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MOTHERHOOD

and

CHILD ENDOWMENT

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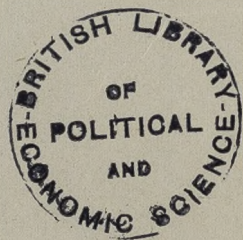
Interim Report to be placed before the
National Conference of Labour
Women at Leamington on
May 9 & 10, 1922

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MOTHERHOOD AND CHILD ENDOWMENT

PREFACE.

The National Conference of Labour Women, held at Manchester in April, 1921, passed unanimously the following resolution:—

“That this Conference calls upon the Government to introduce legislation to secure without delay pensions for women with children dependent upon them, on the lines proposed by the Labour Party in their Mothers’ Pensions Bill, 1920.

“It further requests the Labour Party to have a report prepared giving an account of its proposals for Mothers’ Pensions, provision for mother and child immediately before and after birth, maintenance allowances for all school children over fourteen, and other forms of provision for child welfare, together with an inquiry into schemes of motherhood or child endowment and their relation to these smaller schemes and to the general life of the community.”

The Executive Committee of the Labour Party in September, 1921, appointed a Committee to draw up a Report and submit it to them. This Committee later became one of the special advisory committees of the Joint Research and Information Department of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress.

The Committee appointed consisted of the following men and women:—

Mrs. Harrison Bell.
Mr. Hugh Dalton, M.A.
Mr. Emil Davies, L.C.C.
Mrs. Drake.
Dr. Letitia Fairfield.
Mrs. Hood.
Miss Susan Lawrence, L.C.C.
Mr. G. Middleton.
Mr. T. Shaw, M.P.
Mr. Paul Singer, and
Dr. Marion Phillips, Secretary.
Dr. Fairfield and Mr. Tom Shaw have been unable to attend any meetings.

The Report of the Committee which follows has not yet been adopted by the Joint Committee of the Research Department or either of the parent bodies. It is put forward now for the criticism and comments of the National Conference of Labour Women to be held at Leamington Spa on May 9 and 10, 1922.

The Committee cannot regard their Report as the last word on proposals so far-reaching in their effects on the whole of our institutions. It is, however, a serious attempt to put the issues clearly and to indicate the best lines of advance. It is a subject upon which women as mothers have naturally had the first word; but it affects so greatly every member of the community in their whole relationship to one another, both socially and from the economic point of view, that it is necessary that both men and women should contribute in deciding what the last word shall be.

The Report consists of five parts :—

- Part 1. The demand and its meaning.
- Part 2. The present programme of the Labour Party in regard to mothers and children.
- Part 3. Provision for mothers and children under the present law.
- Part 4. Schemes of motherhood and child endowment in this country and abroad.
- Part 5. Conclusions and a suggested programme.

The first four parts are a collection of facts. In Part 5 the conclusions drawn from them are put forward in a short summary.

Part 1. THE DEMAND AND ITS MEANING

The demand for some form of motherhood or child endowment has been steadily growing for some years past, but the conditions created by the war and the coincident (or consequent) grant of the Parliamentary Franchise to women has greatly stimulated the interest taken in proposals of this nature. The interest is by no means confined to this country. Universal provision for mothers and babies is being discussed in some form or another in nearly every country in the civilised world. Some of their proposals and the reasons for them are discussed in other portions of this report. Here, we are dealing with the demand and the meaning and cause of the demand in Great Britain alone.

As usually put forward, the demand is for some form of money payment to be made to a woman on account of her motherhood and on behalf of each of her children. But money is only of value when it can buy services or commodities, as, e.g., the service provided by a school in educating the children or the commodity of milk for feeding them. Thus endowment of mothers or children might be a payment of money or the provision of free services or commodities. The idea of endowment is, however, entirely opposed to the idea of relief of distress or poverty because it implies a universal national provision and not a means of making up deficiencies in the incomes of particular families. Broadly speaking, endowment schemes are receiving the interested and sympathetic attention of the people to-day because they see in them a means of security for their children apart altogether from any haphazard misfortunes of the individual resulting from the general chaos of industrial and social life. A desire for a higher standard of life for the children of this generation, a keener realisation of what equality of opportunity means in practice, makes the working class study eagerly any proposals to secure that equality and to safeguard that standard for their children. From an economic point of view many workers improved their standard of existence during the war period. They have to-day a bitter struggle to maintain even the pre-war standard. Can endowment schemes, whether of money or kind, assist them? Can they give that bedrock security for their families which would save them from disaster which no individual breadwinner can avert?

Other influences have also developed greatly the people's interest in these schemes. Women as voters have taken a new status in the community, and subjects which directly and intimately concern them have become prominent in the world of politics. The protection of motherhood and infancy and the nurture of the children are now political questions of primary importance, their true place in national life being the more clearly seen because of the inroads of war upon our population through death, disease and disablement, and the power which women have acquired. The Labour Movement has always recognised their primary importance, but even in the Labour Movement the new spirit amongst women has its quickening and stimulating effect.

The growing independence of the spirit of women has also a very great influence. Mothers desire to feel that when they devote their lives and energies to the welfare of their families they and their children shall not be wholly dependent upon one breadwinner. The desire for economic independence amongst women is not confined to those of the professional classes. Amongst working women who cease to be wage-earners on marriage, the desire for reasonable economic independence as human beings and as mothers is a growing force.

In industry, the subject becomes prominent because of the acute problem of the relation between the wages of women and men. The industrial danger of women undercutting men is not effectively or justly met by excluding women from certain employments. Yet equal pay for equal work has been impossible to secure in practice. If a man's wage is a family wage and a woman's need only be sufficient for one person (and that less than a man would need!), is it just that a single man should get the same as a married man, that a woman with dependents should get the wage of a single woman, and a married man with one child the same as a man with seven or eight? The difficulties presented by such wage problems have brought many people to the conclusion that they can only satisfactorily be solved by leaving out any question of family responsibilities and providing for all dependents by national endowment schemes, leaving the question of family responsibilities entirely out of any calculation as to wages.

There is, finally, the question whether by universal provision of certain universal needs the national wealth might not be better conserved than by the haphazard distribution of income to the individual breadwinner of the family, which is the present custom. War has impoverished us; we have lost further stores of wealth as a result of three years of a false peace; can we make better use of what is left and what can be produced, by establishing endowment schemes for mothers and children, especially by schemes of endowment in kind? For economy can be achieved by national or municipal ownership, control and distribution, which is beyond the power of the individual family, no matter how much they endeavour to be economical. From this point of view of national economy, the problem has been receiving the attention of economists.

It will be clear from this survey that Endowment Schemes must have very far-reaching consequences. It is not only necessary to consider whether it would be a good thing for a mother to have 10s. or £1 or 30s. coming into the house every week for her and two or three children as an endowment or pension for them in addition to their father's money. It is also necessary to consider the effect of the payment of this money upon the father's wages. Will Trade Unions be able to withstand the attacks made upon those wages, if the wage-earner no longer has the dependents' needs to supply. What would be the effect on the whole system of Trade Union bargaining and negotiation of such a separation of wages from family responsibilities? Would it mean an addition to incomes or a redistribution? How would the money be collected for these payments? What would be the burden of collection and distribution? What would be the financial effect on the country, and would it react on prices? Would a decrease in wages or rise in prices leave her perhaps even worse off than before?

A money endowment scheme may at first sight seem an admirably logical and exact solution of present difficulties. But logical schemes have a way of breaking against stubborn and unexpected facts. If such a scheme is to be adopted as part of a practical programme of the Labour Party, it must be examined very carefully in its relation to the present financial system and in its effects upon Trade Union methods of negotiation and wage regulation. Moreover, schemes of endowment in kind as well as endowment in money

require the most careful consideration. Such forms of endowment already exist in regard to certain services, and the Labour Party programme advocates their extension in many directions. Nor are the beginnings of money endowment absent from their programme. It is the business of practical politicians endeavouring to find help for the good parent of to-day overburdened with the anxieties of the present and fears for the future, to develop an immediately possible programme which shall surely lead the way to Utopia but need not be postponed until Utopia is reached.

The plan of this Report is therefore, first, to examine the Labour Party programme and see how far it now proposes that provision shall be made from national funds for the upbringing of children. This programme will then be compared with the existing provision and with various endowment schemes put forward in this and other countries. This part of the Report is still, in the opinion of the Committee, incomplete and will be later extended to include further schemes and closer criticism. But the attention of Conference delegates is specially directed now to the proposals in Part 5 that their views may assist the Committee in completing their task.

Part 2. THE PRESENT PROGRAMME OF THE LABOUR PARTY WITH REGARD TO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

The needs of children may be broadly classed under the following headings :

1. Care for their health and their mothers' health.
2. Education.
3. Food.
4. Clothes.
5. Good houses and environment.
6. Reasonable opportunity for recreation.

The programme of the Labour Party includes complete free services for medical advice, treatment and nursing care not only for children but, indeed, for all the population. It is part of their policy to advocate every possible provision for maintaining the health of the children and for seeing that disease is prevented, and, if not prevented, is cured in the most successful way. The programme gives special attention to the care of mothers both before and after the birth of their children, and under the schemes advocated both mothers' as well as babies' clinics would be provided for all the population. In caring for the mothers at the time of child-birth the Party advocates the provision of home helps to carry on the work of the housewife, as well as the provision of nurses, midwives, doctors, hospital treatment when needed, and convalescent homes. So far as the direct health services are concerned, they advocate *complete and free provision*. After the children are born the baby clinics for medical advice and treatment would take them on to school age, and when once they were in attendance at school the school medical service would provide complete treatment and advice. Such free services include school medical service from the nursery school onwards, treatment as well as inspection being given with the consent and co-operation of the parent.

It should be noted that a service so extended would mean replacing the present Health Insurance scheme by a public service, thus saving to the workers that portion of their income which goes now in contributions. As the workers often in reality pay the employers' share as well, the saving is considerable. The whole cost of the services would be paid from local and national taxation, which, properly adjusted on the Labour Party's scheme, would be graded more justly and fall on those who could best afford to pay.

Education is provided for in a similar way—i.e., it should be free from the nursery school, at which the child can be admitted at two years of age, through the primary and secondary schools and the Universities, maintenance allowances being available when needed. Under their policy, all kinds of

education, general and technical, should be free, and the whole expense of educating the children would thus be a national and not an individual charge.

FOOD. Expectant and nursing mothers who need nourishment should be able to get a sufficient supply of milk either free or at a low cost. Labour advocates this also for all babies and children up to school age, in order to make sure that they should have a full supply of milk—the essential food for the infant population. Under the School Feeding Acts, which Labour advocated for many years before they were finally passed, all children of school age in need of food can be supplied with free meals, which may be as many as three a day, and may be continued during the holidays.

CLOTHES. Provision for clothes is not specifically advocated, but children whose parents cannot afford to provide the necessary clothes and boots for a child attending a secondary school, or to do without the wages that a child would bring in if it left school at the ordinary time, would receive maintenance allowances which would continue throughout attendance at the University, if they went there.

With regard to houses and environment, Labour advocates the provision of healthy homes, on garden city lines, by public authorities at reasonable rents. This, of course, leaves the families to pay rent of a larger or smaller amount according to the size of their families and the relative supply and demand of houses; but would at least secure, if properly carried out, the provision of equal amenities of environment for all.

RECREATION. The Labour Party favours the provision of a number of open spaces, playing grounds, and gymnasia, free libraries, and such mixed educational and recreational pursuits as visits to Shakespearean performances, museums and picture galleries, and the encouragement of the provision of music and recreational clubs of all sorts in the schools. The use of the schools as evening play centres, for example, has their complete support, and time for swimming and organised games should, in their opinion, be part of the ordinary educational system. Though no national policy has been adopted on this point, many local Labour movements have succeeded in securing from the Educational Authorities grants for sending children from town areas for a fortnight's holiday in the country during the summer months, and others have established school camps for their children in order that they may get the benefit of an open-air life during their holidays. Thus the recreational needs of the child population have had considerable attention from the Labour Movement.

With regard to the foregoing, it should be noted that they are in the nature of endowment by services, being open to all and paid for from the general funds of the nation. But the Labour Party has advocated special provision for families of many kinds in cases where the normal method of securing an income has failed. For it is to be noticed that up to the present time the Labour Party has accepted as the ordinary method of providing for a family that the father shall be responsible for securing the income. Where for any reason that income fails, other means of making it up find their place in Labour's programme. There is, however, one general exception, namely, the provision for mothers at the time of child-birth. The Labour Party propose that all mothers, whether in employment or not, should receive the benefits set forth for those working in industry or commerce under the Maternity Convention passed by the International Labour Conference, held at Washington in 1919, under the terms of the Peace Treaty. These include not only full medical and nursing care, but also sufficient payment to secure full and healthy maintenance for mother and child for six weeks before and six weeks after birth. Such a scheme would soon be as universal and of more value than the Australian payment of £5 to every mother.

We come, finally, to the provisions suggested where the ordinary means of income has failed. If that failure is due to unemployment, proper maintenance or the provision of work at standard rates is advocated. The maintenance in such cases would be regulated by the number in the family. The wages, however, would be as in the ordinary Labour market—the same for all men workers doing the same class of work in the same area. Where the loss of income is due to the fact that the father is dead or invalided or has deserted his family, Labour advocates pensions for mothers and children sufficient for their proper maintenance. Under the Labour Party Bill, mothers would receive pensions regulated from time to time by the cost of living and at least as high as those now given to the widows and children of soldiers and sailors. If the father is an invalid he would receive, in addition, an invalidity pension in order that he might be well cared for.

Where children have lost both parents, pensions would be provided for the children, and they would be under the care of Health and Education authorities, according to their age.

When we sum up the results of this survey of the Labour Party programme, we see that if it were fully adopted there would be full free provision with regard to the two services of education and health, together with the addition of a payment to the mother at the time of child-birth, but that other provision made is all in the nature of special allowances in order to make up deficiencies due to special circumstances. In other words, the ordinary view is accepted that the needs of a family shall be met by the earnings of the father without consideration of the size of the family, just as the same wages are paid whether a man is married or unmarried, whether he has eight, four or two children or none, and the same wage is paid to a woman whether she has dependents or not.

It should perhaps be added that, in dealing with income-tax reform, the Labour Party is in favour of all earned incomes below £200 in the case of a single man or woman, and higher amounts in the case of those who are married, being exempt from tax altogether, and greater relief being given to small income-tax payers above that line for their children. This would equalise the burden of taxation for families of different sizes.

Part 3. THE PROVISION FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN UNDER THE PRESENT LAW

The provision which is made under the present law for providing services and commodities or money payments to enable people to care for their children, is not very great. Unfortunately, the service of free education only extends, compulsorily, from five to fourteen years of age, and is in danger of being shortened by the omission of the first of these years. It is true that Education Authorities may provide secondary schools and may give scholarships and free places in secondary schools and maintenance allowances, but severe limits are being put into force in order to reduce this so-called "extravagance." There is also power to establish or support nursery schools, but its use also is being severely discouraged.

For mothers and babies, the Maternity Child Welfare Act gives power to make provision of services in all the ways advocated by the Labour Party, but no Local Authority is *compelled* to make such provision, and at the present time they are being urged to restrict and not to extend their services. The payment of allowances to mothers to insure full and healthy maintenance for six weeks before and six weeks after the birth of the child, which the Washington Convention adopted for all women in commercial and industrial employment, has not been put into force, the Government claiming that the provision made by the maternity benefit under the Insurance Act already makes sufficient provision.

Under the Insurance Act, insured women whose husbands are insured receive a maternity benefit on their own insurance of £2, and on their husband's insurance of a similar amount. If the woman is not insured she only gets £2. There is also some provision for special sickness benefit if the confinement leaves illness behind it, but not for the normal period during which the woman is unable to get about.

It is possible, with the consent of the Ministry of Health, for a Local Authority to establish treatment clinics for mothers and babies, but they are advised to establish centres for advice only, and they are discouraged from doing anything further. In a similar way, school clinics are advisory and not treatment centres, and nearly half the children in the schools are found to have defects for which no provision of a remedial kind is made.

Convalescent Homes may be established, but the Local Authority must get the consent of the Central Authority (Ministry of Health) for doing this—and "economy" stands in the way.

The provision of milk free, or at a low cost, for expectant and nursing mothers and babies and infants up to five years of age, is now being restricted, and children over twelve months are not to be supplied except in cases where a medical certificate is given, while milk for expectant mothers can only be given for the last three months of pregnancy and while nursing her baby—and then only after stringent inquiries and with many restrictions.

Moreover, the milk supply for babies and small children is not in accordance with the needs of those children and is lowered to 1 pint a day, and is only to be given while the family income is very low indeed. School meals are also very much discouraged.

Recreational needs are provided for very inadequately, while the condition of housing can be judged from the fact that a million houses were needed in England, Wales and Scotland in 1919, and only about 200,000 have as yet been built in England and Wales. The clearing of slums and the development of housing on garden city lines has been retarded, and the rent of houses placed on so high a level that those families in which there are many children are practically restricted to slum areas.

When we come to provision in the case of families where the ordinary breadwinner has failed to provide an income, unemployment allowance must first be dealt with. Under the 1920 Act, unemployment benefit was 15s. for a man and 12s. for a woman, irrespective of the number of children. Under the 1921 Act, the number of dependents has been taken into account, and a grant of 5s. for a wife and 1s. for each child has been made, thus showing a total disregard of the actual needs of the individuals making up the family.

All other provision, save for pensions of soldiers and sailors and their dependents, is either in the form of sickness or invalidity benefit under the Insurance Act or Poor Law Relief. In the case of the first, there is no recognition of the dependents' needs at all; in the case of the second, the amount does not pretend to be sufficient to keep those dependents. But it is notable that in paying to those who are destitute, as in the case of the unemployed and the persons who receive Poor Law relief, the needs of the dependents are taken into account and payment is so much to the applicant and so much for each dependent—we might perhaps better say *so little* for each dependent. We have not included Workmen's Compensation, because that is a charge upon the employer—not on national funds.

Apart from periods of unemployment, the most important class receiving out-door relief under the Poor Law are the widows with children and the wives of invalids or deserted women who have children dependent on them.

Under the present system the Poor Law pays a small amount to the mother if she is able to work, and a small amount to each of the children. If she is able-bodied, she receives nothing for herself and her first child, but a small

sum for each of the others. As relief is administered by Boards of Guardians, with a certain discretion allowed to each of them, some follow a much more generous system than others, but the law requires that the widow and her children be relieved only from absolute destitution. They are not to be given a sufficient amount to provide for the reasonable upbringing of their families.

So far as provision is made for orphan children, it is made through the Poor Law, either by putting them in their schools or even workhouses, or boarding them out under its care. We may contrast with this the treatment of the wives and children of soldiers and sailors who are serving; these receive separation allowances, irrespective of any income they may have themselves, and based upon the number of children and their ages. Similar provision is made for the dependents of men on service or losing their lives. But the civilian widow, the deserted wife of a civilian and the wife of an invalided civilian, are only provided for if they are absolutely destitute, and then only through the Poor Law.

The State also gives relief amounting, roughly, from 1s. 10d. to 3s. 6d. per week to income tax payers for their children. The amount of income which is exempt from the payment of tax is, however, very small, being only £36 for the first and £27 for each additional child.

Part 4. SCHEMES OF MOTHERHOOD AND CHILD ENDOWMENT IN THIS COUNTRY AND ABROAD

Some general schemes of money endowment have from time to time been put forward, and some forms of family allowances other than those we have mentioned are in force in countries outside our own. In the following paragraphs we have endeavoured to pick out examples of different kinds of schemes, both tried and untried.

1. The State bonus or family endowment.

This was a scheme put forward by Mr. Milner which was considered and reported on by a Committee at the Labour Party Conference at Scarborough, in 1921. The Report was unfavourable to the scheme, and was adopted. Shortly stated, the scheme proposed to take from all persons 20 per cent. of their income and to distribute this sum to each person at a flat rate—i.e. the same to each, irrespective of any qualification. The Report of the Committee regarded the scheme as attempting to do the right thing in the wrong way, and they summed up a careful report in the following statement, with which we agree:—

1. The scheme is already covered by various measures.
2. It is politically inexpedient.
3. It causes great industrial disturbance.
4. Its finance, collection and distribution are almost unmanageable.
5. It establishes a low standard of life.
6. It conflicts with the Labour Party's principles of graduation and discrimination in taxation; takes no account of the ability to pay nor the need to receive.

The scheme has been rejected by the Labour Party, and as an immediate measure it would be totally impracticable, attractive though it seems at first sight.

2. FRANCE. Here certain experiments have been made by employers, quite clearly in the hope of keeping down their wage bill during the war years. But even before then a few undertakings of a public kind had been tried. The reason given by them for doing so was the desire to stabilise and recruit their staffs suitably.

Thus, for example, as early as 1890 the railway companies began to pay their staff, in addition to their salaries, allowances proportionate to the number of

children below a certain age, or not capable of working. In 1917, the State granted family allowances to civil servants. These allowances are payable for each child up to sixteen years of age. Private employers took the matter up very slowly.

It was a Grenoble company, La Société des Etablissements Rogis & Joya, which took the initiative in 1916 in granting to its married workers monthly progressive allowances in accordance with the number of children dependent upon them. This establishment quickly won for the cause of family wages the metal working employers of Grenoble and the neighbourhood, and in 1918 it took the initiative in establishing a system for disposing of the difficulties indicated above. Thenceforward, instead of paying the allowance individually, employers were to combine in establishing a sort of mutual fund to which they were to pay a contribution and which would assume responsibility for the family allowances payable to the workers. This institution was known as a clearing fund for family allowances. It was organised on the following essential principles:—

The fund ascertained at stated periods the total family allowances payable by its members, together with the wages paid by them to their staffs. The proportion per cent. of the total allowances to the total wages was then ascertained, and to this was added a sum equal to the cost of administering the fund. The division of the figure thus obtained by the number of members gave the amount of the contribution payable by each. If the total of the allowances distributed by any member was greater than the amount of his contribution, the fund reimbursed him the difference. On the other hand, if he had paid less than his quota, he was required to pay the difference to the fund. Later, when experience had made it possible to fix an average contribution, the latter was fixed at a uniform rate of 5 per cent. of the wages.

The example of the Grenoble employers was rapidly followed by others, and in February, 1921, there were in France fifty-three clearing funds serving a million workers and distributing more than sixty million francs in allowances.

The funds are local, or more frequently regional. Some of them embrace industries of every kind in the same region; others are only applicable to a group of similar industries.

Two very interesting examples may be given. The Nantes fund, founded by the Western Regional Committee of the National Association for Economic Expansion (Comité Régional de l'Ouest de l'Association Nationale d'expansion économique), pays Frs. 0.50 per working day for every child or ascendant dependent upon the head of the family.

As this fund includes various industries in which the family responsibilities of the majority of the workers are different, it has been found necessary, in order to equalise the expenses falling upon each industry, to divide them into four groups—metal working, importation of coal and various warehousing industries, food, and commerce. Undertakings are, moreover, grouped in sections. For the purpose of calculating the contribution, the total allowances payable in each section are ascertained in accordance with the number of persons dependent on the heads of families employed and the number of days worked. The total number of hours worked by the workers of each category is then ascertained. The total allowance payable is divided by the total hours, and the quotient thus obtained for each group is multiplied by the number of hours respectively worked, and the result is the amount of the contribution.

The clearing fund of the Consortium of the textile industry of Roubaix-Tourcoing pays Frs. 3 per working day for each child under thirteen. In addition, it pays a bonus at birth of Frs. 200 per child. This bonus is paid indifferently to the father or mother, whichever is employed in an undertaking belonging to the fund.

With regard to women, the position is curious. The last-named fund is thus dealt with. The family allowance is paid in full to every woman worker employed alone who proves that her husband is unable to work. When both father and mother work, only the father receives the allowance. Unmarried mothers are entitled to the allowance.

There was an attempt made to bring in a law to make these schemes universal, but the employers object and prefer "private liberty and initiative."

It will be noted that these schemes only affect some workers employed by certain firms in certain districts. It is to be questioned whether it has not many of the faults of co-partnership schemes. We have not yet been able to obtain the opinions of French Trade Unionists. It certainly has not effected any improvement in the rates of women's wages as compared with men's—but it helps those women who have dependents.

3. GERMANY. Here family allowances are a result of low subsistence, and are due to the high cost of living and economic disaster of the country. The State used to pay allowances to its employees for their children, and during the war some employers did so in their efforts to keep down rates of wages, as in France. The Trade Unions opposed such payment by individual employers, and at the Revolution the system was abolished.

At the end of 1919 the increasing cost of living gave rise to a strong movement for the raising of wages. The employers then proposed to re-introduce the system of family allowances and children's allowances, and this system has, in fact, been embodied in nearly all the collective agreements concluded at that time and afterwards.

Family wages, therefore, now exist in almost all trades and industries, above all in the mining, iron and steel, and metal industries.

The scheme in the metal trade is especially interesting. It applies only to male workers, and the allowance is paid to the man for wife and every child up to fourteen years.

This allowance is regarded as part of the wage, but is not payable when a man interrupts his day's work on account of a strike or demonstration. In special cases, however, the full allowance may be granted, even if a full day's work has not been done.

When a firm is compelled by the economic situation to introduce short time, the full allowance is expected to be paid unless the financial position of the undertaking renders this impossible.

It is little wonder that the German workers are trying to abolish this system, which depends on the financial position of the individual employer.

It will be noted again that these schemes only affect a portion of the people, and that they are rather in the nature of "relief" than endowment schemes.

4. AUSTRALIA. In Australia wages are in almost all employments fixed by awards of Arbitration Courts. These are supposed to adjust wages to a "fair and reasonable" standard of life. In 1907 one of the Judges, Mr. Higgins, fixed this roughly at 7s. a day. (This applies to men only.) It was a very rough estimate and pretended to be nothing more.

However, in spite of its obvious defects, Mr. Justice Higgins's figure has been generally adopted, with increases computed in proportion to the increased cost of living according to the figure given by the "Commonwealth Statistician," from 1912 onwards, taking the year 1911 as base. These figures themselves are open to the objection that they deal with only two sections of working-class expenditure—rent and food, which constitute little more than half of the expenditure of a household.

In 1917 and 1918 both the President and Vice-President of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court suggested that the Federal Government should appoint a Commission to inquire into the whole matter, fix a "fair and reasonable" standard of living, and fix the wage required to meet the cost of that standard. This suggestion was adopted by the Prime Minister, Mr. Hughes, and a Royal Commission was appointed in December, 1919, to inquire into:

1. The actual cost of living at the present time according to reasonable standards of comfort, including all matters comprised in the ordinary expenditure of a household for a man with a wife and three children under fourteen years of age, and the several items and amounts which make up that cost.
2. The actual corresponding cost of living during each of the last five years.
3. How the basic wage may be automatically adjusted to the rise and fall from time to time of the purchasing power of the sovereign.

Mr. Hughes promised at the same time that the Government would "at the earliest date possible create effective machinery to give effect to these principles."

The Commission, consisting of three representatives of employers and three of employees, with Mr. A. B. Piddington, K.C., as chairman, made an exhaustive inquiry, travelling from State to State, and eventually reported that the cost of living in November, 1920, according to reasonable standards of comfort ranged from £5 6s. 2d. in Brisbane to £5 17s. in Sydney. These figures were far higher than any which had been adopted by either Federal or State wage-fixing bodies. In 1920 the New South Wales Board of Trade fixed £4 5s. as a basic wage for a family of four. The South Australian Court decided on £3 15s. in the same year, and in the other States the recognised minimum was about the same.

The Prime Minister immediately asked Mr. Knibbs, the Commonwealth Statistician, whether the annual income of the country would bear a basic wage of £5 16s. for all male adult employees, and received the reply that the total annual wealth produced, including that portion which went to profits, would not, if equally divided among the wage earners, yield the amount required.

At the same time Mr. Hughes addressed a series of questions to the Chairman of the Commission, who produced in reply a lengthy memorandum. He believes that world prices will not at present permit so great an addition to labour costs as would be involved in the wholesale raising of the basic wage to £5 16s., but considers that the difficulty might be met by the endowment of children by the State. On his plan all male adults would receive from their employers a basic wage of £4. The employers would pay to the State a tax of 10s. 9d. weekly for each man employed, and the proceeds of this tax would be spent by the State in paying the wives of wage earners 12s. per child weekly.

A Bill on these lines was introduced into the New South Wales Parliament, but was not passed.

As to the practical results of the report, Mr. Hughes announced in February, 1922, when it was presented to Parliament, that the Government refused absolutely to make the basic wage for the Continent £5 16s., and reserved its decision concerning the Piddington memorandum. Three weeks later it was announced that for employees of the Federal Government a basic wage of £4 was approved, and that an endowment of 5s. per child per week would also be paid. Since then the New South Wales Government has promised to bring in a Bill for endowing mothers to the extent of 6s. a week for all children beyond two.

This latter Government has been defeated at the polls, and therefore no further action is likely. The scheme of the employers paying on each male employee appears to have been abandoned, probably owing to the following difficulties :—

1. Large number of very small businesses from whom collection could not be made.
2. Scheme would not cover other than industrial employment.
3. Difficulties as to payments during Labour disputes.
4. Difficulties of settling on a basic minimum wage in a capitalist State.

The interesting thing is that child endowment through the mother seems now to hold the field. This means, of course, a very large collection of funds through taxation, and an equally large expenditure under a complex system (in itself expensive) of funds.

In the suggestion we offer in Part 5 we have sought first the more economical methods of endowment in services and kind, with special forms of money distribution, either temporary, as for mothers in childbirth, or restricted to those whose circumstances are different from those of the normal family through death, illness or unemployment. But we do not consider that our programme covers the whole ground for the future.

For the information as to France, Germany and Australia we have to express our thanks to the International Labour Office, who have supplied us with most valuable reports, from which our quotations are made.

Part 5. CONCLUSIONS AND A SUGGESTED PROGRAMME.

(1) In the opinion of the Committee one of the first aims of the Labour Party to make adequate provision for those mothers and children whose normal means of livelihood are cut off by (a) the unemployment or (b) death, illness or desertion of the father. This should be done by providing :—

(a) Adequate Maintenance during unemployment of the father in accordance with the proposals laid down already.

(b) By Mothers' Pensions on the lines of the Labour Party's Bill of 1919.

These are both schemes for direct money payments.

(2) Further provision is, however, needed to ensure the good nurture of the children and to ease and equalise the burden of large and small families, as well as childless people and parents. This might be met either by services common to all or by direct money payments in the form of a pension for every child. The Committee are of opinion that many services can be most economically and adequately provided by the community as a whole, thus taking the burden of payment off the shoulders of the individual parent and sharing it equitably over the whole of the people through properly graded taxation. They believe that the efforts of the Labour Party should be directed first to securing these universal services. Later, it may also be advisable to supplement these by what may be broadly termed "children's pensions" from birth to working life. But this would require for its successful and economic administration considerable changes in the wage system, as well as very great increase in taxation, and must therefore be held over for later consideration when Labour in power has been able to reorganise and stabilise society on a better basis. Therefore, in this report, direct money payments are only recommended to meet special needs of a temporary character, and endowment in kind rather than endowment in money is favoured as the next step.

In regard to services, the Committee recommend :

1. Universal free education from nursery school to the university with maintenance allowances according to the present policy of Labour.
2. Universal free services with regard to health. The proposal for this included in the report on hospitals covers much of the ground.
3. The extension to all women of the provisions of the Washington Convention on Maternity, providing medical and nursing care, together with adequate maintenance six weeks before and six weeks after child-birth.
4. Provisions of pure milk for expectant and nursing mothers and infants up to five years of age at cost price, or, where desirable, free, and suitable medical supervision through clinics and welfare centres.
5. School medical service in its most complete form for all children at school. With regard to medical supervision both of infants and school children, the Committee urge that it should always be carried out with the close co-operation of the mother, the aim being to give to all as nearly as possible the same advantages as of a family doctor, with the added advantage of access to the best scientific knowledge of a great public service.
6. **FOOD.** Labour has always advocated the feeding at the schools of hungry children whose parents cannot afford to feed them at home. The Committee recommend that provision should be made for at least one meal per day during the school terms for all children. To have the mid-day meal at school is the ordinary practice in a large number of fee-paying schools. Meals thus provided cannot only be given at less cost, but can be especially adapted to the need of children of varying ages. In country schools where the children have long distances to cover, such provision would be a great advantage. Moreover, the fact that meals were provided not only for the very poorest children but for all, would secure a better standard. The Committee therefore recommend that a general communal service should be established in our schools of a mid-day meal under good conditions for all children. No mother would be forced to allow her child to have this meal, but we believe very soon it would become an accepted part of school life.
7. **CLOTHING AND BOOTS.** As with food, so with these. It would be a great national as well as family economy if school clothes and boots were provided for all the children. This would not necessarily mean regulation dress, though the Committee are of opinion that a well-planned scheme for this on reasonably elastic lines would be an advantage. Regulation dress is becoming more and more the accepted thing in fee-paying schools and less the custom in Poor Law and Charity schools. The reason for this is obvious. The Poor Law uniforms were cheap and nasty, and marked the children as paupers; much the same is true of the uniforms in Charity schools, many of which are exceedingly unsuitable to school life, being quaint survivals of the past. It has been found, however, in the fee-paying schools, that, by giving suitable, healthy and simple designs for the children's clothes, the spirit of the school is improved, the children are more comfortably and healthily dressed, and the comparative difference in income between one family and another is less noticeable. In the elementary schools to-day there is a growing custom of having school caps and badges, and it is found that these definitely increase the good feeling of the children

towards their school and one another. On social and hygienic grounds, as well as economic, the Committee is of opinion that the adoption of a simple and becoming regulation dress for boys and girls, varying from place to place or even school to school, according to the arrangements made by the local education authorities, and having different badges and marks of distinction, would be a good thing. It is not at all intended that every child in the free schools throughout the country should wear the same kind of uniform. The colour and design, as well as the material, would vary; and especially with regard to girls' summer dresses, there would be great scope for embroidery and similar constructive work of design in the curriculum of the school itself.

8. HOUSING. Here we have a very difficult problem which can only be dealt with by accepting straightforwardly the obligation on the part of the nation to provide healthy homes for all its people. To do that effectively, it must free the land as well as own the houses. Our old system of building has been to provide for working-class families houses which are only large enough to make proper provision for two or three children. The big families have always had to choose between rents they cannot afford or slums they hate to live in. We suggest we must work towards a policy which will accept the right of every family to a house sufficiently large for all its members, with a regulation of rents which will give the big families a chance.

These proposals we make as a practical programme which a Labour Government should endeavour to carry out as quickly as possible. It would go far to make the lives of women and children secure. We do not pretend that it would go all the way. It is only part of that general organisation of society which will lead to far greater development of national endowment both in services, in commodities, and in money in the future; but it would in itself greatly relieve the family income of many of the expenses involved in the rearing of children and thereby do much to equalise the burden of their parents.