Snow. The latter was surprised to hear that Freda was jealous of her little sister and hungry for affection. She promised to show her more consideration. Tentatively the visitor proposed that she should be allowed to arrange a little holiday for the child, and that on her return both Mrs. Snow and Freda should make a fresh start. "Let her see that you are willing to go to some trouble and expense for her sake," she urged. "Then she will come back ready to do her part in helping you."

Freda was called in. The visitor left it to Mrs. Snow to explain what was proposed. "The lady says perhaps I've been putting on you too much," she said with a reluctant smile. Freda looked astonished. "So I'm going to send you for a little holiday. Would you like that? You'll have to have a new frock, I suppose. I should like you to do me credit." The tone was kind, and shame and a lurking affection were mingled in Mrs. Snow's expression. Freda drew near to her, and suddenly flung herself on her and kissed her. "Well, I never," said Mrs. Snow under her breath; afterwards she owned to the visitor that she might have been right in her diagnosis of the trouble.

The Care Committee arranged the holiday within the next few days. Freda went off joyfully, and the visitor persuaded her mother to write to her affectionately while she was away. There were one or two complaints of disobedience and of the theft of some ribbons from the

foster-mother to whom the child was sent, but on the whole all went well.

On her return, her mother, who had talked matters over with the visitor during her absence, proposed that she should go to the Play Centre twice a week with her school friend. Freda was overjoyed. "I'll scrub the floors just the same," she volunteered.

There were, of course, lapses on the part of mother and child, and once the Play Centre supervisor reported that Freda had ceased to attend. Again the visitor called on Mrs. Snow. The latter had not meant to keep the child away, but "things had cropped up" for two or three weeks in succession. She promised that she would try to keep Play Centre nights free. "There's no gainsaying," she declared, "that there's been a wonderful improvement in the child. I'm sure I'm grateful to you for showing me how to deal with her. There are times now when I'm quite proud of her, I do declare."

Only a very slight sketch of the kind of co-operation which is achieved between Care Committees and the numerous social agencies in London can be given here. Settlements, Toc H men, Boy Scout and Girl Guide leaders, Captains of Boys' Brigades, Play Centre Workers, and Club Leaders co-operate in providing recreation and supervision for children referred to them by the Committees. The Invalid Children's Aid Association provide convalescence and take a great part in the Care Committee work for the children in Schools for the Physically Defective. The Charity Organization Society is asked to tide a family over a temporary emergency, to arrange for a child to be admitted to a Voluntary Home, or to provide a holiday for a mother, nerve-strained owing

to her small and congested home and the constant demands of her family. War Pensions Committees are consulted about the children of disabled men or about War orphans. Infant-Welfare Workers call the Care Committee's attention to the need for school dinners while a mother is in hospital. The Guardians ask them to help to provide meals or assist in making out a claim for Orphan's pension for a boy at a Central School who is temporarily left dependent on an unmarried sister. In their turn the Care Committees seek the help of the Relieving Officer where spectacles or convalescence are required for the children of parents in receipt of relief and in many different emergencies. Sometimes a stay at an Open Air School is arranged to coincide with holidays or convalescence arranged for the members of a family by unofficial agencies. As a rule the Care Committees find that a request for help for any family in a crisis in their affairs meets with ready consideration.

The gain to the child owing to this co-operative spirit may be great. In order that he may derive the fullest possible advantage from it, it is essential that Care Committees should have an intimate knowledge of their fellow-workers inside and outside the official world, and should make free use of experts in various branches of family and child welfare, when occasion arises, while themselves maintaining continuous relations with families both in and out of emergencies. As a rule only lack of training and experience prevents workers from having recourse to experts when necessary, and the danger of these deficiencies is lessened both by the mixture of experienced and inexperienced workers on most Committees and the presence of an organizing staff whose

duty it is to advise the volunteers on the social facilities of the neighbourhood.

How much experts on their side owe to the less-specialized but more permanent relationships formed by Care Committees with the families of school children may be seen from the example of the children's special rescue workers. These workers are appointed by and responsible to voluntary Rescue Committees in each part of London. Their salaries are provided wholly from voluntary funds, and their recognition and systematic use by the public authority in preference to specially appointed public officials is therefore a somewhat unusual phenomenon. The object in view is of course to secure flexibility and freedom in a kind of case where it is essential to act with promptitude and to exercise initiative. In order to afford them the necessary status, the London County Council appoint them as "Approved Care Committee Workers", and they thus take their place as part of the voluntary system in London. They are given access to official papers, the right of entry to the schools, and the use of Care Committee machinery. A measure of public control over the personal work on molestation and other Child Rescue cases with which they are entrusted is ensured by frequent consultation with the Organizers, who remain responsible to the Education Committee for the general conduct of the work.

While they have special qualifications for dealing with the acute stage of their cases, most of the children's workers find that once the crisis is over the rush of current cases makes it impossible for them to maintain sufficiently close contact with the child, and that the

Care Committee alone are in a position to watch over it without reviving memories of the past in the course of their normal intercourse with the parents. Once more voluntary status and freedom from the demands of an official time-table are proved to be assets of incalculable value in child-welfare work. On the other hand, the use of the expert, here as elsewhere, is sometimes attended by dangers threatening the volunteer's opportunities for service. Care Committees are not always kept sufficiently informed of developments known to the Children's Special Workers to be able to act effectively. In some instances previous failure on the part of an individual Care Committee is to blame; occasionally the "professional" spirit prevents co-operation, but more often ignorance or lack of appreciation of the nature, methods, and scope of voluntary Care Committee work lies at the root of the trouble. Whatever its cause, the child suffers from any lack of contact.

The value of contact and co-operation on the part of all interested may be seen in the story of a family to whose aid the combined resources of Education Authority, teachers, officials, and voluntary agencies were directed, to some extent as a result of the central position occupied by the Children's Care organization in the world of social and educational effort.

The School Attendance Officer reported to the Care Committee that a little boy and girl, aged nine and eleven, were living alone in a room in a poor and rough neighbourhood. The little girl was seen in school, and said that her father had died suddenly and that her mother had obtained a resident post in an hotel, and had found a room near the school for the children. She came to see

them in her spare time, but they were obliged to get their meals for themselves and to sleep alone. Margery's manner and appearance were most attractive, and it was obvious that she and her brother, Leonard, came from a home far superior to those in the neighbourhood in which they were living.

While the Care Committee were considering how they might get into touch with the mother, Mrs. Dobson, a letter which she had written to the Education Officer was sent on to them. In it she asked for help in making better arrangements for the children, and inquired whether a scholarship which Margery had recently won at her old home could be transferred to London. She was asked to call to discuss with the Care Committee what could be done for the children, and in the meantime meals were given at the School Cookery Centre in order that they might not be altogether dependent on Margery's somewhat primitive cooking. Mrs. Dobson gladly paid for these when she heard what had been arranged. Shortly afterwards the Committee were able to obtain a vacancy for Leonard in a small voluntary Home in London from which he could attend an ordinary Elementary School in a better-class neighbourhood. For this he needed a somewhat extensive outfit, and the Charity Organization Society accordingly promised assistance.

In the meantime it was arranged between the respective Education Authorities that Margery's scholarship should be transferred to London, and the Care Committee suggested to her mother that she should apply for her admission to a Secondary School in the neighbourhood of Leonard's prospective Home in order that

the two children might spend some of their spare time together.

The School Doctor was asked to see both children to ensure that their health was satisfactory and to fill in the necessary Medical Certificate for Leonard. Here began a series of tribulations. Charming though Margery was, she was distinctly careless, and the haphazard way in which she had been living for weeks had aggravated her natural tendency to this fault. The Care Committee Honorary Secretary arranged a special medical examination only to find that the form of Medical Certificate had been left at home; at a second attempt the form was filled in, and Margery then lost it; the school waste-paper baskets were turned out, the cloakrooms and playgrounds searched, but without result. Margery was flustered and tearful, and although her sympathetic Head Mistress made a point of smiling and giving her a reassuring word at the close of the school day, she went home much depressed. The Honorary Secretary wrote for another form, and the whole process of arranging for it to be filled in at a Medical Inspection at another school was repeated; this time the Secretary conducted the children personally to the Inspection, and bore away the form when completed.

An interview was arranged with the Head Mistress of the Secondary School in order that Mrs. Dobson might talk matters over with her while Margery did the school admission test. They lost their way and arrived too late, but at a second attempt the test was triumphantly passed.

The next problem was to make arrangements as to where Margery was to live. The school boarding-house

proved too expensive; a Care Committee worker in the new neighbourhood was consulted and a foster-mother secured and approved of by Mrs. Dobson. Through the kindness of the same worker, Margery was provided with a drill costume and other school accessories. Thus both she and Leonard started on their new life well-equipped.

CHAPTER XIV

RELATIONS WITH APPOINTING AUTHORITY

NEW recruits to Care Committee work are sometimes alarmed when they receive their letter of appointment from the Council. In this they are informed that Children's Care work "includes visiting parents and persuading them to do what is best for their children, e.g. following-up the school doctor's advice, helping in various ways those who apply for school meals, making arrangements for children to go to the Council's Schools for delicate children, and befriending those who are leaving school. There is also clerical work," says the letter, "which can be done largely at home or at the local Children's Care Office, and work at the School, such as attendance at medical inspections and making inquiries of the teachers about certain children." The intention of the Education Committee that the volunteers should act as its executive agents and should undertake personal social work as their primary duty is thus at once made clear.

At the same time no attempt is made to limit the scope of the work by a comprehensive definition. Care Committees are in fact left free to undertake in addition to their ordinary duties any welfare work for which local conditions and their connection with the schools give opportunities. Here housing, there backward children, in another place recreation, thrift, or bulb-growing absorb their surplus energies. So too, in their case-work for individual families they are not restricted to routine or recognized methods. An invitation to tea with a working-

class family and the formation of a friendship with the daughters from it may prove a far more effective method of after-care supervision than constant home visits by Care Committee members; an ideal "supervisor" has been found for a high-spirited girl in the young man who had previously angered her parents by keeping her out late, but who was quick to understand the dangers of excessive freedom when once they were pointed out to him; an advertisement in *The Times* personal column for a donkey for a costermonger bereaved of his trusty steed has been productive of much family happiness. There is no limit to the variety of ways in which the many problems of child welfare are met by ingenious and courageous workers.

The amount of time given to the work by individual Care Committee members varies as greatly as their interests and methods. There are some who work every day of the week, taking little holiday and showing a regularity equal to that of paid workers bound by rules to observe certain hours. There are others—often busy mothers with a house and family to care for or men who are at work all day in some trade or profession—who can offer only an hour or two a week; such volunteers are often among the most valuable since they bring to the Committee experience of life and great social zeal.

What bulk of work is entrusted to the Care Committees by the public authority apart from the manifold additional tasks which their human interests and ever-growing knowledge of educational and local needs lead them to undertake?

There are in London 913 ordinary Elementary Schools with an average roll of pupils of 621,700. In addition there are 74 Central Schools with an average roll of

23,300 pupils, 7 Day Open Air Schools with an average attendance of 1,135 pupils, and 149 Day Special Schools for Blind, Deaf, Physically and Mentally Defective children with an average attendance of 9,984 pupils.¹ Thus the welfare of over 656,000 children must be considered by the voluntary workers attached to the schools.

Every one of these children is medically examined several times in his school life. In 1927, 338,517 children came before the School Doctors, more than a tenth of them as a result of special requests for their examination by teachers, Nurses, Attendance Officers, and Care Committee workers, who had reason to suspect that all was not well with their physical condition;² over 200,000 children were inspected also by the School dentists. The mere attendance at the many Medical and Dental Inspections involved by this number of examinations constituted a heavy call on the time of the Committees, and the work of visiting children's homes in order to arrange for their treatment was correspondingly heavy.

Many local Education Authorities entrust the duty of "following-up" medical cases to paid Health Visitors or School Nurses, and use voluntary workers, if at all in this sphere, only for special duties such as taking a child to hospital or where special difficulties are known to exist. Thus the child's physical needs are in the main dealt with by professional experts limited in their sphere of work by specialized training and the terms of their appointment. The London Authority have remained faithful to their ideal of family case-work in which all the sectional needs of the child are looked at primarily from the point

¹ *Fundamental Statistics*, 1927.

² *Report of the School Medical Officer for London for 1927*.

of view of home and personality. Owing to this idea stress is laid on the social aspects of medical work. As the School Medical Officer remarked in his Annual Report for 1927, "What are diseases to the Medical Department are symptoms to the Social Service Department. . . . Even if such a simple condition as chronic inflammation of the eyes exists in a school child, the real cause of chronicity is some defect in the home: there is parental ignorance, parental neglect, poverty, or unsatisfactory housing conditions. Whatever the physician may do in the way of improving the child's eyes temporarily by medical treatment, so long as the real disease—a defect in the environment of the child—is left untreated, so long the chronic inflammation of the eyes will return again and again."

The practice both of public authorities and volunteers sometimes lags behind their professions—welcome though the latter may be to persons of like mind. Nevertheless, it may justly be claimed that in London the practice of individual explanation and discussion at School Medical Inspections, in the homes, and at the Treatment Centres has gradually familiarized many parents with the social causes of ill-health, and has made it possible to apply social as well as medical remedies. Occasionally, in Minor Ailment work, press of numbers and the restricted space available at certain Treatment Centres, the over-impatient zeal of teachers, who see children suffering from curable miseries and send them to the Centres without previous reference to their parents, or lack of knowledge, persistence, or imagination in individual voluntary workers prevents the underlying causes of deficiencies in home or parent from being treated. In such cases, the

unfortunate child returns again and again to the Centre suffering from blepharitis, impetigo, and other chronic physical discomforts.

The social and personal effects of the work of the Care Committee cannot be measured statistically, but even from the point of view of measurable results, they can point to a record which compares very favourably with that of the paid expert under other local Authorities. Since 1919, the percentage of children obtaining treatment recommended at Medical Inspections has never fallen below 75. In 1927 it was 76·4. Dental Inspections have produced less satisfactory results, but even here London can claim that 69·7 per cent of the children found to need treatment in 1927 received it. In the rest of the country the percentage of treatment obtained was 56·7 in the counties; 57·4 in the boroughs; 55·9 in the urban districts; and 55·4 in the county boroughs.¹

In addition to medical work the Care Committees are officially entrusted with the work of holding After-Care Conferences, undertaking the preliminary consultations with the parents and teachers, and subsequently arranging social supervision for children who need it after they leave school. In 1927 over 60,000 children were dealt with as school-leavers, and 4,535 After-Care Conferences were held.²

Both in their Medical and their After-Care work, the Care Committees are handicapped by the limitations of the sphere of their Appointing Authority. On the one side, despite partially successful efforts to secure co-

¹ See *Report of the School Medical Officer for London, 1927*.

² *Annual Report of the London Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment for 1927*.

operation with Infant Welfare Centres, the gap between the Infant Welfare work of the Borough Councils and that of the Education Authority for school children has not been bridged; and the School Doctors and volunteers start their work for entrants to the Infant Schools with little information about past efforts on their behalf: often there is a lapse of two or three years between attendance at Welfare Centre and School and numerous untreated defects render the five-year old already "damaged goods". At the other extreme of school life, the approach of adolescence, the Council has of its own free will refused to accept full responsibility. The child's life is thus divided arbitrarily into three periods in each of which a different public authority is responsible for its welfare.

The voluntary Care Committees not only act as the agents of the Education Committee in personal social work but also expend considerable sums of money on its behalf. In 1926, approximately 37,600 milk meals, 14,000 dinners, and 6,400 "meals" of cod-liver oil and malt were granted each week—except in a tiny proportion of the cases where the regulations necessitated reference to the Special Service Sub-Committee—at the sole discretion of the Care Committees, making an average of some 58,000 meals granted to the children of "necessitous" parents weekly.¹ In this way, even when administrative expenses are deducted, probably about £25,000 a year is spent; in addition, fees for medical treatment are remitted or reduced for a very large number of children, and reduced assessments are made for the majority of the 4,700 children who are sent to Residential Schools annually, as well as for almost all those

¹ *Annual Report of London County Council for 1926. Education.*

admitted to Institutions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board under the arrangements with the Council for the treatment of children suffering from special diseases.

How far have the Care Committees proved themselves able to expend public money wisely and impartially? A heterogeneous collection of private citizens whose sole initial common qualification is the spirit of social service, who include among their numbers uneducated and inexperienced persons of every shade of political and religious persuasion, who are neither "under authority" as is the paid official, nor elected as the representatives of the people, at first sight seem scarcely suitable to exercise discretionary financial powers.

Yet if the non-elected private citizen cannot be entrusted with the responsibility for expending public money, his usefulness in the ever-growing public services which are concerned primarily with the care of the individual must be severely limited. The London County Council have made a venture of faith in that they have left the voluntary Care Committees free and responsible, have not sought to limit their discretion by the issue of a guiding "scale", and have subjected them to no inspection—except in so far as the occasional attendance of Organizers at Care Committee meetings involves official cognisance of their doings.

This venture of faith appears to be justified by results. In spite of the absence of formal safeguards there is little or no abuse of power by the volunteer. Committees may pass resolutions of dissent; from time to time they ignore temporarily one of the few rules about feeding cases, but there is a general acceptance of the obligation to work on the principles laid down by the Council, which

members recognize that they incur by the acceptance of office. Political considerations, and even economic and social theories, play a surprisingly little part in the process of arriving at financial decisions. A habit of mind appears to be built up by personal case-work on individual lines which goes far to ensure impartial consideration of family needs and possibilities.

Another great safeguard against abuse is the Committee as opposed to the "one-man" system. Accorded complete control of their own affairs, solely responsible for appointing their officers, Care Committees are forced to realize that they have a corporate responsibility for their decisions; their meetings are usually informal and sometimes unbusiness-like, but extremes of opinion are cancelled out, and continuity of experience is secured in them even when individual members fade away.

One of the advantages of the use of volunteers instead of paid officers as the agents of the Education Authority in the administration of their social expenditure on behalf of individual families has been that there is no divorce between the work of investigation and adjudication. The transfer of Poor Law administration to the London County Council under the Local Government Act of 1929 should mean a closer co-ordination of school feeding with family relief, but there is no suggestion in the Administrative Scheme proposed for London¹ that applications for meals should be decided by the Public Assistance Committees. For the present, at any rate, it appears that they will continue to be dealt with by the voluntary Care Committees in the light of their long-standing personal

¹ *London County Council. Local Government Act, 1929. Administrative Scheme.*

acquaintance with the families concerned and to be regarded to a great extent as an episode in their continuous friendly effort to "upgrade" the homes of the children.

While the localization, separate existence, and responsible status of the School Care Committees suffice as a rule to sustain personal interest and to keep the administration of social services affecting the school child human and individual, the advisory and consultative functions of the volunteer have been less successfully developed.

It is the weakness of a voluntary system that its continuity depends on the personal factor, whereas if one official disappears, his place is filled by the automatic operation of the public machinery. To secure continuity of administration—aimed at locally by the Committee system—over the wider areas of the Local Associations of Care Committees, the Council have arranged that their paid Divisional Officers should act as their secretaries. Much excellent work has been achieved by the Associations in research into local conditions, efforts to supply local needs, the consideration of social and legislative proposals, and the representation of children's needs and difficulties to the Council. Many of their suggestions have led to official action. Yet they have failed to win for the volunteers as a whole adequate recognition of their value as a consultative body, a reservoir of knowledge on questions affecting the social welfare of the school child. They have suffered from an official atmosphere, officially compiled agendas, and lack of vital interest on the part of their members, and of the wider circle of Care Committee workers. Probably this failure—to which there are some exceptions—is due to the com-

combination of the besetting temptations of administrative official and volunteer within the public system: on the one hand, a disinclination to encourage action which may prove obnoxious to higher officials and to the directing Authority; on the other, excessive readiness to leave responsibility and the duty of taking the initiative to the paid official when the services of the latter are forthcoming. It is probably owing to the latter weakness that the work of administering the Feeding Centres, which was originally one of the most important duties committed to the Local Associations, has now passed almost entirely—in practice although not in theory—into official hands.

CHAPTER XV

THE SOCIAL ORGANIZER

THE creation of a special class of official which acts as buffer between the administrative officer and the volunteer, and the continued existence of which depends on the success of the voluntary system, is one of the most successful devices yet found for maintaining the place of the private citizen in public social work. Cut off by the terms of his appointment from personal participation in the executive work of the volunteers, the social organizer cannot be their competitor, unless he denies the purpose of his being, and must be their advocate and aid.

In London, while the Care Committees and Local Associations have direct access to the Appointment Authority, their communications with central and local officials are largely made through the medium of the organizing staff. The Children's Care Organizers—comprising a Principal Organizer and two Principal Assistant Organizers at County Hall and local Organizers in all the twelve divisions of London—are selected with reference to their social training and experience rather than their administrative experience; the Care Committees can have access to them at any time; they have a knowledge of local conditions and of the facilities for helping individuals through the medium of the Council, and through other social agencies, and their interests, like those of the Committees, are primarily social.

Their use as intermediaries between the volunteer and the central administrative staff helps to prevent allegations of "red-tape", delays, and "official replies" on the

one side, and of lack of precision and inability to subordinate the individual to larger issues on the other. How many would be the possible occasions of misunderstanding and exasperation but for this device will be realized when the frequency of the need to call in expert help is considered. The admission of a child to a Residential Special School or Epileptic Colony, arrangements for special examination by the Council's psychologist or other specialist, the transfer of a scholarship, queries about housing accommodation on one of the Council's Estates, and innumerable other questions involve reference to County Hall, and might serve to bring into prominence the inevitable difference in the weight attached to individual interests by centralized officials who work from paper reports, and social workers in close personal touch with their clients.

The intercourse of the volunteers with the local officials of the Council, especially School Nurses and Attendance Officers, is attended by dangers differing from those which arise out of written communications with the central staff. The local official "tiger" is tempted to believe that he could make better going without the "lady" on his back.¹ The School Nurse would like to hasten treatment by running round personally to the homes of the children whom she has seen medically examined; the Attendance Officer wonders why, when he is on the doorstep and could fill in a form with particulars of income on the spot, the volunteer insists on following him and indulging in a lengthy conversation with the parents. It falls to the organizer to explain to her fellow official that while he or she might produce the

¹ See *The Child, the Care Committee and the Parent*. Pepler.

most excellent paper report or cater for the needs of the child section by section, the volunteers are primarily concerned to initiate or strengthen personal relationships by friendly intercourse, look on the child as greater than the sum of his needs, and are free to give unstinted time to work which may yield no tangible results.

There are signs that mutual understanding and co-operation between volunteers and officials in London are increasing. Their respective functions are more generally recognized and the division of their spheres of action is less often questioned. Persuasion, constructive social work, social education, and experiments are the province of the volunteer. Coercion and legal processes of all kinds—whether in cases of failure to obtain medical treatment, “charge” cases or cases under the Adoption of Children Act—are referred to the officials, although the volunteers supply a check to *ad hoc* official inquiries by furnishing information gained during previous acquaintance with child and home.

The dreams of the organizing staff are diverse. Some of them have nightmares in which children with toothache, hungry children, neglected children appear weeping and begging for their personal aid on the ground that their voluntary friends have disappeared and there is no one to obtain vouchers, feed them, or place them in Homes. Others cannot see the child, because their eyes are fixed on a mirage in which Care Committees of superhuman excellence hold meetings, visit, and write up case-papers.

There is a way through the wilderness on which the child and the volunteer may walk together. To find it the organizer must have faith—in the voluntary system and in individual human values.

To have seen faith at work is to know that there is no inherent impossibility in maintaining a successful and progressive voluntary service, and that the problem in all parts of London is mainly one of organization. For example, in a poor North-Eastern district with few leisured inhabitants and poor means of communication by bus or train, the situation in 1920 seemed desperate. The district had suffered heavily by the demands of the War on voluntary workers, and for a time School Nurses had to be employed in "following-up" the Medical Inspections at several schools. Work of every kind accumulated, and the principle of prevention for the most part was abandoned and cases dealt with only when a crisis demonstrated their urgency.

In the course of a few months all was changed. Local resources were systematically followed up; School Managers and clergy were persuaded to give the names of friends and acquaintances who might be approached with a view to Care Committee work, and these friends in turn suggested others; retired teachers and wives of local Doctors were interested in the work; women's Co-operative Guilds were induced to allow appeals for workers to be made at their meetings; Adult Schools were approached; the local papers were searched for names of likely recruits, and descriptive articles were inserted in all the Church Magazines. New workers were gathered together in classes at the local Care Committee Office, and also received intensive individual coaching. Instead of dissipating their energies by placing them out among the schools in ones and twos and so allowing them to grow discouraged by the magnitude of their task, each Committee was built up in turn and given a

new start with a sufficient and even generous supply of members. Few, if any, of the new recruits had abundant leisure, but by sharing out the work, they were able to deal with it without undue strain, and within the space of a year there was no school in the neighbourhood without an Honorary Secretary and a full complement of working members.

Recruiting new Care Committee members is an arduous task. The Care Committees are taking an ever-increasing share in it. The Association of Voluntary Workers for some time appointed a special Recruiting Sub-Committee, which did much to make the work known to the public by means of drawing-room meetings, addresses, and a Press campaign. The Catholic Care Committee Workers' Association—again wholly voluntary in its organization—continues to be most successful in finding new workers. The ordinary individual Care Committee members constantly fill up gaps in their ranks by bringing in friends and acquaintances; in doing so they happily turn a blind eye to the geographical, administrative divisions of London which impede official attempts to bring the leisured members of the residential districts to the aid of the non-residential parts where problems of child welfare are in some ways most acute.

When the volunteers have done their best to augment Care Committee membership, it is the duty of the Organizer to review the state of her district and to prevent depression or overwork in the volunteers by casing out her net into a wider sea. Accumulating the names of possible recruits as she goes, she endeavours to relate the work of the public authority to the previous interests, experience, and social ideals of private citizens.

Not all receive her with even the resignation of the woman who accompanied her acceptance of the invitation to join a Care Committee with the words: "All things come from the Lord, but I wish you hadn't come in the morning."

The organizer, indeed, must treat both recruits and established Care Committee members with an appreciation of their individual circumstances and differences quite as great as that demanded of them in their social case-work. In a voluntary system, home ties, personal inhibitions, and even deficiencies, must be allowed for, and the work arranged accordingly. The only constant factor in the volunteers is their appreciation of human values. On this motive Organizers and volunteers have built up the Care Committee edifice. To keep the child ever before the eye of the volunteer is to ensure his constancy. There are Honorary Secretaries of Care Committees and Organizers who are so filled with simple enthusiasm for children, so warmed by belief in humanity, that casual and uninspired methods, depression or despair in the face of difficulties in the children's homes or in Care Committee organization are impossible in their presence. The voluntary system grows through the contagion of enthusiasm and faith.

Where the recruit has no previous experience of social work of any kind, he is asked by the Council to serve as an "Approved Worker" for a probationary period of not less than three months before being appointed as a full member. Training in the work is often undertaken by some experienced member of the Committee to which he is attached, and through which the introduction to school and the homes of the children is made. Where

no volunteer is able or willing to act as guide, the Organizer assumes the responsibility. By discussion of the needs and difficulties of individual children and families, the methods of social case-work and the facilities for assistance offered by the educational and social system are gradually revealed; while the Organizer insensibly recedes into the background, where she remains ready to fill in gaps in knowledge or to introduce the worker to the agency which is most likely to be able to help the child at any given time.

Lack of training is the greatest objection raised by the professional expert to the use of volunteers. Why, he asks, should Mrs. Jones, who knows little more of the laws of health than her neighbour, Mrs. Smith, take upon herself to advise her about her children? How can the elderly, middle-class lady whose life has been spent in household affairs and the upbringing of a family, and who knows nothing of Poor Law history, Local Government, developments in the schools, social legislation or current social theories, deal rightly with the poverty and low standards of a family of slum-dwellers? What does the retired Insurance Agent who undertakes After-Care supervision know of industrial conditions and demands? A Health Visitor, an expert trained in relief work, an official of the Ministry of Labour, would surely serve the child better by dividing the work between them than does the ignorant volunteer who attempts to meet all the diverse needs of the child and family.

Numerous different replies might be made to the professional critic. Many volunteers bring to their work an experience of life and of the child which means more to London parents than technical knowledge could ever

do; they are, in fact, practical experts in the problems of parenthood and family life. When this is granted, the desirability that they should be able to bring all the resources of the skilled social worker to the aid of child and family remains unquestioned. Numbers of them actually possess social experience, and have undergone a training in no way inferior to that of the paid workers. Others must depend for "background" and technique on the efforts of their fellow-workers and of the Organizer.

At Care Committee meetings, at meetings of groups of workers, or of the Association of Voluntary Workers, much valuable information can be gleaned. Some Organizers also arrange for classes, lectures, and discussions, at which workers can learn something of social and educational history if they are not already acquainted with it, and acquire a familiarity with social problems which gives a wider significance to their work. Such lectures and discussions are usually well attended, and more of them would probably be welcomed.

Individual explanations and practical demonstrations of the value of methods of case-work in the attempt to help particular children remain the most effective way of training. Such individual education often depends on the Organizer. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the press of routine, clerical work, frequent changes in the junior organizing staff, and the subsequent recruitment of inexperienced, although trained, social workers, some of whom have no clear conception of the functions or nature of a voluntary system, are allowed to interfere with the proper fulfilment of the organizer's duties. Both from the point of view of cost to the public authority and of the efficiency and vitality of the voluntary system, a few stable,

experienced, and responsible organizers with the necessary personal qualifications and adequate clerical assistance would be preferable to a larger but kaleidoscopic staff.

To kindle and sustain enthusiasm, to act as trainer and technical adviser, are not the only functions of the organizer. The Education Authority leaves the Care Committees free to organize their work in accordance with personal preferences and local conditions, and there are in practice a great variety of methods of dividing the work between the officers and members of Committees. Stereotyped methods, lack of adaptability to new conditions, and loss of perception of essentials owing to the press of detail are faults most commonly attributed to the bureaucrat. They are not his sole prerogative. The Care Committee organizer has constantly to watch for signs of overstrain and depression in the volunteer, to fill up gaps in personnel and so prevent valiant workers from taking on the load of a defaulting member and dropping exhausted under it, protesting with their last breath that the Council should have given them paid help. She has to watch, too, lest overwork and organization unadapted to new conditions and demands lead to the adoption of sectional methods—the division of work into watertight compartments and the consequent failure to perceive the child as an indivisible personality planted in the soil of the family; she has occasionally to restrain the well-trained but sometimes unimaginative social worker from sitting surrounded by a sea of papers while the child faints unheeded in the streets; more frequently, she has to convince the new recruit of the value of securing continuity of records and accuracy in written reports.

One of the most serious problems is that of preventing overwork in Honorary Secretaries. The latter are usually the pivot on which the work turns. They keep the records, prepare agendas, conduct meetings, allot work to the other members, and are usually the main channel of communication with the teachers. It is essential that they shall be social workers and not persons with mainly clerical or administrative interests, since on them depends the maintenance of social enthusiasm in their Committee members and the building up of understanding of social problems in the teachers. It is essential, too, that they shall remain wholly voluntary agents, free to deal at their own discretion with official demands for statistics and results, and to stimulate their Committees to experiment when occasion offers. The Organizer, by recruiting help when needed and by suggesting methods of organization whereby every member of the Committee pulls his fair share of the weight, can make the task of the Honorary Secretary—on the fulfilment of which depends the maintenance of the whole voluntary system—possible and hopeful.

It is characteristic of the social organizer's position as intermediary between official and volunteer that she has no power to command or to veto. She may and should carry the stimulus of new ideas from one worker to another; but if she speaks with the voice of authority, she is at once identified with the officialdom which the volunteer instinctively resents, and can no longer perform her proper functions. Her influence—which is often great—is personal, and yet she comes to represent to the volunteer something impersonal and greater than herself, the concern of the organized community for the welfare of its children.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM

WHEN the Care Committee worker thinks of London children, he sees them not in their uniform desks at school, but each in the unique setting of his home. The name of Geoffrey Lucas calls up the puckered face of his step-mother; that of Vera Tooley brings with it the memory of a street scene where a once beautiful, half-drunken mother mirthfully applauds the oath which the child flings after a fleeing deaconess; that of Barbara calls up the narrow Mews in which she lives surrounded by gossip, gambling, and continual excitement. Geoffrey, Vera, and Barbara remain for ever distinct personalities, not mere members of groups requiring spectacles or meals or employment. And this view of them is in accordance with reality, since they flit from group to group throughout their lives but are nevertheless themselves.

This insistence on the paramount importance of personality is the great contribution which the London voluntary system makes to child welfare. It does not preclude the use of the expert from time to time, but it provides a running stream of friendship which laps continually upon the shores of each little island where a child makes his home.

The system is fluid, impetuous, persistent as running water; time and form mean little to it; it returns again and again to the same pebbly beach where a naughty or ailing child or an unkind parent dwells, and appears unconscious that the spectator on the bank sees no

results. It washes away the official straws of precedent, statistics, caution, formality, and delay, and sometimes surges uncomfortably round the official boat.

That boat grows yearly heavier as the State takes on fresh responsibilities in the care of individuals and uses more of its power to promote the welfare of its citizens. The Local Education Authorities appear likely to continue to acquire new powers and duties which may gradually affect the status of the parents.¹ Their social work for school children has long ceased to have any necessary connection with poverty, and the development of new aids to personal happiness and efficiency must have the effect of introducing their agents into yet more homes which are financially stable and independent.

If photographs of children in the poorer London Schools taken more than twenty years ago are compared with the appearance of the children in the same schools to-day, a great gain in alertness and physical vigour is apparent; possibly the extension of public social work on his behalf has to some extent compensated the London school child for his deprivation of the natural childish joy of activity in open spaces and ever-changing country scenes. He has more certainty of expert advice in physical troubles than have many of his contemporaries in well-to-do families outside the orbit of the public School Medical Service. His parents' standards of material good are changing with those of the community; and there are some grounds for believing that—except in a small section of parents who have lost their last incentive to self-respect and self-sacrifice when the State has inter-

¹ See *Reports on Sexual Offences Against Young Persons*, and on *The Treatment of Young Offenders*.

vened between them and their children—parental care and maternal efficiency are increasing.

These results have followed on the social services which the Local Education Authorities began to accumulate over twenty years ago. Yet the child still steps into another world daily when he returns home from school at the close of the afternoon, and once for all at the age of fourteen years. There are signs of official recognition that a greater intimacy must be brought about between the schools and the community, and that parents, local opinion, and the world of industry should be associated with the development of education.¹ The volunteer within the educational system helps to promote such an association by interpreting the work of the schools to the parents, by observing and criticizing in the spirit of the social research student, and by communicating his conclusions to the wider circle of his friends. He also uses his privileged position to search out new needs of the child, provide for them by pioneer, experimental effort, and, in some instances, persuade the public authority to assume responsibility for meeting them permanently.

The private citizen as agent of the community has his faults and disadvantages. He is not necessarily expert; the claims of his life as bread-winner or home-maker distract him from continuous public social work; he has an obstinate prejudice against authority, and may be more destructive than constructive in his attitude to official attempts to design organization for practical use; at the

¹ See *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent, 1926*, and *Report of Committee on Education and Industry, (Parts 1 and 2), 1927 and 1928*.

same time he yields the field too readily to the official when he sees the latter in competition with him.

In the London Care Committee system some of these faults and disadvantages are gradually being overcome. The machinery for training the inexperienced recruit is not yet perfect, but there is in many volunteers a perception of the need for knowledge and mastery of technique and a desire on the part of the organizing staff to meet this need. Volunteers appear and disappear with bewildering rapidity, but a growing nucleus of steady workers remains and ensures stability and continuity. A considerable number of the present Care Committee workers have served uninterruptedly since the inauguration of the system in 1909. When a survey was made in 1920, it was found that, despite the severe depletion of membership due to the War, there were over 500 workers who had completed more than ten years' continuous service—a figure in excess of the total number of paid school doctors and school nurses at present in the service of the Council.¹ The machinery evolved by the Council, including the device of the social Organizer as buffer between Care Committee member and administrative official, is bringing about more appreciation of the efforts and organization of the public authority on the part of the volunteer. The services of increasing numbers of paid specialists and the ever-rising standards of material equipment have been used not in substitution for, but as aids to, voluntary work. Finally, the Committee system, the officially acknowledged status and the undivided responsibility of the volunteers for executive work have so far prevented the official staff from swallowing them up.

¹ See *Fundamental Statistics*, 1927.

Representative local government depending on the work of elected persons and officials arose partly out of the deficiencies of a system of unpaid personal service by private citizens. It has come to be regarded by many of us as a law of nature. Men carp at bureaucracy, but continue to rest upon it; shake their heads over the growing social activities of the State, but are wrathful if a sparrow falls to the ground officially unnoted. The test of the health of the social State continues to be the vigour of the social conscience of its individual members. If we cannot rest at ease while the reservoir of social power is not used for the benefit of our fellow-citizens, if we are not willing to be marshalled and dominated by a regiment of officials over which we have no direct control, the remedy lies in our own hands. We may use the opportunities for personal social service within the public system which are already offered to the private citizen and may demand yet more.

In this way alone the official organization may be permeated and continually re-created by the informal and often illogical insistence on human values of the man in the street. Large-scale government by elected Committees, despite the personal efficiency and good will of many of their officials, involves a slow procedure, and at present usually a discouragement of initiative and willingness to take responsibility in any but the highest officers. If the private citizen has a recognized status as the voluntary agent of the public and a recognized right to invade the Municipal offices, he will ensure that the baby is not left to die while the Public Health official seeks authority to leave his desk.

The development of a more intimate association of the

private citizen with the machine of government depends on the possibility of creating a right relationship between the official and the volunteer and on the proportion of socially conscious citizens in the community.

It is not only in London that progress has been made in reconciling the different outlook and methods of paid experts and lay voluntary workers. Elsewhere, a considerable proportion of the Local Education Authorities make some use of the voluntary services of private citizens,¹ and presumably achieve a working arrangement between them and their official staff. The problem is therefore not insoluble.

How far can the State rely on an adequate supply of voluntary workers to carry out its personal social work? The experience of the London Education Authority is that the private citizen must be sought out; at present he does not come in sufficient numbers uninvited. It must be the prime duty of some person or body of persons to go out and compel him to enter the field of public service. The work of recruiting new members of Care Committees goes on continuously. Perhaps one in ten of the individuals approached without any personal introduction or link with the existing Care Committees responds. Of those who refuse their help, a considerable proportion do so, not because of lack of social interest or conscience, but because home ties or other personal considerations prevent them from undertaking public work for the time being. Sometimes they come unsolicited at

¹ See *School Care Committees*, by John H. Nicholson. Of the 80 per cent. of Local Education Authorities which replied to Mr. Nicholson's inquiries, 46 per cent. of the County Councils and County Boroughs, 22 per cent. of the Boroughs, and 49 per cent. of the Urban District Councils used some form of voluntary effort.

a later date. Many people express regret that they have not heard earlier of the opportunity for service, and are joyfully surprised to hear that the organized community can make use of their leisure and surplus energy.

There are in London to-day 922 Children's Care Committees, comprising 5,105 full members and 179 "Approved Workers".¹ Among these volunteers there are practically no drones; public opinion among their fellow-members, an uneasy conscience, and periodical official action expels non-workers from the hive.

In addition to the Education Committee, numerous private and public agencies make an effective bid for volunteers. Yet there are no signs that the supply is failing; nor in the Care Committee system is there any attempt—except in isolated individual cases—to use membership as a means to political or personal ends. The workers come from many and diverse sections of society. Social, political, and religious differences are ignored in their appointment, and as a rule, inspired by their common devotion to the child, "Young Conservatives", men and women of advanced "Labour" views, clergy and ministers of all denominations, leisured folk from the West End, and the busy wives of local tradesmen work together in amity. The volunteer is as free as is the Government official from political bias in his work. Through his devotion to the individual and his unatrophied critical faculties he may even come to be a powerful agent in preventing sudden changes in policy and method in public social work when a political landslide occurs among his elected representatives.

¹ *Report of School Medical Officer (London County Council) for 1927.*

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¹ *Report of School Medical Officer (London County Council) for 1927.*

While the voluntary Care Committee system has made manifest many practical advantages in the use of the private citizen in public social work, there remains to be considered the objection that a class of official experts in social personality, whose sole function would be the mediation and adjustment of the various social services in the interests of the individual and the family, would serve the same purpose as, and might prove more efficient than, the lay volunteer whose social work is often only one of many functions.

Present-day tendencies in public administration lead to greater specialization of officials and to the splitting up of their work into more or less watertight compartments, but there is no fundamental reason why these sectional methods should continue to hold the field. It is important therefore to decide whether the social work of the private citizen is of special service to the State by virtue of its voluntary character.

A society approaches its highest potential power as an agent for the promotion of the best social life only in so far as its individual members—by reason of whose social nature it exists—are conscious of the social bond and will to make it effective. If this is acknowledged, there appear to be two main reasons for desiring the continuance of voluntary social work. In the first place, such work brings the individual volunteer into more intimate touch with his fellow-citizens than does purely political effort directed towards governmental activity; secondly, a wholly bureaucratic public social service involves the presentation of public social benefits with authority and an element of compulsion, whereas the use of the volunteer as the agent of society makes it possible to avoid any

suggestion of external force, and to appeal for the free co-operation of the persons whose social capacity it is desired to promote. In so far as these persons voluntarily respond they, too, are raised to the status of intelligent and willing partners with the State, and the dynamic force of the social impulses of the community is thereby increased.

For both reasons society gains by the social effort of the private citizen, which has a unique value precisely because it is voluntary and based solely on his personal recognition of his social nature and obligations.

It may be expected that the developments foreshadowed in the national system of education will further facilitate the growth of social competence, and that in time the number of potential social workers will coincide with the number of the nation's adult citizens. How far these future citizens will be privileged to play an active part in the social service of the State, within an ordered scheme in which elected representatives, expert officials, and eager volunteers will have their place, depends largely on the thought and action of to-day. If they are granted status, responsibility, and opportunities for personal work, they will perhaps be indebted in some slight degree to the example of sustained devotion afforded by voluntary Children's Care Committees in London and elsewhere.

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