

Some Recent Developments in Social Service in Great Britain

By John S. Morgan*

"Subject to the provisions of this Act, every person who, on or after the appointed day, being over school leaving age and under pensionable age, is in Great Britain, and fulfills such conditions as may be prescribed as to residence in Great Britain, shall become insured under this Act, and thereafter continue throughout his life to be so insured."¹

In that one clause of a single act of Parliament can be found some of the main elements of Britain's new statutory social services. It draws attention by implication to the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 and later to 16 years of age. It makes clear the dominant motive of the social legislation enacted or proposed by the Labor Government of Britain. The idea that all should share the dangers and difficulties of modern industrial civilization on an equitable basis, whatever their age, sex, rank, or economic status, was particularly prominent in wartime, when "fair shares for all" was the established pattern of conduct. It is now to be found as a major principle of social change in postwar Britain.

The principle of all-inclusive sharing is not confined to the persons to be covered by the social services; it is also applied to the needs which are to be met. The predominant aim is that all citizens shall have the right to receive all the services they require to meet the unpredictable social, medical, and economic problems that bedevil the lives of so many in the complex pattern of living that is now the inheritance and the problem of civilized mankind.

The major items of the British Government's legislative program for social insurance and a national health

service are examined in some detail in the BULLETIN for February 1947² and need not be repeated here. In addition to this legislation, note must be taken of the Education Acts of 1944 and 1946³ and of some of the important inquiries which have been reported, such as the Rushcliffe report on legal aid and advice,⁴ the report of the Lord Chancellor's Committee of Enquiry on Justices of the Peace, the Curtis report on the care of children,⁵ and the *Report of the Committee on Procedure in Matrimonial Causes*.⁶ These and other Government papers serve to show that most, if not all, of the needs of the common man are the subject of study and of action. Examination of some of these measures and proposals will show that if Sir William (now Lord) Beveridge could write in his report of 1942 that "provision for most of the many varieties of need through interruptions of earnings and other causes that may arise in modern industrial communities has already been made in Britain on a scale not surpassed and hardly rivaled in any other country in the world,"⁷ then in 1947, only 5 years later, it can truly be said that there has been a great improvement in coverage, and there is promise that the aim of all-inclusive coverage for all men is being held.

² Carl Farman and Catherine Ferrins, "The New British System of Social Security," *Social Security Bulletin*, February 1947, pp. 9-19.

³ 7 and 8 Geo. 6, ch. 31; and 9 and 10 Geo. 6, ch. 50.

⁴ *Report of the Committee on Legal Aid and Legal Advice*, London, 1945. (Cmd. 6641.)

⁵ *Report of the Care of Children Committee*, London, 1946. (Cmd. 6922.)

⁶ Cmd. 7024, London, 1947.

⁷ *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, London, 1942. (Cmd. 6404.) For a full account of the report see Martha D. Ring, "Social Security for Great Britain—A Review of the Beveridge Report," *Social Security Bulletin*, January 1943, pp. 3-30.

A Survey of Public and Private Services

National Insurance

The National Insurance Act, 1946, accepts and gives effect to most of the essential principles of the Beveridge report. It provides insurance cash benefits, that is, benefits receivable by right of previous contribution, for all periods in which there is interruption of livelihood earning; and it provides them on the principle that the need is the same and therefore the cash benefit should be the same, whether the need arises from unemployment, sickness, or retirement.

In place of an administrative jungle that has hitherto involved no less than seven Central Government departments and a host of local government authorities, there is now to be a single department, the Ministry of National Insurance, with its own regional and local offices. As viewed by the citizen, this administrative change in the public social services will be perhaps more noticeable than many of the increased benefit rates and more generous regulations. For him it means one insurance card, one weekly stamp, and one office for the receipt of cash benefits other than assistance. Provisions for the assistance program are not yet announced, but its administration will most probably be closely related to the Ministry of National Insurance.

It would be wrong to imagine that the National Insurance Act satisfies everyone or that it covers adequately the real needs of all persons to whom it applies. Without going into the details of benefit rates, it can be said that the principle of a "minimum income sufficient for his subsistence, needs and responsibilities," which Beveridge claimed had been "abandoned"⁸ by the Coalition Government in its proposals of 1943, has not been fully restored by the Labor Government in its 1946 legislation. The old people have received the most generous treatment,⁹ getting immediately much more substantial benefits than Beveridge had proposed. Unemployment and disability benefits are sub-

⁸ Sir William H. Beveridge, *The Pillars of Security*, London, 1942, p. 132.

⁹ For details see *Increases in Old-Age, Widows' and Blind Persons' Pensions*, London, 1946. (Cmd. 6878.)

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¹ *National Insurance Act*, 1946, sec. 1.

ject to time limits; and the children's allowances, under the Family Allowances Act, of 5s. a week for every child under school-leaving age, except the first, are well below the minimum subsistence level, even allowing for substantial improvements in the provision of benefits in kind. Another weakness is that mothers of families engaged in their vital task of running the home are classified as "not gainfully occupied persons" and as such are ineligible for sick benefits. This provision may be administratively sound, but it does not do away with the social consequences, so well known to social workers, of the fact that "mother cannot afford to be ill." The transfer of all cash-benefit payments to the Ministry of National Insurance has many virtues, but it also raises some awkward questions about services which should be closely integrated with and related to cash payments; this is a general feature that will be discussed later in this paper.

Workmen's Compensation

The new and revolutionary treatment of workmen's compensation in the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act, 1946,¹⁰ has its critics, though few can be found to deny the advantages of exchanging the labyrinthine complexities of the old order for a single and relatively simple state insurance scheme. By establishing somewhat higher rates of benefit than those under the National Insurance Act for sickness benefit, for example, the new act leaves room for anomalies and also invites the natural suggestion that the benefits under the general act are, as indeed they are, below an adequate minimum rate. The whole question of medical treatment and rehabilitation is assumed to be properly within the competence of the new national health service and the rehabilitation services of the Ministry of Labor; thus, again, the cash benefits are divorced in administration from their complementary services. There are some who would prefer them to be more nearly related within the same organization, as they are, for example, under the Ontario system of workmen's compensation.

¹⁰ 9 and 10 Geo. 6, ch. 62.

National Health Service

The National Health Service Act, 1946, represents a major change in Britain's provision of social services. The legislation has been, and still is, a source of major controversy within the medical profession, but it would be wrong to permit the very vocal opposition of a part of the medical profession, and of some sections of the population partly on political grounds, to overshadow the very real welcome the proposals have received from a large proportion of the general public.

There are many significant features in the national health service, but for the student of the social services there are two which are perhaps of particular interest. The provision of a free medical service for all is a constructive measure that should do much in future decades to remove thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, from the rolls of those in need of economic assistance. The creation of a national hospital service shows a new trend in public administration, because it involves taking away from the major local authorities a service, in many cases assumed only recently as a result of the reforms in the Local Government Act, 1929, and placing the management of a state service on a national basis with regional boards. It is hoped that the new service will expand and develop the work of the hospital almoners.¹¹ They are fully trained social workers, who provide the essential link between the medical care provided by the hospital and the social and family conditions of the patient.

Other Areas of Public Activity

In surveying recent developments in social service in Great Britain it is impossible to omit four other major areas of activity that have far-reaching social implications for the people of Britain.

Some reference will be made later to the important place which the Ministry of Labor and National Service now plays in the pattern of the

¹¹ Further information on the training and work of the hospital almoners can be obtained from the Institute of Hospital Almoners, B. M. A. House, Tavistock Square, London, W. C. 1, England.

British social services. The Ministry's services for the veteran, for the disabled, for those in need of vocational training and redirection, allied to its responsibilities for a constructive employment service, make it an essential partner in the provision of constructive social service.

The Education Act, 1944 (with some comparatively minor amendments in 1946), not only recast the educational system on more democratic lines, but also made provision for greatly improved educational services for handicapped children, for milk in school and school meals as an essential part of education, and for the development of "recreational and physical training" services for adults as well as young people as an obligatory duty of local education authorities. This act is notable also for the abolition of smaller local education authorities and the concentration of administration and policy in the hands of the counties and county boroughs.

Housing is a third area of public activity which has peculiar interest for social workers and administrators. Between the two World Wars, something like a million houses for rental by the lower-income groups were built in Britain by the local municipal authorities, with financial aid, policy direction, and technical services from the Ministry of Health which, as the successor of the Local Government Board, is the Central Government department generally responsible for relations with local authorities. This major contribution to the solution of Britain's housing problem has given rise to a number of social services. Slum clearance and the correction of overcrowding are social policies. Differential rent systems relating the rent of a municipal house to the income of the family, rather than to the cost of the house, are social policies, requiring in their administration the application of social service techniques. These policies have led to a marked growth of professional housing management, one of the specialized fields of the social work profession which has achieved recognized status in Great Britain.

The creation of the planned new towns, exemplified in Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth, has had

added impetus since the publication of the Barlow report¹² and has become, with the New Towns Act, part of national policy, with profound social implications. It is particularly relevant that the development of these new towns, two or more of which are already in progress, is to be placed in the hands of specifically designated, centrally appointed organizations and not of the local municipal authorities already on the ground. Provision is made, however, for the transference of the town to the existing or an appropriate local government authority when it has been created.

The fourth area of social change, one that is still in the stage of inquiry rather than of action, is that of child care and protection. The Curtis report on the care of children shows only too clearly that two major faults of the present provision are the almost complete lack of adequately trained social workers for this work and the administrative confusion that invariably arises from piecemeal legislation.

It is interesting to find that the Curtis committee, while it recommends that one central department should be "ultimately responsible" for the care of children, believes the actual provision "should remain a matter for the local authorities and the voluntary organizations." The committee strongly favors, however, a single, fully responsible committee of the local council to be responsible for all the authority's duties in connection with the care of children, with a highly qualified "children's officer" as its chief executive. These proposals indicate an effort at coordination without centralization, which is a somewhat unusual approach to the administrative problems of the social services in present-day Britain.^{12a}

¹² *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*, London, 1940. (Comd. 6153.)

^{12a} Since this article went to press the British Government has announced its acceptance of the main thesis of the Curtis report and its intention to center child-care work in the Children's Branch of the Home Office and to encourage local authorities to appoint children's committees served by competent children's officers.

Private Social Services

Turning now to the private social services or, as they are more generally known in Britain, the voluntary social services, a number of significant developments can be noted. In this field, however, the changes are more subtle and less easily defined than are those in the area of the public or statutory social services.

The report issued in 1909 by the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws¹³ referred to the need for increased cooperation among the private social service agencies. The First World War emphasized this need, and in 1919 the National Council of Social Service was created. This organization, particularly in the present decade, has made a remarkable contribution to the social services in promoting cooperation among private agencies and also between public and private agencies engaged in the same fields of social service. Particular mention may be made here of the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organizations, created in 1937, the Standing Conference of Voluntary Organizations, created in 1938, the Women's Group on Public Welfare, created in 1940, and the National Old People's Welfare Committee, created in 1943. Each of these conferences represents joint consultative machinery, provided with secretarial services by the National Council of Social Service and drawing together the private agencies, the public services, and interested individuals engaged in the same or similar fields of social service.

The National Council of Social Service has also been engaged, among many other activities, in a sustained and growing effort to improve the quality of social life in the rural and urban areas of Britain. This phase of community organization is reflected in the Rural Community Councils movement, with its closely related policies in respect of village halls, and the Community Centers and Associations movements, both centering in the council and both representing a very substantial program of cooperative effort at the local level.

¹³ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress* (Part VII of the Majority Report, England and Wales), London, 1909.

In the past 5 years the National Council of Social Service has taken a more active part in social service on the international level. It has been responsible particularly for promoting the interchange of social workers and administrators, for which there are now committees in Britain, the United States, France, Czechoslovakia, and possibly other European countries. The council has acted as the coordinating center of Britain's participation in the International Conference of Social Work, and its general secretary was recently appointed Treasurer of the International Conference scheduled for 1949.

The tendency to joint or cooperative action by the private agencies may be illustrated from other areas of social work. The Council for Voluntary War Work was established in 1939 under the auspices of the War Office and brought together the private agencies engaged in providing comforts and welfare for the armed forces, to ensure adequate coordination and the most economical use of the available manpower. The Provisional National Council for Mental Health¹⁴ incorporates all the major private agencies engaged in this type of work. The council, which had its origin in the thorough investigation and report of the Feversham committee,¹⁵ provides an excellent example of private agency action based on considered inquiry rather than on the urges and pressures of a passing emergency. In quite another type of social work, the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad represents cooperative action on the international level.

The Second World War created for many of the British people problems of individual and family need that far outstripped any previous experience. The effects of intensive bombardment, of mass evacuation, of transferred industries, of billeting

¹⁴ Now established as the National Association for Mental Health, incorporating the Central Association for Mental Welfare, the Child Guidance Council, the National Council for Mental Hygiene, and the Mental Health Emergency Committee.

¹⁵ The committee's report was published in 1939, and the Provisional National Council for Mental Health was established in 1943.

huge armies from other countries,¹⁶ and of general conscription, were to strain the bonds of family life, and in many cases, of family economics, beyond the breaking point. The statutory schemes for the Prevention and Relief of Distress, War Service Grants,¹⁷ War Damage Compensation, War Injuries Compensation, and other programs, such as School Feeding, Emergency Feeding, and Emergency Housing, took the major economic shocks. As always, however, there remained a wide area of residual problems that fell particularly to the private agencies to resolve.

The British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John, in the Second, as in the First, World War, set up a joint organization through which were mobilized immense resources of voluntary help, skilled service, and sorely needed aid over a wide range of social services. Particular mention may perhaps be made of their services for prisoners of war, their work in maintaining medical and ambulance services for bombed areas, and the auxiliary medical services they provided for the armed forces and civilians both at home and overseas.

Residual financial needs, after the statutory schemes had been used to the full, were particularly the responsibility of the family case-work agencies, led by the Charity Organization Society of London, which thus added another chapter to its long history of service since its foundation in 1869. Very large sums were collected from the public in Britain and overseas upon which these agencies drew heavily for the special needs of a long war. The three most notable funds raised for these purposes were the Red Cross and St. John War Fund (especially its penny-a-week scheme, which drew contributions from a wide constituency of ordinary citizens); the Lord Mayor's Air Raid Distress Fund, which received, in addition to its home support, substantial contributions from

the Dominions and colonies; and the British War Relief Fund of the United States.

One of the most interesting social phenomena of the war was the urgent need of the ordinary citizen for accurate information and skilled advice. The inevitable complexities of programs designed to serve millions of people often made their intricacies incomprehensible to and their operations unmanageable by the ordinary citizen whom the restrictions were intended to protect and the schemes were intended to serve. From this need there came the creation of the Citizens' Advice Bureaus,¹⁸ established in 1939 by the National Council of Social Service in cooperation with the case-work agencies and the local councils of social service all over Great Britain. It was found that a central service of accurate information,¹⁹ combined with skilled interviewing and sympathetic interpretation, provided an essential lubricant to the complex machinery of social welfare. So clearly was this fact established that it is now recognized that public authorities have a responsibility not only to provide social services but also to explain and interpret those services to the people whose needs they are intended to meet; local authorities are today being urged by the Central Government to make provision for this vital new social service, while the Central Government has itself retained a Central Office of Information from the wartime Ministry of Information.²⁰

Not only does the general public need information, but social workers and administrators of the social serv-

¹⁸ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Great Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe*, London, 1944.

¹⁹ The central key of this information service is a regular digest of all social legislation and information entitled *Citizens' Advice Notes*, which is published by the National Council of Social Service and is recognized as a standard reference for social workers and administrators.

²⁰ The need for legal advice, long known to social workers, became very clear during the war, and one consequence was the foundation of legal advice services for the armed forces. Subsequently a Government committee, headed by Lord Rushcliffe, investigated the whole subject and published in 1945 a report, commonly known as the Rushcliffe Report on Legal Aid, containing proposals that the Government is expected to implement.

ices also need the facts and figures on which to base their thinking. The Government has made many valuable contributions to social thinking during the past 5 or 6 years. Some of the more important reports, to which reference is made throughout this article, constitute the necessary preliminary thought and investigation from which the new social code of Britain is being written into law.

The contribution of the private agencies to this essential process of skilled inquiry and careful thought is beginning to grow. The work of Political and Economic Planning (PEP) is well known, and its authoritative bulletins and reports constitute some of the clearest statements on social and economic issues of the day. The Fabian Society continues its work of educating the British people, for which it has become famous. Other research organizations, such as the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, the Institute of Sociology, and Nuffield College, have all made significant additions to the study of the social services. Among the agencies actually engaged in social work, the National Council of Social Service during the later years of the Second World War made or encouraged a number of particularly valuable studies of social questions of immediate practical significance. The most important of these studies was *Our Towns—A Close-Up*,²¹ made under the auspices of the Women's Group on Public Welfare. This study became a best seller and is known to have had profound effects on social legislation, being quoted, for example, in the Government's introductory *White Paper on Educational Needs*, which preceded the Education Act of 1944. These beginnings of research and study within the social work agencies are significant, since the agencies have the accumulated experience which, allied to theory, may well contribute a new and vital element to social study.

The need for information and skilled guidance has shown itself in quite another form. The great increase in the number of broken marriages, evident during and after the First World War, became even more

²¹ Oxford University Press, 1942.

¹⁶ At one time or another, Britain housed the armies of the United States, Canada, Norway, Holland, the Free French, and other allied nations, and must have been the base for literally millions of allied troops.

¹⁷ Supplementary grants to meet exceptional needs of the families of members of the armed forces.

acute during the Second World War and was accompanied, as always, by an increase in cases of social maladjustment, delinquency, and other social disorders. Accepting as a basic social fact the role of the family as the essential unit of the community, and successful marriage as the foundation of the family, a Marriage Guidance Council was started in London in 1943 as an experiment. The object was to provide a team of expert consultants—doctors, psychologists, clergymen, social workers, lawyers, and others—who would be available to give advice and treatment to people whose marriages were on the rocks and who sought their aid. The scheme has been widely accepted, and similar councils are now being formed in many towns and cities of Britain.

During the years between the wars there were some exciting and interesting experiments in education. Many of them, such as school camps for children from the "depressed areas" and adult education stressing the practical or involving extended use of the "discussion-group" techniques, were carried on with funds supplied, not by the Board of Education, but by the Commissioners for the Special Areas. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA) further developed the discussion-group methods of adult education, and their work was paralleled in the civilian world by organizations like the Workers Educational Association, the great national voluntary youth organizations, and other similar bodies. The promotion in 1940 of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and Arts (CEMA) by the Pilgrim Trust brought music, painting, and drama of high quality within the reach of the common man. These wartime advances have been consolidated in the first years since the allied victory. The Education Act of 1944 makes "recreation and physical education" an obligatory duty of the public education authorities for the first time; ABCA has become the Bureau of Current Affairs with a civilian framework; CEMA has become the Arts Council of Great Britain, fully supported by public funds; and the whole movement of adult education has been pointed up by the creation of a National Foundation of Adult Education, which, in a fashion reminiscent of

some of the other cooperative groupings already discussed, is to provide a common ground for consultation and joint effort in making new advances in adult education.

Postwar Trends

Within this brief survey of the social services in Great Britain it is possible to discern a number of important tendencies, which need to be examined more closely and made more explicit.

A Fixed Scale of Cash Benefits

The first of these tendencies is in the area of cash relief. It will be noted that economic assistance to prevent want is, in every case, based on flat-rate payments on fixed scales. This is a marked feature of British thought and is clearly brought out in the Beveridge report. Whatever the cause of "want," whether it be sickness, unemployment, or retirement, the cash benefits are essentially related to the same scales in the National Insurance Act. It is even more significant that, whereas workmen's compensation was related to the previous earnings of the injured person, the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act meets this form of want, too, on a fixed scale of flat-rate benefit. This trend is in marked contrast to the general acceptance in Canada and the United States of the concept of benefits related to previous earnings and of relief assistance based primarily on a budgetary deficiency basis. The acceptance of the principle of a uniform flat rate should involve acceptance of the principle that the rates are at or above minimum subsistence levels. It is by no means agreed that the rates currently fixed under the British programs are in fact adequate on this basis.

It is true that the new British social insurance schemes do include the whole population, that there are uniform contribution rates for all and uniform benefits for all. It should, however, be observed that this uniformity does not mean that "categories" have been abandoned within the framework of social insurance. The various benefits are still based on the classification of the applicant ac-

ording to the type of need. Since the whole population is covered by the National Insurance Act, and since all the main causes of economic want are included in the benefit categories, the number of residual cases outside the provisions of the social security legislation as a whole should be relatively small. Soon the last fragments of the old Poor Law will disappear within the new scheme of national assistance, which will, so to speak, put a floor beneath social insurance.

It is significant of British experience in the 1930's that every effort should have been made to avoid any suggestion of a "means test," in marked contrast to the Congress of the United States, which in 1935 and 1939 wrote the word "needy" into the various assistance titles of the Social Security Act. So anxious indeed is the present British Government to avoid any suggestion of a means test that it has written into the National Insurance Act a temporary provision, valid for 5 years from the commencement of the new scheme, under which regulations "may authorize the Minister to pay unemployment benefit to insured persons, on the recommendation of a local tribunal, for such number of days of unemployment as may be specified in the recommendation, being days for which they are not entitled to such benefit by reason only of having exhausted their right thereto."²² As they are not insurance payments, these "out-of-benefit" payments will be made from national revenue and not from the insurance fund. This approach is an expedient to make provision for the unemployed "employable" person without imposing a means test and putting him on general relief. It does not solve this awkward question, but at least it is in favorable contrast to the position of many State governments in the United States and also of Canada,²³ where the unemployed "employable" seems likely to have a thin time between an unemployment insurance scheme, which limits the duration of benefit strictly according to contributions paid, and a system of general

²² National Insurance Act, clause 64.

²³ See the Canadian Unemployment Insurance Act, 1940, and the 1944 Regulations made under the Unemployment Relief Act of the Province of Ontario.

assistance which takes account only of "unemployable" persons.²⁶

Some Dangers in Administrative Centralization

It will be observed that one major consequence of social security legislation in Britain will be to remove large areas of public social service from the cognizance of the local authorities. The responsibility of relieving "want" is taken wholly by the national administration, thus finally breaching the age-long tradition of local responsibility enshrined in the "Forty-third of Elizabeth" and thereafter an axiom of Poor Law policy. Health services, too, become the concern of a national department, with the interesting and important administrative device of regional boards which will be outside and not necessarily related to local government authorities. Other examples of strengthened ministerial powers have already been noted, as in the creation of special authorities for the new towns, for example; while the replacement of the Board of Education by the Ministry of Education and the concentration of educational administration in the hands of the larger local education authorities are pointed in the same direction.

This tendency will unquestionably have a marked effect on the structure and character of English local governments.²⁷ For one thing the whole complex question of grants-in-aid will now have to be reviewed in the light of the direct assumption by the Central Government of many of the financial burdens hitherto the responsibilities of the local authorities. Local government in England is in any case long overdue for reform, but the Government has so far taken the view that the time is not yet ripe for con-

²⁶ For a view quite contrary to that commonly held in Britain, compare Lewis Meriam, *Relief and Social Security* (Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., 1946): "Unless the state is to pay benefits to persons regardless of their need, a means test is an essential part of a relief and social security system."

²⁷ No reference is made in this connection to the position in Scotland, which has a somewhat different local government structure, but there can be little doubt that here, too, the new legislation will have some interesting results.

sideration of the matter.²⁸ Nonetheless, this remains an important question which has profound implications for the future social structure and the future administration of English social services.

Separation of Cash Benefits and the Social Services

Another administrative feature of the new British public services is the separation of the payments of cash benefits from the social services to the beneficiaries. In the future, nearly all cash payments will be made by the Ministry of National Insurance. As these payments are flat-rate benefits in an insurance system, this Ministry must inevitably become primarily a vast calculating and filing machine, which will be able to operate almost entirely on the paper evidence of contributions made and the evidence presented of unemployment, maternity, sickness, retirement, or death. It will necessarily have a large investigating staff, and it is to be hoped that there will be a much greater realization than there has been hitherto in Britain of the need for skilled social workers in this field. Without skilled professional workers there is a grave danger that the advantages of administrative simplicity will be more than outweighed by the failure to relate essential social services to the relief of economic difficulties.

This is only one example of a lamentable lack of recognition in the British social services of the need for trained professional workers in social welfare administration. There are, however, some grounds for hope. Provision of training for social workers is beginning to come into its own, but only beginning, and their recognition as qualified technicians in the civil service and in local government service, though perceptible during the war, has not yet been anything like adequate. The acceptance of case-work techniques is perhaps further

²⁸ See, for example, the reply of the Minister of Health to the recent conference of the Association of Municipal Corporations, which expressed "concern over piecemeal legislation which is removing the powers and responsibilities of municipal authorities." (*New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1946).

advanced than that of other kinds of social work; other areas where some substantial recognition has been achieved in the public service are in housing management, medical social work ("hospital almoners"), psychiatric social work, probation work, and most recently in the care of children.²⁹ In group-work techniques and in the practice of community organization, the position is that, while many private agencies have long had their own training schemes, some of these have been both excellent and adequate, but others have been limited in scope and uneven in quality. There is some Government recognition of the need, but no adequate provision for supply. It should not, however, be thought that because the formal position appears bad the situation is quite so unsatisfactory as it looks. There are in fact many hundreds, if not thousands, of social workers in Britain with substantial qualifications and long years of experience, and the development of the country's social services owes much of its present surge forward to their untiring efforts. What is needed now is the proper organization of the profession, adequate provision for training, and suitable recognition, especially in the public services, of the functions and importance of skilled social work.

This discussion of the need for skilled social work has occasioned a diversion, albeit an essential diversion, from the theme that in the separation of cash payments from social services there is some danger that Britain will achieve administrative simplicity at the cost of adequate attention to the social needs of the beneficiary. If there is danger in this separation, there may also be opportunities, because a service that is not hampered by having to "look over its shoulder" at the cash-benefit consequences of its actions can attack its problems in a constructive and total way that in other circumstances might be awkward if not impossible. Thus those engaged in the national health service might well concentrate

²⁹ Recognition of the need for social workers is one thing. The training and employment of them is another, as the reports of the Curtis Care of Children Committee clearly show.

on the constructive and positive duties of preserving health.²⁸ Perhaps the best illustration of the constructive results which may follow this policy may be observed in the postwar concept of the functions of the Ministry of Labor.

Ministry of Labor as a Social Service Agency

The experience of the Ministry of Labor during the years of heavy unemployment was that its function as an "exchange" for *employment* was overwhelmed by its obligations to register and pay cash benefits to the *unemployed*. Today, with unemployment benefits the responsibility of the Ministry of National Insurance, the British Ministry of Labor, enlarged and fortified by its multifarious wartime experience, is occupied with a constructive task. To it fall the duties not only of finding employment, but of training men and women for the most suitable employment, of protecting them at work, and of mobilizing the whole productive manpower of the country. It is in this context that this Ministry now directs veterans' affairs, the rehabilitation and reemployment of disabled persons, the vocational training of ex-soldiers and civilians, the study of executive and administrative employment, and the deployment of British manpower. Because it has this all-inclusive function, and also because its assignments include such matters as industrial welfare, the Ministry of Labor must be reckoned as one of Britain's major social service organizations.

If it is true in military affairs that the weakest place in any front is usually where two units are linked, it is also true in the public services. The Ministry of Labor will show its strength or its weakness by the skill with which it creates essential links with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of National Insurance, the national health service, and the other partners in social security. The same

²⁸ A task in which they have much to learn from the Peckham Health Center experiment. See *Biologists in Search of Material*, London, 1937; *The Peckham Experiment*, London, 1943; and other accounts by Dr. G. Scott Williamson, Dr. Innes Pearse, and their colleagues of the Peckham Health Center.

opportunities will arise for skilled work and for skillful administration in the organization of each of the other partners. Adequate administrative liaison may well be the greatest test of Britain's new pattern of public welfare.

New Paths for the Private Agencies

So great a reorganization and expansion of the public social services must inevitably have deep and lasting effects on the organization and functions of the private agencies. The private social services are alive to the changes which are taking place, and they recognize that these changes present an immense challenge. There are some, though few, who believe that, with so much responsibility accepted by the public authorities, the proper functions of the private agencies are diminishing. From most there is a recognition that, as State responsibility grows, so also do the opportunity and responsibility of the private agency, not necessarily in the old ways, but in new ways, in order that the individual citizen may get full value from the new social plan as it comes into effect.

Practical examples of this line of thought among the private agencies are not far to seek. It is significant that the Charity Organization Society has now changed its name to the Family Welfare Association, indicating that its future work lies primarily in the area of personal adjustment rather than in its hitherto traditional practice of "organizing charity." The widespread growth of community organization of many kinds, in the village halls movement, in neighborhood groups, in a variety of women's clubs, shows how much this type of social work has progressed in the past 10 or 15 years.

Another interesting development has been the growing tendency to cooperate in raising money. Although the idea of the community chest traditionally derives from ideas and experiments in Liverpool, always in the forefront of private social service in Britain, it has never been adopted in Britain on the scale or with the coverage that it has now attained on the North American Continent. The structure of many of the private agen-

cies, with much concentration of power and policy-making at national headquarters, makes local operation of a community chest difficult if not impossible.

Three specific developments in the last 10 years, however, have set the pattern for more cooperation in fund-raising. The London Metropolitan Police indicated some years ago that they would not authorize tag days under the Street Collections Act unless organizations engaged in the same kind of work could arrange for joint collections for the whole metropolitan area on the same day. The consequence has been a marked diminution in the number of tag days and a substantial rise in the total contributed by a gratefully less harassed public. The British Broadcasting Corporation made a similar regulation in allotting its appeal time, and here again private agencies engaged in similar work have joined together for the purpose of raising money. Less successful were a number of attempts, based on counties or on large cities, to coordinate the raising of "war charity funds."

The financial bases of private agencies, however, are likely to cause the agencies much anxious thought in the next few years. The changing income structure, resulting from increasingly progressive²⁹ taxation, must inevitably reduce the amounts which can be expected from large donors. Means must be found to increase the amounts received from the ordinary citizen, not by getting more from a small number of wealthy individuals but by increasing in a very substantial measure the number of individuals who contribute small sums. The success of the penny-a-week funds for hospitals, and during the war for the Red Cross and St. John War Fund, suggests that this method might become the backbone of private agency financing in the future. The transfer of the hospitals into the national health service may release substantial funds for private agencies, but this is a potential rather than an actual source of revenue. The finance of private social agencies, however, is a subject that greatly needs investigating, especially in Britain.

²⁹ Used here in the technical sense as opposed to "regressive" taxation.

The function of private agencies to pioneer in developing new social services is firmly established in the British tradition. Practically all her present social services derive from past voluntary effort. In this work they have in the recent past been able to secure powerful support from some of the great trusts, such as the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the Pilgrim Trust, and the King George V Jubilee Trust. These resources remain available. In the development of music and drama, in which the emphasis is on the active participation of the ordinary members of the community, in the establishment of new and more widespread schemes of adult education, and in the creation of new community organizations, much pioneer work is already in progress. Another fruitful field of private agency activity lies in what might be called interpretation, that is to say, in relating individual needs to the available social services. This is a type of work particularly developed in the Citizens' Advice Bureaus during the war years that has many applications today. Perhaps it is most needed at the present time in the field of old age, where so many pensioners may soon cease to get more from the public services than their cash benefits.

In a word, it might be said with a substantial measure of truth that the work of the private agencies in Britain will be found more and more in the area of human relations. In the complex and difficult world of today, there is much to be done in that field, and as the state takes on the heavier share of the social services, which need all-inclusive coverage for their further growth, the private agencies have a great responsibility and a supreme opportunity to go out in front and lead, as they have led before, in the pioneer work in these new fields of human need.

Out of the Past and on Into the Future

Social service developments in Great Britain derive from three main sources, whose influence can be traced throughout this brief account.

In the first place they represent a victory for the Fabian philosophy of gradualism. The minority report of the Poor Law Commission of 1905-09 was the first sign of the break-up of the Poor Law. The pioneers of adult education, among them the Fabians, the Workers' Educational Association, the settlement movements, and others, have led the way to a genuine understanding of social issues by the common man. It was this fact that made the Beveridge report a political force that no party in Britain could afford to ignore.

Secondly, the course of events between the wars set the pattern for the future. The false economies of the early 1930's, the long, grim history of failure in the coal-mining industry, the human wastage of the "rationalization of industry," and the sore places left by persistent unemployment were accompanied by administrative expedients such as the Unemployment Assistance Board and the Special Areas Commissioners which brought the National Government into the arena of public assistance. Drastic reorganization of the industrial scene became a major political demand.

Lastly, the experiences of the Second World War have molded and marked the British social structure to a degree which is not yet fully appreciated. A progressive system of taxation which in 1942-43 left only 80 persons in the whole country with incomes of more than \$24,000 after taxation, as compared with 7,000 such persons in 1938-39,⁵⁰ marks the triumph of economic egalitarianism. The creation of an Emergency Medical Service brought modern hospital service into every corner of the British Isles, and the preventive medical service in the armed forces taught the lessons of universal medical and dental care. The application of modern methods of psychiatry and rehabilitation in the armed forces has led the way to a new approach to the prob-

lem of disablement. The administration by the Assistance Board of schemes for the prevention and relief of distress caused by the war, of supplementary pensions for old people, and of war service grants for the families of members of the armed forces showed that the national civil service could operate national public assistance programs with sympathy and flexibility. Evacuation taught Britain some sharp lessons in education and a widespread respect for the techniques of social work. The management of limited food resources has developed into a new pattern of public care, in which those in need of nourishment have priority over those who can afford to pay for extra foodstuffs. The mobilization of a greater proportion of its population, men and women, than any other people in the world has set the pace for the constructive tasks of peace.

The object of this article has been to sketch in bold outline Britain's rapidly developing system of social services and to direct attention to some of the more significant patterns which, for good or ill, are now being inextricably woven into the fabric of her social life. To achieve proportion in any synthesis of this kind there has had to be much omission of pertinent detail and even ruthless exclusion of much that is of importance. It is hoped, however, that enough has been said to indicate that the British people are not looking back to the past but forward into the future. They have learned not a few of the bitter social lessons of the years between the wars. Amid the cruel harvests of the Second World War, they have gleaned at least some constructive ideas on the management of their affairs. In spite of all the difficulties which beset them today, they have plotted a new course on the chart of human affairs. They know that mistakes will be made, that their present plans are not perfect, and that they have many problems yet to face; but they will go on with courage, for "Happiness is freedom, and freedom is courage." (Pericles: *The Funeral Oration*.)

⁵⁰ British Information Services, *Taxation in Britain*, New York, 1945. In 1946-47 an earned income of \$200,000 will, after taxation, leave the earner \$19,723.