

# NATURE

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## SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

THE interdepartmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services under Sir William Beveridge's chairmanship, set up to survey the existing schemes of social insurance and allied services, including workmen's compensation, and to make recommendations, the report of which is expected shortly, is dealing with a problem that closely concerns one of the great purposes of the nations now fighting for freedom and for a civilization based on respect for human personality. The idea of social security springs from the deep desire of men to free themselves from the fear of want. To realize this idea the causes of insecurity must be removed wherever possible, and the individual assured of that protection against the common risks of life which he cannot provide by his own unaided efforts.

The fact that the dangers and uncertainties of war stimulate many of the highest virtues of individual men and women should not lead us to underrate the great significance of freedom from want. When insecurity lasts for years and becomes part of a nation's life, its effects are just as deadening as those of unbroken security. For the last twenty-five years more than half the population of Great Britain has lived on the knife-edge between poverty and destitution, and the fear of falling into one or the other has stultified initiative and led to a desperate saving for the future at the expense of the present. Various stop-gap social services relieved, but did not cure, poverty and unemployment. We are at last coming to realize that the survival of democracy after the War depends on the replacement of unemployment by full employment and the reconciliation of security with freedom.

It is a significant sign of the times that recognition that the achievement of social security depends both on social and economic planning and on the willing acceptance by a free community of the sacrifices and restrictions involved is becoming more widespread. It is elaborated in a notable broadsheet, "Planning for Social Security", issued earlier in the year by Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.), which is based on a memorandum submitted to the Beveridge Committee. It is also implicit in one of the latest Studies and Reports of the International Labour Office, "Approaches to Social Security: An International Survey". This latter report does not merely round off the long series of studies of the International Labour Office on social insurance and assistance by reviewing the contributions to social security of these modes of bearing social risks. It is also intended to prepare the way for planning a complete social security programme in readiness for post-war reconstruction.

The resolution on aims and functions of social insurance, adopted at Havana in December 1939 by the Second Labour Conference of the American States which are members of the International Labour Organisation, shows the extent to which the social security ideal had taken shape in the minds of

American Governments before President Roosevelt's famous Four Freedoms speech or the Atlantic Charter. The resolution is appended to "Approaches to Social Security", the whole forming an admirable survey of the essentials by which the proposals of the Beveridge Committee will in due course be judged. The essay is a statement complementary to the P E P broadsheet, which is limited to a discussion of British practice and to British proposals, the merits of which are the more clearly seen against this background of general tendencies and experience.

A brief survey of social insurance shows clearly that responsibility for meeting social needs has been dispersed among numerous agencies, without much regard for plan or order, and the illustrations given in the third chapter of "Approaches to Social Security", on co-ordination of social assistance and insurance into a coherent system of social security, indicate the measure of what remains to be done to establish a system affording reasonable security for all who need it. Moreover, it must be recognized that security is a state of mind as well as an objective fact. To enjoy security there must be confidence that the benefits will be available when required, and to afford security, the protection must be adequate in quality and quantity.

Elimination of the causes of social insecurity consolidates and improves the structure of society, but social security policy can only be planned as part of a larger programme which includes measures for promoting employment and maintaining it at a high level, for improving nutrition and housing, multiplying facilities for medical care and widening opportunities for general and vocational education. Social security services are promoted by economic adjustments that make for the expansion of employment and for the distribution of income so as to procure the essentials of decent living, with due consideration for family charges. Such adjustments facilitate the financing of social security schemes, not only tending to keep benefit expenditure within bounds, but also to reduce it, since improved conditions of life and labour reduce the frequency and severity of social and industrial risks.

Compared with this survey, the P E P broadsheet is much more forthright and critical. Its major interest lies, however, in the constructive proposals advanced in regard to principles of reconstruction and a Ministry of Social Security. It puts forward a provisional scheme for a process of reconstruction which might extend over the next thirty years. It is an examination of basic principles and an attempt to define the objectives of long-term reconstruction, but it does not discuss secondary or immediate issues.

Besides the establishment of a national Plimsoll line of goods and services, the State must assume the wider duty of planning the use of our economic resources and man-power for full employment and maximum welfare. The building of post-war social security, moreover, will depend on acceptance by the citizen of stronger obligations and new compulsions. The opportunities and responsibilities which enhance the freedom of every citizen by making his rights

real can only be enjoyed when the price is paid of accepting expert advice and skilled services to find work, to be trained or transferred for work, and to keep fit or to be speedily restored to health and independence. If we can get away from the futility of pressing a man to train for a job which does not exist; or of putting a sick man on to an inadequate allowance and driving him back prematurely into industrial conditions which can only undermine his health again, and remove some of the administrative absurdities and complexities, we shall have little cause to fear that the development of a social security system will sap the morale and independence even of the nation's least responsible elements.

The first essential, according to *Planning*, is therefore the establishment of a Ministry of Social Security to take over, among other things, administration of all income-maintenance services.

In regard to detailed services, the broadsheet suggests the unification of the medical services by divorcing them financially and administratively from National Health Insurance and from public assistance, and organizing them in one national system which provides its services to all citizens as a right. To extend the scope of the National Health Insurance scheme to include persons of "like economic status" and the dependants of all insured persons, and to afford a far wider range of skilled services, as suggested by the National Conference of Friendly Societies, are regarded as likely to impede rather than promote the unification of health and medical services into a comprehensive national system. It is a cumbersome approximate to the ultimate solution visualized by the Royal Commission of 1926 of "a carefully built up service organized on a single local basis in which all varieties of preventive and curative work find their appropriate place".

The advantages of a system in which all medical services are provided on the basis of common citizenship to every member of the community are detailed, and the idea of the health centre and of co-operation and team-work among doctors and closer contact with specialists, with the benefit to the general level of medical work, are well set forth in the broadsheet. Similar points were stressed by the Dawson report of 1920 and developed in the recent report of the Medical Planning Commission of the British Medical Association, as well as in the report on National Health Services written by Dr. Janet Campbell for the British Association for Labour Legislation. While the local health centre may provide new opportunities for active citizenship on a neighbourhood basis, a reconstructed income-maintenance system can clearly hold no place for administration of incapacity cash benefits by approved societies. That system must disappear, since the only approved society required is the nation itself.

Naturally enough, the broadsheet does not go into the detail of the recent report of the British Medical Association's Committee on Industrial Health in Factories, but it recognizes the contribution which such a Board through its industrial medical service might make towards extending first-aid services and raising their quality—a field in which air-raid pre-

cautions should not be without effect—as well as in passing on research problems to the Industrial Health Research Board. Any step which tends to stimulate industrial health research indeed merits careful examination, and among the further suggestions of *Planning* are, first, the development of an adequate system of first-class centres and departments for traumatic surgery, and, secondly, the creation of a proper system of special centres for diagnosis and treatment of occupational diseases and for research into their causes and conditioning factors. Here the British Medical Association's Committee on Industrial Health in Factories has rightly stressed the importance of co-operation between the medical profession, scientific workers, the factory inspectorate, employers, social workers, and the workers and their organizations. Finally, the Board should be responsible for vocational training schemes as well as entrusted with the care of all physically handicapped persons who might be rendered fit to engage in a remunerative occupation, and it should maintain a specialized service for placing disabled workers. The whole network of services involved in medical rehabilitation is so intimately bound up with other medical services, including hospitals, that they should be provided and controlled by the same authorities which are responsible for all the major medical services, although the Board should have powers of supervision and inspection of facilities.

This valuable broadsheet makes it unmistakably plain that any real unification and reconstruction of the social services in Great Britain will involve an immense amount of educational work to ensure the full co-operation, not merely of the numerous societies and local authorities concerned, but also of the individual citizens. It is the more welcome, therefore, that such a document should have appeared in advance of the Beveridge report, and that attention should also be directed to a scarcely less ambitious project in the Americas. The conference which met at Santiago de Chile affords evidence that in America also resources are being pooled in a positive effort to realize the common ideals of freedom from want and fear. A committee has already been constituted for the systematic and continuous exchange of information among the social security institutions of the American countries, and has set as its goal the establishment in each country of compulsory social insurance, covering industrial accidents and occupational disease, sickness, maternity, old age, invalidism, premature death, and involuntary unemployment, and applying to self-employed peasants and domestic servants as well as to industrial and commercial workers.

The case for a comprehensive and well-planned system in Great Britain could scarcely be better put than in the P E P broadsheet, and that such widespread attention should be given to this question of social security is a hopeful sign. It should not be forgotten that domestic policies, by promoting full employment and purchasing power, have a most favourable reaction on those difficult problems which will be encountered in the reconstruction of world trade after the War. Already the U.S. National

Resources Development Board, in its report for 1942 now before Congress, demonstrates that planning for social security finds an accepted place in the post-war plans of the United States. While it is reasonable that the Government should decide to await the Beveridge report before taking any action in regard to social services, there will be grave disappointment if there is delay in implementing a real social security policy and programme based on the recommendations of that report. Failure to do so would be a blow both to the immediate war effort and at the post-war aims and association of the United Nations.

## THE CASE FOR PASTEURIZATION

### The Pasteurization of Milk

By Prof. G. S. Wilson. Pp. xii+212. (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1942.) 18s. net.

THIS is a well-planned, well-written and well-documented book, but with a title that may, to some, give a slightly wrong impression of its contents. It concerns itself almost entirely with one main theme—a reasoned statement of the medical evidence in favour of the pasteurization, or effective heat treatment, of all milk. The bacteriological, particularly the public health aspects of pasteurization, as might be expected from Prof. Wilson, are treated with care and thoroughness, and a balanced summary is given of the relevant nutritional findings of the past ten or fifteen years. It is, however, no manual for the pasteurization engineer or technologist—that book has still to be written—and the economic, legislative and administrative aspects of milk processing also are only very briefly touched on.

How it came to be written is explained by Sir Wilson Jameson in a foreword. The Milk Industry Bill, one of the few really constructive legislative efforts of the decade before the War, was introduced in November 1938 and, by what many consider a grave error of judgment, was withdrawn after its first reading. Among a number of other measures the Bill gave local authorities permissive powers, subject to certain limitations, to make pasteurization compulsory in their areas. After its withdrawal, representations were made to the Ministers of Health and Agriculture in the hope that further legislative endeavours would be made to rescue the safety of the milk supply of Great Britain from the wreckage of the Bill. Though these representations were unsuccessful, they convinced the then Minister of Health, Mr. Walter Elliott, that there was need for the further education of opinion on the whole subject of pasteurization of milk in relation to public health. He asked Prof. Wilson to bring existing evidence together and review it, and this book, publication of which was considerably delayed by the outbreak of war, is the result.

As propaganda—and that in no sinister sense—it is successful and convincing. People who wish to retain anti-pasteurization beliefs as part of their religion are strongly advised not to read it. If they do they can scarcely avoid being persuaded of two things: first the need, from the point of view of national health, for efficient heat treatment of all commercial milk before it is consumed by human beings, and second,