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INTRODUCTORY.

"Nutrition," the Chief Medical Officer tells us, "is everything in childhood. Childhood is the particular and only occasion when it is true to place nutrition in the first rank. Indeed, it stands unique, for it is the only foundation of growth."* Lack of food is not the only cause of malnutrition; the debilitated child may lack fresh air, exercise, rest, but a principal cause is insufficient, improper, irregular, unsuitable, or unappetizing food.

A child in a civilized community has then a first claim on the food resources of his country. This is commonly recognised in war-time, and adults, if necessary, must go without. In peace time, when there is plenty for everyone, we are apt to forget it. Never before in our history have we been better supplied with so rich a variety, or such abundance, of foodstuffs. Yet, in spite of this, thousands of our children are known to be living on diets which do not even provide the minimum conditions of health and growth. Not only socialists are discovering the folly of an economic system which makes "profit," in the narrow sense of mere "financial results," the test of social utility. "We have to remain poor,"* says Professor J. M. Keynes in deploiring our failure to use the vast technical and material resources at our disposal to build a wonder-city, "because it does not 'pay' to be rich." Worse, our children must starve in an age of abundance, because it does not "pay" to feed them.

THE FACTS ABOUT MALNUTRITION.

The Test of a Satisfactory Diet.

A satisfactory diet, as defined by the Chief Medical Officer, is one that provides for full natural growth—"for the full unfolding in growth of the best potential qualities, physical and mental, inherent in the child at birth."*

For practical purposes, we are told,† one has to judge a diet in four different respects, namely, the supply of calories (units of energy), the quantity of first-class or "animal" protein, and the supply of mineral matter and vitamin content. The minimum needs of the adult man may be taken as 3,000 calories, that of the adult woman as 2,500 calories, while that of children varies from 40 per cent. of the "man" value at the ages 2—3 to the full adult value at the age of 14. The experts are, in fact, not sure that a boy or girl of 14 does not need even a larger share than a full-grown man or woman.

The next criterion of a sufficient diet is the supply of first-class protein, which is only to be found in animal products, such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese, milk, etc. In a satisfactory diet, first-class protein should form at least 5 per cent. of the total calories. The estimate is admittedly a modest one. In ordinary middleclass diets, "animal" protein is said to form about 7.5 per cent. of the calories.

The remaining criteria may be considered together. There are no means of measuring the amounts of the different kinds of vitamins and salts which are necessary to prevent "deficiency" diseases, e.g., rickets, scurvy, undue susceptibility to certain infections; but milk and milk products, green vegetables, fresh fruit, salads, "fat" fish, such as herrings, are known to be rich in them. If, therefore, the diet contains a fair share of these so-called "protective" foods, there is little danger that it will be lacking in vitamins and salts. It is important to remember that a satisfactory diet much be complete in all respects. No amount of calories, for example, will make up for a deficiency in "first-class" protein, or in vitamins and salts.

Common Faults of Diet and their Causes.

With the enormous range of foodstuffs procurable, it is plain that no one with money to spend need have a defective diet, but where economy has to be considered it is a different matter. That serious defects are due to ignorance, to established customs and tastes, no one is likely to dispute. "I am perfectly satisfied," the School Medical Officer for East Suffolk writes,*

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† "Criticism and Improvement of Diets." Ministry of Health, 1933.
"that ignorance on the part of the mothers exerts the greatest influence on the causation of malnutrition. They fail, not because they lack interest, not because they are careless and slovenly, but simply because they know no better. The distribution to the best advantage of a very slender weekly wage is far from being a simple matter and, in the absence of guidance, it is little wonder that failure so often results."

Cereals (flour, oatmeal, rice) are relatively cheap and easy to get, and consequently bulk largely in working-class diets. "It is unusual," Dr. M'Gonigle (M.O.H., Stockton) states,* "to discover children suffering from the effects of actual shortage of food-stuffs, but the ill-effects of deficient quality of nutrition are widespread." Where large appetites must be satisfied at a very small cost, it is inevitable that the more expensive "animal" foods, meat, fish, butter, eggs, should be cut down. An analysis of the dietary of 22 unemployed families by Dr. M'Gonigle showed that, while the calorie value equalled on an average 80 per cent. of the normal, and the carbohydrates 94 per cent., the value in first-class proteins was only 55 per cent. of the normal, and the value in fats 59 per cent.† "There is abundant evidence," reports the Chief Medical Officer‡ "that a direct result of poverty is to reduce the amount of protein and fat in the diet, and relatively to increase the carbohydrates."

It is, however, in the protective foods, milk, green vegetables, fresh fruit, that a deficiency is most likely to be met. "All the defects," the Chief Medical Officer has stated,* "which may exist in diets in common use can be readily corrected by the addition of milk and green vegetables." If a diet is supplemented by milk and green vegetables, the other materials of which it is composed can, it is said, quite safely consist of articles which are easily obtained and relatively cheap, such as bread, flour, potatoes, roots, pulses, sugar, fats.

Milk is the perfect food for the young. It is now generally recognised that one pint of milk per child per day is a minimum allowance, not merely for very young children, but for children up to 16. Unfortunately, we are not a milk-drinking country. There are countless homes where milk is said to be only used for tea, or is bought for the cat! The total daily average consumption of milk in this country is about one-third of a pint (against one pint in the U.S.A.); in some populous areas, it is only 0.08 or even 0.06 of a pint. When this is realized, and also that one pint of milk is said to contain about two-thirds

† "The Lancet," March 18, 1933.
‡ "Health of the School Child," 1931, p. 96.
§ "State of the Public Health," Ministry of Health, 1926, p. 185.—The statement refers to a relatively prosperous year, and may to-day need some modification.
of the total daily first-class protein requirements of the average child, more than one-third of his total fat requirements, and to be rich besides in vitamins and salts, some conception can be formed of the inadequacy of the amount of this most valuable food which children are receiving, and the improvement in their growth and vigour that might be expected to follow a more adequate use of it.

The Minimum Cost of a Satisfactory Diet.

The cheapest possible diet upon which healthy subsistence is possible is said to consist of oatmeal, herrings and cabbage,* but no one could swallow the necessary quantity of oatmeal, nor tolerate the monotony of such a diet, even if he had the physiological knowledge to buy it, and the practical skill to cook it and serve it so that it would not be revolting. That appetite, apart from hunger, has much to do with proper digestion is a well-known physiological fact. Starting then from the assumption that a satisfactory diet must be reasonably varied and palatable, the minimum cost per man per week has been variously estimated (February, 1933, prices) between 4s. 10d. (M’Gonigle) and 6s. 8d. (Crowden).† The average sum works out at 5s. 8d., but Dr. V. H. Mottoram suggests that the sanest figure to adopt for practical purposes would be 6s. per week per adult male. These estimates presuppose “the most economical purchasing and household management, and demand a knowledge of dietetics and a skill in the laying out of money and in the preparation of food which few housewives are likely to possess.” On the basis of 6s. per “man,” the minimum cost of a child’s diet may roughly be estimated at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cost per week</th>
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<tr>
<td>14 and over</td>
<td>6/-</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>5/5</td>
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<td>10-12</td>
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<td>6-8</td>
<td>3/7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
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About the same figure is reached as a result of an enquiry into diets in poor law homes. The Advisory Committee on Nutrition state: * “In a home containing about 200 children we estimate that the weekly cost, allowing for one pint of milk per child daily, would be about 4s. 6d. per head, if all provisions were bought at contract prices.” “The Chief Medical Officer,”†

*“Food and Health; The Physiological Minimum.” *The Lancet*, March 18, 1933.
†*Ibid.*
*“Diets in Children’s Poor Law Homes,” November, 1932.
†*“Health of the School Child,”* 1931.
however, thinks that, unless the numbers are large and there are facilities for obtaining foods at contract rates, a more reasonable sum would be 5s. 6d. a week. It is plain that, on the lowest estimate, a man, wife and, say, three children, should spend on an average on food alone not less than about 25s. a week.

**Diet and Working Class Budgets.**

"More than any other factor," the Chief Medical Officer has declared,* "the amount and quality of food are likely to vary with changes in the economic status of individuals, and the danger to the health of children resulting from reduction of income is to be sought for mainly in this sphere." Food is not the only necessary of life. Rent, for example, is a fixed charge which must be paid whether or not a margin is left for food. The Ministry of Labour base their present calculation of the cost of living on the assumption that 17 per cent. of the total weekly budget goes in rent, but circumstances may decide otherwise. Big families especially must often pay large sums in rent because owners and agents refuse to let rooms to people with children.

From an examination of the budgets of poor families living in London, Dr. G. P. Crowden calculates† that, on an average, 35 per cent. of the total income goes in rent, or about twice the official estimate. The Medical Officer of Health for Hammersmith has found‡ that, after rents have been paid, a number of working-class families, both employed and unemployed, have only a very small margin left for food, clothing and other necessaries. Among employed families, this margin per head per week may be as little as 3s. 8d. and 2s. 9d.; among unemployed families, 1s. 11d. and even 1s. 7d.

A recent enquiry carried out by a Committee of the Hull Community Council* into the budgets of poor families, some of them unemployed, showed that in Hull rent usually takes about one-quarter of the income, food two-fifths, clothes rather less than one-tenth, leaving one-quarter for fuel, light, cleaning materials, and sundries. Some families of four persons, i.e., man, wife, and two children, have thus only 11s. or 12s. a week for food. The diet in many cases, say the Committee, "shows a serious omission of nutritious food, especially for children, and cannot but result in serious ill-health."

The Sheffield Social Survey Committee† have worked out a "minimum needs standard," covering food, clothing, cleansing materials, light and fuel, below which a family in Sheffield may

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† "Week-end Review," March 4, 1933.
‡ "Annual Report for 1931.
* "Unemployment in Hull," 1933.
† "Survey of the Standard of Living," 1933.
be said to be living below the "poverty" line. According to this standard, the minimum working income per "man" should be 6s. 11d., or 24s. 11¾d. for a husband, wife, two school children and an infant. The estimate takes no account of rent, insurances, fares, holidays or conventional luxuries, and assumes that the family income is spent to the greatest advantage. The Committee report that even on this low basis: "Nearly one-fifth of the working-class families of Sheffield were either living below, or bordering on, the 'poverty’ line during the winter 1931-32, and that, even if all those available for work had been on full-time employment at current rates of wages, one in seventeen of the families would still have been in or on the margin of poverty." The proportion of children under 14 living below the "poverty" line was much greater than that of families, "nearly one-third of them being on or below the 'poverty’ line."

When we remember that, even in organized trades, the full-time wages of semi-skilled and unskilled workers have fallen in some industries to between 35s. and 40s. a week, the rates for agricultural labourers being as low as 30s. and even 28s. a week; that hundreds of thousands of workers are employed on short time; that nearly two million adult men are wholly unemployed; that the rates of unemployment benefit have been cut down to 23s. 3d. a week for a man and wife, plus 2s. for each dependent child; that few public assistance committees are willing to grant assistance to able-bodied families beyond this point; we are forced then to the conclusion that hundreds of thousands of children, unless they are receiving school meals, are living on diets which do not provide for "full natural growth," and may result in serious ill-health.

Evidence of Malnutrition.

The risk to health of underfeeding is all the more insidious in that deficiencies in the quality of diet may produce no immediately obvious results. "A diet," the Chief Medical Officer explains,* "may be very defective and yet, if sufficient in amount, may satisfy children's appetites leaving no craving behind, and may maintain apparently normal vigour for a considerable time. The inevitable results of such a diet are, however, ultimately to be seen in its failure to promote a full measure of growth, in lessened immunity to disease and possibly in the presence of some form of 'deficiency' disease."

It is then not surprising that, in spite of the depressed state of industry, the official figures do not show as yet any marked physical effect on the child population. Of children submitted to routine medical inspection in 1932, not more than 1.07 per cent.

were notified as suffering from malnutrition, though the percentage has risen slightly from .95 in 1929. These figures, however, do not tell the whole story. The School Medical Officer for London reports that, while the proportion of definitely ill-nourished children is only about one in 6,000, the proportion of children with subnormal nutrition was as high as 4.8 in 1931 and 4.9 in 1932. Considerably higher figures are revealed in the depressed areas. Evidence collected by a Committee of the Save the Children Fund* shows that the proportion of children with subnormal nutrition is 9.2 per cent. in Leeds, 13.0 per cent. in Merthyr Tydfil, 17.2 per cent. in Newcastle, 21.0 per cent. in Pontypridd. The School Medical Officer for Wolverhampton reports:† “Under this particular heading [malnutrition], there is a distinct increase in the figures, and it is doubtful whether the figures represent the whole of the picture.” Of the children notified in Wolverhampton as subnormal in nutrition, no less than 95 per cent. were found to be necessitous. “There appears,” the report continues, “to be established here a definite link between unemployment and malnutrition of children.” The Chief Medical Officer’s report for 1932 concludes:‡ “Though the medical reports recently received contain no signs of widespread physical degeneration, there is an undercurrent of forewarning as to the possibility of mental instability in the adult man, and prolonged under-nourishment of women and children.”

Nor is it certain that all the children suffering, in one degree or another, from malnutrition are discovered by the school doctor. From a recent medical examination carried out by Dr. Someville Hastings in West London, it appeared that, of 53 children belonging to 21 unemployed families, no less than 33 children showed some sign of malnutrition. Yet, of this number, four children only were receiving extra nourishment at school. The truth is, as Dr. Someville Hastings points out,* that the effects of under-nourishment are by no means easy to detect by physical examination. The signs may be readily missed unless they are specially looked for—which is rather a long business. Nor do they become evident at once. It is easy, moreover, to confuse the average with the normal, so that the doctor’s standard varies with a rise or fall in the proportion of ill-nourished children. Even where light weight is associated with chronic sepsis of the tonsils, teeth, ears, etc., the septic conditions may be secondary to food deficiency, which may be the more direct cause of the low weight.* The situation has been admirably summed up in a leading article in the “Medical Officer”:†

*“Unemployment and the Child,” 1933, p. 57.
†“The State of the Public Health,” 1932, p. 31.
‡“The State of the Public Health, 1932, p. 41.
*“The Lancet,” March 25th, 1933.
*“The Medical Officer,” April 29th, Dr. Dunstan, M.O.H., Lewes.
†April 29th, 1933.
“Unfortunately, we cannot make a sensational story out of malnutrition as it occurs to-day—it produces a slow silent rot of virility, vitality and fibre from which recovery soon becomes impossible. It takes a lot of ill-feeding to kill a child. It takes very little to sap his value seriously.”

THE PROVISION OF SCHOOL MEALS.

The 1906 Act.

The power to supply meals to children in ordinary elementary schools was first given to local education authorities under the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906. Before, however, any expense connected with the purchase of food can be incurred out of local rates, the authority must resolve that there are children attending school within the area who are unable, by reason of lack of food, to take full advantage of the education provided, and that voluntary funds are not available or are insufficient for the purpose. Out of 317 authorities, more than half have never at any time taken steps to exercise their powers. The total number of meals supplied in 1931 was about 48,000,000, of which 27,000,000 were milk meals, 16,000,000 were dinners, and the rest breakfasts, teas, cod-liver oil, etc. The number of children fed was 320,000, or less than 6 per cent. of the total elementary school population. About one-fifth of the cost of the food was recovered from the parents. In addition to meals supplied by authorities under the 1906 Act, some 800,000 children are receiving milk meals under a scheme established by the National Milk Publicity Council. Use in this case is made of the school organisation, but the milk is paid for by the parents.

The great weakness of the 1906 Act is its permissive character. Authorities are not obliged to operate it. The report of the Save the Children Fund Committee* makes it clear that, where a decline in the nutrition and health of school children is recorded it may be attributed to the fact that the provision of school meals has not kept pace with the need. The inadequacy, where it exists, is said to be due in general to one of two causes: either there is lack of initiative, or of a sense of responsibility, on the part of the authority, or the authority is so much impoverished that it is not possible to incur the expense of providing meals.

The Selection of Children to be Fed.

The practice of authorities in selecting children to be fed varies in a marked degree. Some authorities give meals to

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*“Unemployment and the Child,” 1933, p. 126.
all children for whom extra nourishment is advised by the school doctor. Others appear to be under the impression that they should only feed children actually classed as "malnourished." Other authorities again regard the service as a measure of public assistance, or an emergency expedient for meeting an industrial crisis. They make, therefore, their selection primarily on an "income" basis. It is usual in this case for an application to come from the parents, while the selection is made by the head-teacher or the care committee. As a rule "each case is decided on its merits," but a few authorities have adopted definite income scales below which a child is classed as "necessitous."

Thus, under the Sheffield scheme, where the weekly family income (after deducting rent and rates) does not exceed 6s. per head, dinners and breakfasts are given on six days a week, and during the holidays as well; and, where the family income is less than 4s. 6d. per head, teas are given in addition. Wolverhampton* allows free meals where the family income, after deducting rent and clubs is less than 6s. per head, and reduced charges are made where the family income is below 7s. per head. In Cardiff, dinners and milk are given free of charge where the family income, after payment of rent, is less than 7s. per head with two in family, (one child), 6s. per head with three or four in family, and 5s. with five in a family. Bradford gives free dinners where the family income, less rent and rates, falls below 23s. with three in family, rising to 66s. with twelve in family, and there is a graduated scale of reduced charges. Free breakfasts are given in addition in the case of very poor families.

The claim made by some authorities that only on an income basis can the needs of the situation be properly met has been disputed by the Board's medical officers, who think that this claim is unjustified.* In areas, it is said, which have adopted the method, considerable numbers of children who are either actually suffering from malnutrition, or are on the borderline, do not for various reasons get it. It is certain that many parents, through ignorance, a sense of false shame or—a very potent factor—because they fear that the cost of the food will be deducted against their public assistance allowance, do not apply for school meals. Where it is left to the care committee "to decide each case on its merits," not merely may individual committees hold widely different opinions as to what constitutes a sufficient family income, but they may have their own ideas as to parental responsibility and their own ways of enforcing it.

* "Unemployment and the Child," pp. 53-55.
The Chief Medical Officer recommends† that the selection of children to be fed should be made by the school doctor on physical criteria, borderline cases being fed as well as cases of actual malnutrition. Apart, however, from the fact that, as we have seen, the early signs of malnutrition are by no means easy to detect, the underfed child does not always come at once to the notice of the school doctor. Routine medical inspection takes place normally only three times in the course of the nine years of elementary school life. The doctor has to rely in the intervals very largely on the judgment of the teacher or care committee, who may be little qualified to observe any but obvious and urgent cases. The truth is that on any basis the selection of the under-nourished child is an extremely difficult business. The best results seem to be obtained where the selection takes place on either basis, and one method is used to supplement the other.

**Results of School Feeding.**

Serious as are the defects of the 1906 Act, where school meals have been provided, the benefit to the children can hardly be exaggerated. More than anything else, according to the Report of the Save the Children Fund Committee, school meals have prevented ill-health in children during the present crisis. Evidence collected by them from nineteen typical areas show a very close connection between school feeding and malnutrition. "It will be noted," the Report states,* "that in the majority of cases 1932 is worse than 1931. Only in four places—Oldham, Bradford, Leeds and Glasgow—are the malnutrition figures less in 1932 than in 1931, and only in Bradford and Oldham, where the increase in school meals has been greatest, is there a substantial improvement recorded in 1932 compared with 1931. In the case of Coventry, Manchester and Walsall, there is no change. In the other twelve places shown on the table there is deterioration."

Even more striking than the figures showing the connection between school feeding and malnutrition are the results of enquiries carried out by the Board's medical officers into the relation between diet and growth. School feeding is supplementary feeding. The addition to the dietary of foods commonly lacking in poor homes may indeed give in some cases as good results as a more complete meal. An experiment made by Dr. Corry Mann* under which supplementary rations were added to the ordinary dietary of a larger institution showed that:

(1) Sixty-one boys receiving the ordinary diet only gained an average of 3.85lbs. per boy and grew an average of 1.84 inches in twelve months.

† *Ibid*, p. 69.
* "Health of the School Child," 1925, p. 117.
(2) Thirty boys receiving, in addition to the ordinary diet, a ration of protein daily which about doubled their consumption of "animal" protein, gained an average of 4.01 lbs. in weight and grew an average of 1.76 inches in twelve months.

(3) Forty-one boys receiving, in addition to the ordinary diet, one pint of milk daily gained an average of 6.98 lbs. in weight, and grew an average of 2.63 inches.

Dr. Corry Mann experimented at the same time with supplementary rations of New Zealand butter, castor sugar, vegetables, margarine, and fresh watercress. Such additions all resulted in increases of weight, but, except in the case of the butter ration, there was little or no increase in height.

The value of milk as a supplementary diet has been abundantly proved. In an experiment conducted by Dr. J. B. Orr*, four groups of children were selected, one group receiving whole milk, a second separated milk, a third a biscuit ration of the caloric value of the milk, while a fourth group acted as controls. Taking all the children (1,157) together and dividing them into milk-fed and non-milk-fed groups, it appeared that there was an average increase in height of 23.5 per cent., and in weight of 45.37 per cent., in favour of the milk-fed groups over the non-milk-fed groups. The evidence of school medical officers further shows that, where supplementary milk meals are given, not merely is there a general improvement in weight and height, but school attendance is more regular, the children are more alert and energetic, and the improved physical condition makes them more attentive and receptive of school teaching. This is specially noticeable in the latter periods of the afternoon. Teachers also testify to a greater propensity to mischief.†

Where, however, as a result of underfeeding, growth has already been impaired, there is a limit to what can afterwards be done in order to repair the damage. "At the start," states the School Medical Officer for Rotherham in describing the results of careful observation of 815 children receiving milk meals, "the malnourished children were on the average, one inch below the normal child in height and three pounds lighter in weight. The immediate effect of the milk was to cause these children to increase in both height and weight faster than the normal child; after eleven months of milk feeding the deficiency had been reduced by some 40 per cent. as regards height and weight. A further eleven months of feeding, however, produced no further closing of the gap; the children increased in height and weight, but showed no tendency to make good the remainder of the gap."

† Ibid, 1931, p. 110.
Some indication of what may be done by systematic good feeding appears in a comparative study of the physical development of boys at the age of fifteen in four well-known public schools and in a South London riverside district.* This showed that the calorie value of the public school diets varied between 3,325 and 3,819, compared with a calorie value of 1,935 to 2,421 for the industrial district diets, the public school diets being superior especially in the proportion of fat and "animal" protein. There was a difference of 15 to 20 lbs. in the weight of the typical public school boy and the boy of the same age coming from an elementary school.

All the evidence points to the same conclusion. It is not enough to feed the "necessitous" or debilitated child. To achieve "full natural growth," it is imperative that the essentials of a satisfactory diet should be assured throughout the period of childhood and adolescence.

THE ECONOMICS OF "COMMUNITY" FEEDING.

"After Bread, Education."

Nearly thirty years ago, a Committee of the Fabian Society urged* that all children, destitute or not, should be fed, and fed without charge, at the expense of the State or municipality. The first need, they argued, of a people is food; without proper feeding instruction is useless, and worse than useless—it is indefensible cruelty. Feeding is of infinitely greater importance than education for, in the last resort, you can do something with a race that, however ignorant, is healthy and physically well developed; with anemic degenerates you can do nothing, though you offer them all the schools in the world.

It is not enough, they declared, to feed the destitute only. For it is by no means certain—and since then the contention has been abundantly proved—that this way the children who most need food will get it. It may be very unfortunate that parents should feel their own sense of dignity before the well-being of their off-spring, but it is an indubitable fact that a great many of them do. Few out of the many parents whose children do not get sufficient nourishment are willing to write themselves down as "necessitous," and those who do may not be those who most need and most deserve assistance. The method further leads to a very undesirable distinction between those children who are fed out of public funds and those who are not. The provision of universal free meals does not destroy parental responsibility, but only communalises it. If you feed destitute children only, there may be something in the argument

* "Health of the School Child," 1927.
* "After Bread, Education," Fabian Tract, 1905.
that you are relieving the parent of part of his responsibility, but, if all citizens pay for the provision of meals through rates and taxes, direct and indirect, and all parents can send their children freely to eat the meals, then they are simply providing for their children by co-operative methods, and there is no more interference with parental responsibility than if all the parents in a particular block of tenements agree to start a common kitchen. The “communal” meal, provided under proper discipline in humane surroundings has, indeed, a civilising effect upon the children, who learn what a dinner ought to be and, when they grow up, make all the better fathers and mothers in consequence. To suggest that school meals “break up the home” is absurd. The Eton or Harrow boy is kept at school, not merely for meals, but for the whole of the term. Yet no one fears for the home life of the plutocracy!

These and other arguments used by the Fabian Committee of 1905 are as sound to-day as they were a generation ago.

**Prevention is Cheaper than Cure.**

The great opposition, however, to the Fabian scheme came, as it comes to-day, from those who maintain that its cost would be ruinous. Undoubtedly, the expense would be considerable, but sooner or later, in one way or another, it is the State which must pay for underfeeding its children. If a child grows up underfed, the chances are heavy that it grows up a weakling and inefficient worker, or falls the victim of disease. What we save to-day on food, we are likely to spend many times over to-morrow on medical treatment and special schools, on sickness benefit and hospitals, on poor relief and charities, to say nothing of the lowered efficiency of the workers and the loss of working days.

Sir John Bray, in his presidential address to the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants (1931), estimated that we spend nearly £200,000,000 per annum on the prevention and treatment of disease and combating their results. In addition to the cost of the prevention and cure of disease, there is the loss of productive power that ill-health causes. A very conservative estimate by Sir Francis Fremantle, M.P., puts the total annual cost to the nation of ill-health at £300,000,000. Less than one-twelfth of this sum would go a very long way in school feeding.

**The Economy of the “Community” Feeding.**

It is wiser to spend on food than on sickness, but this is no reason to spend on food extravagantly. From the standpoint of good housekeeping, it is plain that “community” feeding has over the family meal many advantages. The objection raised by
some people, who would prefer to cater for themselves, or at least to choose their own caterer, does not apply to children. A child does not in any case determine his own diet. Not merely have public authorities access to expert knowledge and advice which is not generally open to the private housewife, but they have opportunities of buying in the wholesale market good food cheaply which are obviously closed to her. Her facilities for buying may, indeed, be extremely limited, and confined in practice to those of the small local shop. Nor has she always the necessary facilities for cooking. Cooking is a highly-skilled craft. Every mother does not take to it naturally. There can be no question that, where food is prepared on a large scale in up-to-date kitchens, with the aid of a trained staff and modern equipment, it is possible to provide a variety and excellence of cooking which is quite beyond the reach of the small household, and yet to make substantial economies in materials and fuel. The growing use in working-class homes of tinned and semi-cooked foods, which are seldom the ideal diet for children, must at least partly be connected with the lack of proper cooking conveniences in small flats and tenements, and the excessive cost of fuel, which is bought and used in small quantities.

Reference has been made in a previous section to the urgent need of children to drink more milk. We are told, on the other hand, that too much milk is produced in this country. Yet the retail price of milk is more than half again as high to-day as it was before the war. About one-half of this price goes to the dairy who distributes the milk between arrival at its place of destination and its delivery to the housewife; the other half goes to the farmer. It is plain that the farmer fares less well than the dairy, but he does not in this case fare so badly. His trouble is that he sells to the dairy something less than two-thirds of his total product. His surplus he must sell to the manufacturer, who is only prepared to pay him one-half, or even one-third, of the price that he gets from the dairy. If a new market could be found for liquid milk, and the milk delivered wholesale direct from the farm or dairy, to the school, there is clearly here a margin for a substantial reduction of price, which would yet leave a fair profit to the farmer.

Nor is it a matter of price only. Milk is a highly perishable food and one which is quickly contaminated; it may be the carrier of tubercle or other infectious disease. As the great consumer of milk in the district, the authority would be in a favourable position to secure, not merely a cheap, but a clean and pure supply.

There are other excellent foods, of which this country has abundant supplies, but too little use of them is made in children's dietaries. Many common kinds of fish come within this category. The herring is a "fat" fish of exceptional dietetic value, but its place in working-class dietaries is now being very largely taken
by the less nourishing and more expensive "fish and chips." Fresh fish very quickly deteriorates, while supplies may fluctuate wildly from one day to another. A glut of fish at the port is a common occurrence. Costs of distribution are high in consequence. Between the port price and the price charged to the housewife, there may be a difference of several hundred per cent. An enterprising authority should be able, not merely to buy fish at wholesale prices, but to come to some arrangement with the fishing industry to take at short notice exceptional catches of suitable kinds of fish on terms satisfactory to both sides.

Green vegetables and salads contain properties essential to healthy growth. There is no shortage of these foods in the country, but for one reason and another our children do not eat them in anything like sufficient quantities. They are bulky and, therefore, costly to handle. Except from street barrows, they are not cheap to buy at retail prices. In the smaller and less expensive shops, they are not always too fresh, and in the winter months sometimes hard to get. Yet the grower may get practically nothing for them, or find a difficulty in selling them at all. Here is another opportunity for wholesale deliveries from the growers or dealers to the school, which should enable the authorities to obtain ample and cheap supplies. Some schools in country districts, which have established school canteens, have adopted the practice of growing their own vegetables. Costs per meal in this case have been greatly reduced, and the practice could be followed in suitable circumstances.

It was reported the other day in the Press that a valuable cargo of oranges had been dumped into the sea because, since tariffs were imposed, it did not "pay" the dealers to handle them. Where dealers fear to tread, the authority should be able to step in. The tax, which is prohibitive to the private trader, could be recovered by the authority from the Exchequer, into which it is paid, in the form of grant. What the Exchequer lost on the swings, it would gain on the roundabouts, and no harm would have been done to anyone.

**A New Market for Agriculture.**

Apart from economics to be made in the buying and preparation of food, school feeding could be used to play a new important part in developing the food resources of the country. "It is to the market," the Minister of Agriculture has declared,* "that both the consumer and producer must for the present bend their attention. . . . It would be black treachery to place men on the land without markets for their product." Our children lack food, our farmers lack markets. Cannot the two be brought together?

Milk is a food which this country is eminently fitted to produce. We produce already on the lowest estimate about 1,200 million gallons of milk a year, but we do not consume in liquid form more than about 700 million gallons. The pressing need of the industry is thus an outlet for fresh milk. The importance of the school as a prospective market has even gained recognition in the House of Commons. So good a Conservative M.P. as Sir Edward Grigg has placed milk meals for school children in the forefront of measures which would restore prosperity to this country. A new market for 80,000,000 gallons of milk a year, he has declared, would "transform the problem of the milk industry."*

The problem of the fishing industry again is one of marketing. In spite of a shifting of demand from the herring, a decline in the consumption of white fish has been evident since 1931. The amount of fish that our trawling industry can market is known to be substantially below its productive capacity. The home consumption of herrings has declined since before the war by about one-third, while a marked contraction has taken place in exports. When the fishing fleet assembled for the East Anglian autumn fishing last year, it numbered 150 fewer vessels than in the previous year. On many occasions in 1932, the price of sprats fell so low that fishing was abandoned. It may be estimated that the addition of fish meals as a weekly item in children's diets, extended to the present school population, would create a new demand for at least another million cwts. of fish a year. In the absence of an expanding home market, the present "Eat More Fish" campaign is for the most part mere waste of money. No country could be better suited than our own to grow green vegetables. There are thousands of unemployed workers ready to grow them. A new market for green vegetables, extending to every town and village, would give to the Minister of Agriculture the opportunity for which he is waiting to place men on the land. The children, meanwhile, would have acquired a taste, which they would not afterwards lose, for fresh wholesome home-grown food.

The home farmer has a monopoly of the fresh milk market. It is otherwise with meat, cheese, butter, etc., which are important items in children's diets, but these are also foods that this country is admirably adapted to produce. According to high medical authority,* no matter how carefully food is chilled or preserved, the resulting product is inferior to the fresh material. For this reason alone, it is urged that encouragement should be given to the consumption of home-grown produce. This is not the place to discuss how far it is wise, or practicable, to give pro-

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* Dr. Alexander Lander. Address to Agricultural Section of British Association, September 6th, 1933.
tection to the home farmer against foreign competition. It may, however, be pointed out that, so long as the Exchequer continues to make grants in aid of local expenditure on school meals, it is open to the Government to bring pressure to bear on authorities to buy, so far as possible, only home-grown produce and to make good, if necessary a difference of price. Such a subsidy to agriculture would anyway be a much more sensible plan than the present subsidies amounting to some £8,000,000 per annum granted by the Government to the growing of wheat and of sugar-beet!

The Government's present agricultural policy, which is more concerned to make farming "pay" than to develop the food resources of the country, has done nothing to expand markets. It is aimed instead at restricting supplies in order to raise prices. While tariffs and quotas have been imposed on foreign foods, new machinery has been set up designed to assist the home farmer to limit production at home. The effects are now beginning to be felt. We pay more for our food, but we buy less of it. The children are worse off, and the farmers no better off than before.

THE OUTLINE OF A SCHEME.

Amendment of the 1906 Act.

The Provision of Meals Act, 1906, has never at any time been accepted by socialists, except as a half-way measure. When the Act was passed, school feeding was at the stage of experiment, but after nearly thirty years of experience its value has been proved beyond all dispute. While there may be practical difficulties in the way of establishing all at once a universal scheme of school feeding, the time is clearly overdue when further steps should be taken to meet the more urgent needs of the position. The first step to this end would be a revision of the 1906 Act.

The weakness, as we have seen, of the existing law is its permissive character. Authorities are not obliged to operate it. In order, moreover, to do so, they must first of all declare that there are "necessitous" children in the area and voluntary funds are not forthcoming to feed them. Where the parents are able to pay, they are under a legal obligation to recover a part, or the whole, of the cost. The time has now come when these conditions should be removed. Authorities should be granted full and unconditional powers in respect of provision of meals, and the duty further imposed on them to secure that no child attending a state-aided school should lack the essentials of a satisfactory diet.

Milk Meals for All.

The case for supplementary milk meals, and the urgent need to extend the present provision, has been fully discussed in
previous sections. Under the scheme instituted by the National Milk Publicity Council, a daily ration of one-third of a pint of milk is supplied to any child whose parents have agreed to pay for it. The milk allowance, admittedly, is inadequate, but the Council are not at the moment in a position to increase it. Experience shows that few parents are willing or able to pay more than 1d. per day, and the dairies do not see their way to supplying more milk at the price. The choice of a dairy rests with the teachers, who are responsible for serving out the milk, and also for collecting the pennies from the parents. The milk is delivered by the dairy in bottles, one bottle for each child, out of which he drinks his portion. A minimum of trouble is thus caused to the teacher, and practically no outlay is needed on the part of the authority. The great obstacle in the way of extending the scheme is the difficulty of collecting pennies from poor families.

The proposal is that this scheme should now be extended to all state-aided schools, and authorities required to supply, free of charge, not less than half-a-pint of milk per day to every child under the age of sixteen. In the case of debilitated children, an additional half-pint could be given on the advice of the school doctor. Milk meals would thus be made a part of ordinary school routine. Apart from the objections already discussed to dividing the children into “necessitous” and “non-necessitous” groups, the collecting of pennies in a compulsory scheme would be almost impossible to carry out.

If milk meals are to be provided on a large scale, some inconvenience may be caused to farmers and dairies, who have to adjust their supplies to the days when the schools are closed, and this in turn would be reflected in the price. For this reason, as well as from the standpoint of health, it would be desirable that milk meals should be continued so far as possible on Saturdays and during the holidays. It is not a case for compulsion; but, where parents gave notice that they wished their child to receive milk meals on other than school days, the authority should be required to make the necessary arrangements at the school or some other convenient centre. It is the poorer families who may be expected to take the greater advantage of an opportunity of this kind. In the case of better-off families, any falling off during the holidays in the school demand would tend to be compensated to some extent by increased consumption at such times in the homes.

NOTE.—Children under five not attending school are outside the reference of the present discussion, but it is plain that all the arguments in favour of the provision of milk meals are equally strong in their case. The necessary arrangements could be made by the local public health authority, and the milk distributed through the infant welfare centres.
Children over Eleven and the School Canteen.

Half-a-pint of milk is estimated to supply about one-third of the total first-class protein requirements of an average child. The value of such a meal as a supplementary diet would obviously be greater in relation to total requirements in the case of younger than of older children, whose dietetic needs approximate to, or may even exceed, those of adults. It is also at the stage of adolescence, when growth is accelerated and the onset of puberty imposes an exceptional drain on vitality, that the results of underfeeding are likely to be most serious. The cost to the parents of maintaining the dependent family bears at the same time each year more heavily as the children grow older, and relief to the family income is at this point most needed. The high incidence of defect discovered in working boys aged 14-16—in London, a recent enquiry into boys’ clubs showed a figure of 75 per cent.—cannot be wholly unconnected with deficiencies of diet in earlier years, and the consequent absence of physical reserves to fall back upon. Malnutrition is by no means unknown in secondary schools. In London, 7.2 per cent. of secondary school boys and 12.2 per cent. of girls are reported as subnormal in nutrition.* The figures are actually higher than those for London children in elementary schools. From the physiological standpoint, there is thus a special case as regards adolescents for the provision of something more than milk meals.

The concentration of children over eleven in separate senior of “central” schools, which may be situated at some distance from the children’s homes, has at the same time created in many areas a new problem. Where the distance between the school and the home compels large numbers of children to remain at school for the midday meal, authorities have for practical reasons been obliged to establish school canteens, which provide some form of hot dinner. The school canteen is already a well-known feature of the secondary school, and many authorities to-day, in building new senior or “central” schools, include a kitchen and dining-hall as part of the normal equipment. These canteens are run for the most part on a voluntary and self-supporting basis. The cost of the food is charged to the parents and, in secondary schools, costs of cooking and service as well. For this reason, full use of the school canteen is only made by children of a relatively well-to-do class. The poorer children either struggle to get home for dinner, or else they bring their sandwiches to school and buy at most a cup of hot coffee or cocoa. It is customary for the teachers to take turns in supervising the school meal, while the children wait for the most part on themselves. The need for supervision and attendance, which are

important factors in the cost of school dinners, and may involve a heavy burden on the teachers, is obviously much less in the case of older children than it is in that of little ones, many of whom require constant personal attention. Experience shows that meals provided directly through the school organisation are in general much more satisfactory in character than those contracted for through an outside agency.

It is, therefore, proposed that authorities should be required to establish school canteens in all schools or departments for children over eleven, and to supply dinners, free of charge, on each school day, as part of the ordinary school routine. The scheme should be extended to grant-aided secondary schools as well as to schools coming under the elementary heading. Where fees are charged, the cost of the food supplied could, if desired, be added to the fee. The dinner should be required to contain, as advised by the Chief Medical Officer,* not less than two-thirds of the child’s total requirements of “animal” protein. A child over eleven receiving school dinners as well as milk meals would thus be assured his full supply of “first-class” protein.

Provision for Necessitous and Debilitated Children.

The universal provision of milk meals, together with dinners for children over eleven, would go at least a long way to make good the present deficiencies in children’s dietaries. The younger children coming from normal working-class homes would not be entitled under the scheme to school dinners, but, in large families especially, they would gain to some extent indirectly from the fewer mouths to be fed at home. The great merit of the scheme is that it would place school feeding for the first time on a proper basis as part of the ordinary school routine, and remove it definitely from the sphere of mere public assistance or medical relief.* Special provision would, however, still have to be made for the poorest families. The remedy for unemployment, or for low wages, is not the “soup kitchen,” but so long as these evils persist it is obvious that such children must be properly fed, and also the child referred by the school doctor as subnormal in nutrition.

The best plan here seems to be that the Board of Education should prescribe an income scale, to be based on the minimum cost of a satisfactory diet (say 6s. per “man” value at current prices), below which authorities would be required, on applica-

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*It is interesting to note that in 1922 the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women’s Organisation put forward proposals for school dinners, and other allowances in kind, as part of a general scheme of family endowment. This scheme was subsequently adopted by the Labour Women’s Conference.
tion from the parents, to provide, in addition to milk meals or other meals supplied as part of the ordinary school routine, school dinners and, if necessary, school breakfasts and teas, free of charge, to all children, irrespective of age, in need of them. Such an income scale may be expected, under present conditions, to cover the great majority of unemployed families, who have no means of subsistence other than unemployment benefit or transitional payment, and also a proportion of employed families living below the "poverty" line. It would be a definite advantage of the scheme that the school meal, unlike any form of money allowance, could not be diverted to the payment of rent, or to any other purpose. The full value received would go in extra nourishment for the child. Children should not be debarred from enjoying school meals because their parents are receiving poor law relief. The Government's present policy, which discourages the provision of meals to such families, except in special circumstances, should be reversed. In the case of very poor families, it would be necessary that dinners should be given on Saturdays and during the holidays as well as on school days.

The periodical physical examination of the children should at the same time be made as thorough as possible, and authorities required to feed borderline cases as well as cases of actual malnutrition. Extra nourishment ordered by the school doctor should be given without reference to the family income, and in such form as he may prescribe. The cost in this case, if desired, could be recovered from well-to-do parents.

The Cost of the Scheme.

The cost of carrying out the scheme would depend on many variable factors, and can only, therefore, be very roughly estimated. It would be determined, on the one hand, by the number of children to be fed each day; on the other hand, by the price of food and the ability of authorities to buy cheaply in the wholesale market.

The total number of children in state-aided schools, who would be entitled under the scheme to receive milk meals, is approximately 6,000,000, of whom about 2,000,000 are children over eleven who would receive dinners in addition. The latter figure includes, however, some 400,000 children over eleven in secondary schools, trade schools, etc., of whom about one-half are fee-payers. Assuming that the parents in this case would continue to pay the cost of the dinner, either directly or in the form of increased fees, the number of children over eleven who would receive dinners, free of charge, may be estimated at 1,800,000.
The number of "necessitous" children, for whom additional provision would be required, is not so easy to determine. It would obviously diminish with a return to prosperity. There are to-day (September 1933) some 2,000,000 adult men on the unemployment registers, equivalent to about 22.5 of the insured population. On the assumption that the proportion of school children, whose fathers are unemployed, to the total school population is about the same as the percentage of unemployment among insured male persons, the number of children belonging to unemployed families would be roughly 1,200,000.

These children, however, would anyway be entitled under the scheme to milk meals, and children over eleven to dinners besides. This would leave 800,000 children under eleven, of whom at least one-half, or 400,000, may be expected to apply for dinners. To this number must again be added some thousands of employed families living below the "poverty" line, or where the breadwinner is working half-time, say, another 100,000 children under eleven, for whom it would be necessary to provide dinners. The needs of the "debilitated" child would, in great measure, be met by the general provision of milk meals, together with dinners for adolescents. The number of "debilitated" children under eleven (other than those belonging to "necessitous" families) may thus be expected to be relatively small. The cost of the meal could, moreover, be recovered in this case from well-to-do parents.

No exact calculation can be formed of the number of children who would require meals on Saturdays and during the holidays. For the purpose of a rough estimate, it may be assumed that about one-third of all children, or some 2,000,000, would apply for milk meals, and about one-half of "necessitous" children, or some 250,000, would apply for dinners on other than school days.

Costs per meal would vary mainly with fluctuations in food prices. Under the present arrangement between the National Milk Publicity Council and the dairies, the price of milk supplied to the schools has been fixed at 6d. a gallon. The price is about the same as the average charge made to the private householder, and 1d. more than the charge made to hotels and restaurants which buy milk at contract prices, but the price does not here provide for costs of bottling, etc., such as are included in the school price. In view, however, of the wide margin which exists between the dairy price and the price received by the farmer (between 1½d. and 2½d. a quart in the case of surplus milk), the authority should certainly be able to contract for large supplies of milk at the hotel price of 5d. a quart, or 1½d. per half-pint, including all costs of bottling, etc. There is no reason to suppose that costs of bottling would be greater in the case of half-pint than of third-pint bottles.
Costs per meal in the case of school dinners vary widely from one area to another. Thus, London reckons the cost of food alone at 4d. per meal. In some places, where each school caters for itself, the cost is 5d.; while other schools, those especially which grow their own vegetables, have brought down the cost to 2d., and even to 1¼d. In order, however, to secure that the meal should contain a full share of "animal" protein, it would be wise to take an average figure of 4d. Some further adjustment would be needed to meet differences in the food requirements of older and younger children. Assuming an average food cost of 4d. per dinner, the adjusted figure could be stated at 4¼d. for older children and 3½d. for younger children. These figures take no account of possible reductions in food prices, where the authority may be able to deal directly with the producer.

To the cost of food something more must be added for costs of cooking, fuel, etc., and service. In London, where wages are relatively high, these costs are estimated at about 2d. per dinner, making an average total cost of 6d. per dinner. Costs of service, however, could be substantially reduced in the case of school canteens for children over eleven, who may be expected for the most part to wait on themselves. Costs of cooking, fuel, etc., vary again to some extent with the number of children to be fed, and the regularity with which the dinners are supplied. An all-round total cost of 6d. per dinner would be a not unreasonable estimate. Of this sum, expenses other than food would represent about one-quarter as regards older children supplied regularly with dinners, and rather more than two-thirds in the case of younger children receiving dinners only from time to time.

On the above basis, the cost of the scheme may be stated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk meals supplied to 6,000,000 children at 1¼d. per meal on five days a week for 44 weeks</td>
<td>£6,875,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra milk meals supplied to 2,000,000 at 1¼d. per meal on Saturdays and during the holidays</td>
<td>£958,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinners supplied to 1,800,000 children over eleven at 6d. per meal on five days a week for 44 weeks</td>
<td>£9,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinners supplied to 500,000 necessitous children under eleven at 6d. per meal on five days a week for 44 weeks</td>
<td>£2,750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra dinners supplied to 250,000 necessitous children at 6d. per meal on Saturdays and during the holidays</td>
<td>£575,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£21,091,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How the Money Should be Raised.

Under the present grant formula, education authorities are able to recover from the Board of Education one-half of their total net expenditure on school meals. The cost is thus borne equally between local rates and the Exchequer.

The larger the volume of public expenditure the more important it is that the burden should be equitably spread. Local rates to-day bear very unevenly over the country. They press lightly on rich areas, but heavily on poor areas. Thus, in well-to-do residential resorts, such as Bournemouth, Eastbourne, or Hove, rates in the £ are 7s., 7s. 6d., 7s. 11d. respectively, while in poverty-stricken industrial areas such as Rhondda, Caerphilly, or Merthyr Tydfil, they are as high as 23s., 23s. 6d., even 27s. 7d. The result is that, where the need for school meals is greatest, the authority can least afford to provide them. Rates bear again unfairly on households within the same area. They are, in effect, a tax on house-room. Large families pay more than small families. There is no necessary relation between rates and family income. Unlike income-tax, rates are a direct charge on industry and commerce. They have to be paid before a profit can be made, or if no profit is made at all. This unfairness has, in fact, been recognised by Parliament, and substantial relief given in recent years to manufacturers and farmers, but at the expense of the householder and the shopkeeper. High rates are at least a contributory factor in the high level of retail prices, which bear again more heavily on small incomes than on large ones. In any but the richest areas, a rise in rates would be a much more serious affair than an increase in national taxation.

It is, therefore, proposed that grants from the Exchequer in respect of school meals should be raised from 50 per cent. to 80 per cent. of the total net expenditure. In order to avoid extravagance on the part of local authorities, as well as to secure the greatest measure of efficiency, it would be advisable that the Board should fix a maximum cost per meal (subject to price fluctuations) and a minimum content. It would be a definite advantage that school dietaries should be brought under the more direct supervision of the Board’s medical staff. The marked improvement in recent years in the dietaries in children’s residential homes may be very largely attributed to the guidance coming from the Central Department.

Conclusion.

Great as would be the gain to the children from the scheme and, ultimately, to the nation as a whole, it may yet appear to the taxpayer, who has to pay the bill, that a sum of £21,000,000 a year is a lot of money to be spent on the feeding of school
children. We are, most of us, creatures of habit. We are accustomed, as taxpayers, to spend largely on some things, say, wars and war debts, and we do so as a matter of course. We are not accustomed, as taxpayers, to spend largely on other things, say, education and the school medical services, and to do so seems to us shocking. It is then primarily a matter of a change of fashion.

A sum of £21,000,000 is no doubt a lot of money to be spent on anything. Yet it is only a fraction—hardly more than 0.5 per cent.—of the total national income. It is roughly equivalent to, say, another 4½d. on the income-tax, or an all-round rise of 6d. a week on the earnings of all occupied persons. We are, after all, a rich, even an extravagant, people. In our more frivolous moods, we do not hesitate to spend in hundreds of millions of pounds on, say, tobacco and drink, joy-rides and cinemas, sports, gambling, cosmetics, and such-like adult indulgencies. Nor does it appear that there is a particular virtue in not spending. The economists teach, on the contrary, that the purpose of money is to spend it. That is, they say, what money is for. We may, of course, spend wisely or foolishly, productively or wastefully, for public or private purposes. We may be the richer, or the poorer, in consequence, though hardly so poor as we should be from not spending at all. It is up to those who are opposed to school feeding on the ground of expense to explain how money could be better or more productively spent than on "the slow unfolding in growth of the best potential qualities, physical and mental, inherent in the child at birth."
SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS.

The main proposals of the scheme may be summed up as follows:—

(1) The Provision of Meals Act, 1906, should be amended so that authorities would be granted full and unconditional powers in respect of school meals, and the duty further imposed on them of securing that no child in a state-aided school should lack the essentials of a satisfactory diet.

(2) Authorities should be required to establish a system of milk meals in all state-aided schools, and to supply, free of charge, not less than half-a-pint of milk, on each school day, as part of the ordinary school routine. Milk meals should be supplied on Saturdays and during the holidays on notice being given by the parents that they wished the child to receive them.

(3) Authorities should be required to establish school canteens in all schools or departments for children over eleven, and to supply dinners, free of charge, on each school day as part of the ordinary school routine. The provision should be extended to grant-aided secondary schools as well as to senior schools and departments coming under the elementary heading. In the case of fee-paying parents, the cost of the meals could, if desired, be added to the fee.

(4) The Board of Education should prescribe an income-limit, based on the minimum cost of a satisfactory diet, below which authorities should be required, on application from the parents, to provide, in addition to milk meals and other meals given as part of the ordinary routine, school dinners, and if necessary, breakfasts and teas, free of charge, to all children, irrespective of age, in need of them. In the case of very poor families meals should be given to "necessitous" children on Saturdays and during the holidays as well as on school days.

(5) Authorities should be required to provide extra nourishment in all cases, including borderline cases, where the child is referred by the school doctor as subnormal in nutrition, without reference to the family income, and in such way as he may prescribe. The cost in this case could be recovered from well-to-do families.

(6) The Board's grant in respect of school meals should be raised from 50 per cent. to 80 per cent. of the total net expenditure. The Board should fix a maximum cost per meal and a minimum content.
THE FABIAN SOCIETY.
11, DARTMOUTH STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.

The Fabian Society is supported by the voluntary subscription of its members and friends, and the extent of its operations is limited by the amount of the funds at its disposal.

The chief object to which the Society devotes its resources is the education of the people in political, economic and social subjects. To effect this purpose it must in the first place educate itself by the discussion of those problems which from time to time appear ripe for solution. Its members therefore undertake the study of such problems and lay the results before the Society, where they are considered from various points of view. Finally, the conclusions adopted or generally approved by the members are published, usually in pamphlet form, and by this means made available for the information of all. More than 200 such pamphlets have been issued to date.

The Society further endeavors to promote social amelioration by the dissemination of information about existing institutions, in order that better use may be made of the powers already possessed by local administrative authorities, now too often neglectful of their obligations.

The same ends are sought to be attained by means of circulating libraries supplied to Workmen's Clubs, Co-operative Societies, Trade Unions, and similar bodies; by the publication of lists of best books on social and political subjects; and by the means of the Summer School held each year for members and others.

The Society also at times engages trained lecturers to give courses of lectures during the winter months on social politics to working-class and other organisations.

The members of the Society, who control its policy, are Socialists: that is to say, are committed to the theory of the probable direction of economic evolution which is now often called Collectivism. But much of the activity of the Society must meet with the approval of all those interested in Social Reform, many of whom are not concerned to adopt a definite social ideal, and could not therefore apply for membership in the Society. To all such we venture to appeal for help for the Society's educational work.

Any who are willing to assist are invited to join the Society as members or associates or to subscribe to the funds without becoming members. Associates are required to subscribe not less than 10/- yearly. Such subscriptions may be allocated to any branch of the Society's work which may be selected. Subscribers of sums not less than 5s. a year can attend the ordinary meetings of the Society, except those called for private business, and will receive Fabian News, its monthly journal, together with all the publication issued to members.

Full particulars of all the undertakings of the Society are recorded in the Annual Report, which includes an audited account of the receipts and expenditure. This Report, and the other publications of the Society, can be obtained of the Secretary, who will be glad to give any other information desired, and to send forms of application for membership or associate membership, if requested.
THE FABIAN SOCIETY.
Established 1883.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

BASIS.

The Fabian Society consists of Socialists. It therefore aims at the reorganisation of Society by the emancipation of Land and Industrial Capital from individual ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit. In this way only can the natural and acquired advantages of the country be equitably shared by the whole people.

The Society accordingly works for the extinction of private property in land, with equitable consideration of established expectations, and due provision as to the tenure of the home and the homestead; for the transfer to the community, by constitutional methods, of all such industries as can be conducted socially; and for the establishment, as the governing consideration in the regulation of production, distribution and service, of the common good instead of private profit.

The Society is a constituent of the Labour Party and of the International Socialist Congress; but it takes part freely in all constitutional movements, social, economic and political, which can be guided towards its own objects. Its direct business is (a) the propaganda of Socialism in its application to current problems; (b) investigation and discovery in social, industrial, political and economic relations; (c) the working out of Socialist principles in legislation and administrative reconstruction; (d) the publication of the results of its investigations and their practical lessons.

The Society, believing in equal citizenship of men and women in the fullest sense, is open to persons irrespective of sex, race or creed, who commit themselves to its aims and purposes as stated above, and undertake to promote its work.

SUBSCRIPTION.

A fixed subscription, equal for each member, is not desirable in the Fabian Society, as it would press unequally on members with widely different incomes, and would have to be unreasonably high. Members are therefore left free to subscribe according to their means and it is suggested that a voluntary income tax of ½ per cent. (10s. for each £100 of the member’s income) will meet the case of fairly well-to-do people. The Executive Committee, however, desire to point out to candidates that a subscription of less than ten shillings per annum involves a loss to the Society.

I accept the above Basis, desire to become a member, and enclose as my first subscription.

Signature

Name and Address (state of Mrs. or Miss)

Parliamentary Constituency

Occupation........................................ Date.............

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To the Secretary of the Fabian Society, 17 Dartmouth St., Westminster, London S.W.1.

Signature of the above form and payment of a subscription are the only preliminaries to election.

ASSOCIATES.—Anyone in sympathy with the objects of the Society, but unwilling to become a member, can join as an associate.

Extract from the Rule relating to Election of Members.

Every candidate for election shall make a contribution to the funds of the Society before his election; the amount will be returned to him if he is not elected.
SELECTED FABIAN PUBLICATIONS.


THE COMMONSENSE OF MUNICIPAL TRADING. By Bernard Shaw. 1/6 net; postage 2d.

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS. By R. B. Suthees. 1/6 net, postage 2d.

THE DECAY OF CAPITALIST CIVILISATION. By Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Cloth, 4/6; paper, 2/6; postage 4d.


FABIAN ESSAYS. (1931 Edition). 2/6; postage, 4d.

KARL MARX. By Harold J. Laski. 1/-; post free, 1/1.

TOWARDS SOCIAL DEMOCRACY? By Sidney Webb. 1s. n. post. 1d.

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Tracts, each 16 to 24 pp., price 1d., or 9d. per dozen, unless otherwise stated.

Leaflets, 4 pp., each, price 1d. for three copies, 2d. per 100, or 9d. per 1000.


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