

NOTES AND NEWS

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK, 1947

*Welcome Address by The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. C. Chagla,
Chairman of the Reception Committee*

It gives me very great pleasure as Chairman of the Reception Committee to welcome to this City social workers and representatives of social service agencies from all over India. I consider it the proud privilege of Bombay to be the venue of the first session of this All India Conference of Social Work.

Social work in all its aspects has assumed vital and paramount importance since India achieved her independence on the 15th of August, because we must never allow ourselves to forget that one of the most cherished goals of free India is social justice. It is not enough that in free India men should be equal before the law and that evenhanded justice should be meted out by courts of law. Nor is it enough that our political institutions should be democratic institutions and that we should conform to all the, democratic principles—that men should be free, that there should be freedom of press, freedom of association and freedom of worship. It is equally important that there should be social justice in this country if we are to justify our freedom and establish our claim to be a progressive nation prepared to be judged by the highest standards laid down by thinkers and public men all the world over.

What is social justice? Every human being belongs to some society or other. It may be a primitive society or it may be an advanced society and as such he owes a duty to society and he owes a loyalty to society. He has to obey its laws, and not only its laws but also its unwritten conventions. That is one side of the picture and

unfortunately that is the side which is usually emphasised. It is apt to be forgotten that society in its turn owes a debt to every one who is its member. The Victorian ideal used to be the greatest good of the greatest number, but that ideal has now become a little tarnished and worn out. The ideal of today is that we must work for the greatest good of all members of society leaving put none from the all pervasive effects of social justice.

There are certain fundamental social rights *to* which every citizen is entitled. The first and foremost is his right to work. I am using the word "right" and not "duty", because every son of Adam has to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow and to that extent his duty is plain and simple. But there are thousands of able bodied men gifted with intelligence and talent for whom society can find nothing to do, however willing they might be to work, and it is this recognition of the right to work, which, to my mind, is the first principle of social justice. Every citizen is also entitled to be free from want. No society can furnish to every person luxury or comfort. Equally so, no society can refuse to a citizen those elementary rights which alone make it possible for a man to realise his manhood and not to sink to the degradation of beasts and animals. Every one is also entitled, while he remains a useful member of society, to feel that he has security, not security in many possessions, or in riches, or in the hoardings of a life-time, but security in the thought that in his old age the labour and hard work that he has put in would give him deserving comfort and ease and that in the event

of his being cut off in the prime of his life, his dependents would be looked after by society till they are in a position to be on their legs.

We are often prone to pass severe judgments on the failings and shortcomings of our fellowmen. In doing so, we often forget to what a large extent this is due to frustrations and maladjustments for which society is largely responsible. Our function, therefore, should be not so much to judge as to understand, not to condemn but to abolish the cause of frustrations and to set right the maladjustments.

A clear cut distinction must be drawn between charity and social justice. When you give charity, you are giving something to which the person receiving it is not entitled. It almost inevitably engenders in the mind of the donor a sense of superiority that he has done well in the eye of the Lord; on the other hand, in doing social justice you are only paying society's debts to the person who is its creditor, and whether the debt is paid by the society as such or by individuals constituting the society, there is nothing more sanctimonious about the deed than the discharging of one's duty.

In our country, in all communities we have had a very high sense of benevolence and charity; munificent donations have been given to relieve poverty and distress and to advance education and other deserving causes. But, unfortunately, we have on the whole lacked a social sense. We have rarely thought in terms of society, Our thoughts have either run in communal grooves or if we are sufficiently broad-minded we have taken a humanitarian view. But underlying all this has always been that feeling that the poor and the downtrodden deserve to be helped by those who are better off. We have never felt strongly that poverty, disease, illiteracy are all social evils which can be eradicated.

In order to eradicate them the first step is to hate them passionately and to realise that these evils were not ordained by God but are man made and can be done away with by man.

Unfortunately—and I wish to be quite frank—both the great religions in India, the Hindu and the Muslim religions have inculcated a philosophy which has had the unfortunate effect of making men tolerate these evils. The Hindu with his theory of *karma* often believes that what a man suffers here is preordained and that he is born in this world for the sins that he committed in a past life. The Muslim with his belief in *kismet* equally believes that suffering, if destined, has to be gone through cheerfully and inevitably. This is the philosophy we have to fight against. There is nothing inevitable or sacred or ordained about poverty, disease or illiteracy. It is a comfortable and convenient philosophy, which, people to whom the Gods have been kind and who have been brought up in the lap of luxury, hug to themselves in order not to be reminded that millions of men in this country are living in the most abject poverty and in conditions which are a disgrace to any civilised society.

One of the problems this Conference will have to tackle will be to what extent social service must be rendered by private effort and to what extent by the State. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* has already died a natural death. No one now suggests that it is not the duty of the State to redress social wrongs and social injustices. But in our country the task is so colossal that it is impossible to expect the State on the threshold of its nascent existence to undertake the gigantic work of being the sole dispenser of social justice which ultimately it must become. Therefore, for a long time to come, there will always be

need and pressing need for a host of individual social workers and private social agencies, and I am sure during its deliberations this Conference will consider how the work of these individuals and agencies should be co-ordinated so as to produce the best and most satisfactory result. I do not wish to suggest that the State has not even in the immediate future to play a very big part in doing social justice. No individual and no private agency can possibly have the funds or the organisation which are at the disposal of government.

It is indeed a curious irony of history that when a country is waging war its patriotism touches the highest level and people are prepared to pour out millions in the work of destruction, and also more nobly in alleviating suffering which is caused by that very destruction; but when the country goes back to peace, somehow the tide of patriotism begins to run out and we have not the enthusiasm or the farsightedness to spend a hundredth of what we were prepared to spend on devising and forging devilish instruments of destruction.

For a long time thinking men in India have felt that our social conscience requires to be roused and attempts have been made from time to time to organise social work and put it on a sound footing. As early as 1889, we had the Indian National Social Conference with whose work the name of Mr. Justice Ranade will always be associated. That Conference went on for nearly 35 years. Then we had the Social Service Conference, the first session of which was held in Calcutta in December, 1917 and its first President was no less a

person than Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest social workers India or perhaps the world has produced. But the continuity of these conferences has never been kept up and they seem to be more spasmodic than something with an internal strength which goes on growing and expanding. People with a sensitive social-conscience have also established in different parts of the country *Seva Sadans* and *Seva Samitis* and Social Service Leagues, but I am glad that the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Bombay, one of the finest, if not the finest, institutions of its kind in India, ultimately gave a lead in the matter and called a meeting of various social welfare agencies in this City to organise an All India Conference of Social Work and this Conference, which I have the honour to address, is the result of that lead given by the teachers and *alumni* of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. I sincerely hope that this Conference will succeed in drawing the attention of Government and of the citizens of this State to the many social ills from which India suffers and also in pointing out the ways and means by which conditions in this country can be ameliorated. I hope the work of the Conference will not end by merely passing resolutions and then breaking up to meet again after a year. The object of the organisers is to do something practical and concrete, not merely to arouse the social conscience, but to make both Government and individuals to work in their own respective spheres so that our free and independent India should not only boast of a political democracy but should become a country where her citizens can lead a good and happy life.

Inaugural Address by The Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher, Prime Minister of Bombay

It is indeed a great privilege for me to be invited to inaugurate this Conference where so many distinguished men and women from different parts of the country have assembled to consider problems connected with the organisation of social work. I am grateful to you for having given me this opportunity to meet such a galaxy of social workers and to revive contacts with many old friends. The object of this Conference, as we all know, is to enable social workers from different fields to exchange ideas and experience and, in particular, to assist in establishing a standing organisation for studying problems, disseminating information and providing facilities for exchange of views regarding social work. In a vast country like ours not only are social problems different in different areas and groups, but they are even related to different stages of social development and a central clearing house of information is bound to be of great value. Besides, as each social worker is naturally restricted in practice to a small part of the total field, opportunities of organised, contact are essential in order to make the accumulated experience of some generally available to all. I trust that the deliberations of this conference will lead to a clearer perception of the many problems which are going to be discussed here and will result in establishing an organisation with a definite programme of co-ordinated activity of social service by scientific methods.

I would take this occasion to make a plea for a true and correct appreciation of what we understand by society. "The whole succession of men during many ages" said Pascal "should be considered as one man ever living and constantly learning." This is the true organic view of humanity regarded either, as a single whole or in its several races, nations or communities. The

Purusha Sukta of the Hindu has given us the same conception. "The apophthegm is not primarily of political or of ethical significance but is a statement of natural history." Speaking of the ascent of man, in his beautiful book "Work and Wealth—A Human Valuation" Hobson says, "There is no clear evidence of the continuous ascent of man regarded as an individual, at any rate within historical times. There is evidence of the ascent of human society towards a larger and closer complexity of human relations and a clearer intellectual and moral consciousness. This means that mankind as a whole and its several societies are becoming more capable of a human valuation and of a collective conduct of affairs guided by this conscious process." So long as society is spoken of and thought of as an abstraction, no social conduct is, in his opinion, sound or safe. "For an abstraction is incapable of calling forth our reverence, regard or love. And until we attribute to society such a form and degree of personality as can evoke in us those interests and emotions which personality alone can win, the social-will will not be able to perform great works." Here is food for thought for all of us and we should pursue this line of thought even if it is difficult.

The traditions of social service in this country have been of the highest. There have always been thousands of men and women who, in their own quiet manner, have devoted themselves to the service of their fellow beings. Their example cannot but inspire humility and reverence in all of us. "Among many human desires there is a unique desire—the desire to do right" and among other moral resources men possess "a sense of obligation towards the good as their mind conceives it." That is why there have been, are, and always will be social workers. Social workers, however,

are usually so deeply absorbed in *doing* social work that they rarely have the time to think *about* social work. And so, if social effort is to be directed along scientific lines it would be useful to survey the situation as a whole and perceive the fundamentals of its organisation from time to time.

The aim of social work, as generally understood, is to remove social injustice, to relieve distress, to prevent suffering and to assist the weaker members of society to rehabilitate themselves and their families, and, in short, to fight the five giant evils of (1) physical want, (2) disease, (3) ignorance, (4) squalor, and (5) idleness. We must analyse the various aspects of these problems. Connected as I am with the machinery of Government, I may perhaps be permitted to refer primarily to the problem of "the State and Social Services" which you have put down first in the order of your deliberations. I do not know what specific problems are going to be discussed under this head, but I should like to say something on this which, to my mind, is a fundamental break with the existing ways of thinking.

In the past, Government in this country has held itself more or less aloof from the field of social service and it is but natural that social workers should be agitated over the proper relation of the State to social service in future. I should like to remind you that we are now meeting in a new atmosphere of freedom where the old inhibitions no longer hold. The State now belongs to the people and the fulfilment of the highest functions of the State lies in its transformation into a social service corporation. You have no doubt heard of the famous expression "constructive programme" of Mahatma Gandhi. He has always maintained that the fulfilment of the constructive programme *is* Swaraj. I am sure you know the all comprehensive

nature of the constructive programme. Instead, therefore, of thinking merely in terms of a *relation* between the State and social services, the State must be looked upon as an agency of social service and all its activities must hereafter be judged by reference *solely* to the social interests which they promote. The truth of this statement may not perhaps be grasped by those who have been accustomed to look upon social work as a distinct field, clearly divided from political and economic reform. This compartmental attitude may have some academic usefulness even now, and was, perhaps, justified in the context of our political subjection in the past, but it is, I submit, wholly inappropriate to the new concept of the State in which we want to live. Political and economic reconstruction are in fact the foundations of social welfare. The main function of our political and economic organisation today is to create conditions which prevent the rise of social distress and social maladjustment. The State and social workers are really attacking two sides of the same problem—the preventive and the curative. In trying to abolish ignorance, poverty, drink, dirt and disease, the State is doing social work of the highest magnitude. The State is, therefore, a social service organisation, *par excellence*. You will see the propriety of this remark if you consider the trend of the activities of UNO, UNESCO, ILO, etc.

I have said this in order to emphasise the new outlook that must animate our efforts in future. It must make us realise that social work in the sense in which the term is generally understood is only a part of the total effort required from the community as a whole to provide a healthy and happy life for its members. Society exists in the co-operation of individuals. "Once let us realise society as possessing a unity and life of its own to the furtherance

of which each of us contributes in the pursuance of the particular life we call our own, the so-called sacrifices we are called upon to make for that longer life will be considered no longer as encroachments upon but enlargements of our personality." We must substitute for the attainment of individual welfare the ideal and the standard of social welfare. If we do so, it is necessary for the State as well as social workers to perceive their functions in this new context. I do not say that our State is in fact today fulfilling this function to your or my satisfaction. We have just taken over an administrative machinery which was geared perhaps to other purposes and it will naturally take some time for the State to ensure for its service a body of able and devoted servants inspired by this new purpose and selfless activity. I am sure the Conference will suggest ways and means how this could be done in the best and quickest manner. Much could perhaps be done by providing facilities for higher education in social sciences in the Universities, or by instituting compulsory courses of practical social work, or by providing specialised training in social activities; but the main problem is to instil in the minds of all who are connected with the functions of Government, the *spirit* of service. Everything that increases knowledge of social conditions and methods of work is valuable, but the capacity and willingness to put that knowledge to proper use are much more important and will be evolved by a true appreciation of the nature of society.

The problem is not merely one of educating the civil servant. To my mind, social work will have found its true place in our life only when all members of society are made to look upon it as a part and parcel of their way of living. Instead of considering social work as something out-

side, and, therefore, distinct from our personal work, we have to cultivate a new outlook by which whatever we do in practice of our career, profession or business is in discharge of our social responsibilities. Until this is done, the majority of the members of the community will be living a double life in which social work is looked upon as a diversion or sort of "extra," spare time work to be done at leisure. That way, we shall continue to witness the tragedy by which we ourselves contribute to the creation of the problems we are called upon to solve. This will be ultimately avoided only by the provision of a proper ethical background to our system of education and the creation of economic institutions which make for comparative equality of opportunity. Both these are tasks in which the State is called upon to give the lead.

Let us, however, realise that, given the best possible social order, the most enlightened State and the most responsible individual conduct, there will still be need for tackling certain specialised problems of social work which must be dealt with by a body of workers trained for the purpose and able to devote themselves whole time to it. Want is bound to be there. For, as has been said, "However much human ingenuity may increase the treasures which nature provides for the satisfaction of human needs, they can never be sufficient to satisfy all human wants, for man unlike other creatures is gifted and cursed with an imagination which extends his appetites beyond the requirements of subsistence. Human society will never escape the problem of the equitable distribution of the physical and cultural goods which provide for the fulfilment and preservation of human life." The magnitude of this problem in our country is unbelievably great. In addition to several age-old problems,

we have with us the recent social changes due to the economic and educational impact of the West. Add to these the almost staggering problem of rehabilitation brought about by forced migrations of millions of people during the last few weeks, and you will see that there is an almost unlimited field for social work. There are many aspects of the problems created by this social dislocation which can be directly tackled by Government and these are being attended to as far as lies within the resources of the State. But you will agree that there are many others which will have to be taken up by individuals and by private social agencies, for there is a special need today for a band of social workers capable of identifying themselves with the sufferers, living among them, sharing their common sorrows, and yet imparting to them the necessary courage to help rebuild themselves and their homes. I say this because I am convinced that in handling human problems of a delicate nature, the personal touch plays a very significant part. Organisations of social work are no doubt necessary if the problems are to be solved systematically and on a large scale, but we would be defeating our own purpose if we made social work so completely institutional and therefore impersonal as to deprive it of the human element in it. Spontaneity which is the very essence of social service must be preserved at all costs.

In the opinion of some great thinkers, "Political reforms cannot be expected to produce much general betterment unless

large numbers of individuals undertake the transformation of their personality," a radical and permanent transformation of personality is their prescription. Meanwhile, "politicians can do something to create a social environment which will promote this object." I would suggest that in setting up institutions for training social workers an attempt should be made to develop the personality and character of the trainee so as to produce a disciplined and well-equipped young person capable of handling problems with sympathy and imagination.

It is the privilege of social workers to do their most arduous duties in a silent and unostentatious manner, away from the glare of publicity and unmindful of the laurels that may be heaped on their compeers in other fields. The supreme compensation for their endeavour lies in the satisfaction they feel and the joy they bring to the homes of their less fortunate brothers. Virtue is its own reward. We must first concentrate on what is practical and urgent. There are no cut-and-dried solutions of social problems. After all, the search for right living is a continuous process. Social problems assume new patterns in every age and therefore need new solutions. We can only do our best by approaching them in a spirit of inquiry, and apply ourselves to their solutions with all the sincerity of purpose we can command so as to fulfil the purpose of human life and make it happy, healthy and worth living. I declare this Conference open. I wish it all success.

*Report regarding the Organising of the Conference by
Dr. J. F. Bulsara, Hon. General Secretary*

None of you assembled here may have any doubt about the propriety of holding an All India Conference of Social Work

at this juncture. When the country is passing through a tremendous socio-economic upset and upheaval, and we are faced

with a human exodus from long-established homelands on an unprecedented scale in the history of man, we can appreciate all the more readily the significance of such a Conference, or the need for correct leadership in the sphere of human relief and rehabilitation on the part of workers, who have spent their lives in tackling such problems and are fitted by their training and experience to give guidance in such matters. All the same, the delegates who have come from far and near would like to know an account of the activities that have resulted in the holding of this Conference. With your permission, therefore, I shall try to give you a brief account of the efforts that have gone into the organising of this Conference and the object the organisers have in view.

At a time when, with the morning rays of independence dawning on the horizon, our country's energies were being bent unitedly towards creative and constructive work for the socio-economic, educational and cultural amelioration of the masses, the *Alumni* Association of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, in the beginning of this year, conceived the happy idea of organising a Conference of Social Work on an All India basis. One of the objects kept in view was to bring social workers, scattered all over the country doing field work in various spheres, together on one platform in order to enable them to discuss their common problems, exchange their varied experiences and take counsel together so as to lead to mutual advantage, and to the improvement of their work and technique. Another objective was to explore the possibilities of establishing on a permanent footing an Indian Conference of Social Work, so as to help in co-ordinating welfare services affecting the peoples of India, give advice and guidance, and act as a clearing house of information on all

scientific and systematic relief and rehabilitation work done in the country.

Accordingly, a preliminary meeting of various social service agencies in the City of Bombay was convened in May, 1947 and the subject discussed thereat. This meeting of the Organising Committee with Dr. J. M. Kumarappa, the Director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, as Chairman, decided to convene an All India Conference of Social Work, as till then, we had no specific inkling of the subsequent partition of the country. A Working Committee was formed of prominent social workers and other representative interests with Dr. J. M. Kumarappa as Chairman, myself as Honorary General Secretary, Mrs. Mithan J. Lam and Mrs. Khadija Shuffi Tyabji as Joint Hon. Treasurers and Messrs. M. S. Gore and B. Chatterji as Joint Hon. Secretaries. The Working Committee appointed five Sub-Committees to carry out the varied work and commissions inevitable upon the organising of a Conference of this magnitude, *viz.*—

- (a) Steering Sub-Committee with Dr. J. M. Kumarappa as Chairman and Mr. T. L. Kochavara as Secretary.
- (b) Constitution Sub-Committee with the Hon'ble Mr. Mangaldas M. Pakvasa as Chairman, Mr. N. H. Pandya as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Meher Nanavatty as Secretary.
- (c) Finance Sub-Committee with Lady Rama Rao as Chairman, Mrs. Bapsey Sabavala as Vice-Chairman and Miss N. B. Sidhwa as Secretary.
- (d) Publicity Sub-Committee with Mr. K. A. Abbas and on his resignation, Mr. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan as Chairman and

- Mr. W. D. Kulkarni as Secretary.
- e) General Arrangements and Volunteers Organisation Sub-Committee with Mrs. Gulestan R. Billimoria as Chairman and Mr. Meher Nanavatty as Secretary.

The Reception Committee was formed under the able chairmanship of the Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. C. Chagla.

Among all the horses and mares appointed to run this long distance race, somewhat of a tiring nature, there were no flukes or outsiders selected except one and that was your unfortunate Honorary General Secretary. Why a very heavily overworked and busy civic official was selected for this signal honour and taxing task, I have not yet been able to fathom. I suspect there must have been some sinister conspiracy on the part of my friends, Dr. Kumarappa, Mr. Masani, Prof. Choksi, Messrs. Gore and Chatterjee, the secret of which they have not yet divulged to me, but which I hope they will presently do, now that the Conference has been successfully inaugurated.

It is not claimed that this Conference of Social Work is the first of its kind. One called "The Indian National Social Conference" was started as early as 1889 under the guidance of the late Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade to deal with problems of social reform, and held annual sessions almost for 35 years. Thereafter, in 1916, when the Indian National Congress met in Lucknow, the idea of starting an All India Organisation of Social Workers was first conceived at the suggestion of Mr. D. N. Maitra, founder of the Bengal Social Service League, who, I am glad to inform you, has blessed the idea of this Conference, and has asked us to call it not the first but the Fifth All

India Conference. Accordingly, the first Social Service Conference was held at Calcutta in December, 1917, simultaneously with the session of the Indian National Congress. It will gladden your hearts, ladies and gentlemen, to know that the first President of this Conference was no less a personality than the architect of India's freedom, and one of the greatest social workers India has produced, namely, Mahatma Gandhi. The second session of the Conference was held in 1918 at Delhi under the presidentship of no less a distinguished daughter of India than Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Acting Governor of the United Provinces.

The continuity of the Conference was, however, broken thereafter and efforts were again made in 1922 at the third Social Service Conference in Madras to revive the All India Organisation. The fourth session was held in December, 1923 in Bombay, with Sir Lallubhai Shamaldas, the father of our popular Finance Minister and a sincere social worker, the Hon'ble Mr. Vaikunth Mehta, as the Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Dr. Mrs. Annie Besant, whose birth centenary we celebrated only last month all over the country, as its President. The all India body seems to have again met with mishap and in subsequent years only provincial conferences were held in Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and other places. In view of the chequered history of this attempt, let us sincerely hope, our organisers will show greater grit and not allow this Conference to meet the fate of its predecessors. It is to ward off the evil eye that dogged the steps of the last Conference that we are perhaps wisely changing the name and number of our fresh effort.

While we were carrying on with the work of this Conference, our Chairman received a letter from Mr. Howard R.

Knight, Secretary General of the International Conference of Social Work, U.S.A., asking him to take steps to get a National Committee appointed, so that it could arrange to send delegates or representatives to the International Conference of Social Work to be held in New York in April, 1948. We thought it advisable to place this question of appointing such a National Committee before the Indian Conference of Social Work, the establishment of which on a permanent footing is one of the main objectives of this Conference.

You will thus see, ladies and gentlemen, that the organisers have started the idea of a country-wide Conference not a moment too soon. Not only is the International Conference of Social Work legitimately being revived after its interruption during war years, but the history of a vast world-wide relief organisation like the UNRRA, with the stupendous task of succouring millions of derelict and disrupted citizens, families and even governments entrusted to it, brings home to us the significance and need of social work in a war-distracted world with unbalanced economies all round. Besides, social work is as old as mankind, and India has always given a high place to the virtue of charity and the acts of relieving human or animal suffering. Yet we cannot claim that in the existing socio-economic structure of Indian Society, we are today witnessing a healthy social organism. With more than 50 per cent of our population always on the verge of poverty, with 90 per cent steeped in ignorance and unalphabetism and with nearly 30 per cent suffering from disease, ill-health or undernourishment, we have necessarily to face all the problems that are inevitable upon a highly handicapped and severely maladjusted population—what cannot but be, as it seems to me, *an unhealthy or sick society*. Such social sickness is to be

found in China and parts of the Near Middle, and Far East. Some of the Western countries have been reduced to the same sickly state by the last World War. This social sickness in various spheres of life can be removed by treating the root causes of the malady, if ever we are going to get rid of it and attain a vital, healthy and well integrated social structure. And it has been proved by long experience of social workers that a scientific treatment of social maladies is always less costly in the long run than haphazard or unsystematised relief.

The Western world has learnt by long experience that poverty and its attendant ills cannot be eradicated by *pity or punishment*, which were the remedies long applied all the world over; that its removal demands the study and survey of root causes and their scientific treatment. So long as the theory of pity and punishment held the field, we had, by and large, only private philanthropy and religious orders tackling the problems of human suffering and destitution. The State only interfered when riots or mob violence threatened its existence or the security of the vested interests. All our institutions during this epoch were, therefore, necessarily of a *post-mortem* character. We thought of alms when people went hungry and begging; we thought of dispensaries and hospitals when people got sick and epidemics threatened; we built jails and penitentiaries when criminals violated social safety or the sanctity of ownership of property. All along we tried to relieve obvious human suffering after it had occurred and assumed a virulent external manifestation, and then largely by *post-mortem*, remedies and treatment in the nature not of resuscitation but patch-work. All social maladies we took to be natural and inevitable. In our country we even propounded the nebulous theory of *karma* to explain them away and give false unction to our stinging conscience.

We did not look beyond the symptoms of the social diseases, we did not try to attack the root causes, fearing always and arguing that doing so was a more difficult and more costly task. We firmly believed that *palliative* measures were cheaper than *preventive* ones.

But the last eighty years of the study of sociology as a science, the employment of scientific methods of treatment of social ills and handicaps through psychiatric and other humanitarian measures, fortified by the results of preventive medicine and mental hygiene, and more so by measures of security, positive health and well-being of groups and communities, have gradually convinced social workers in the West that preventive work is far more efficient and beneficial and less costly in the long run than curative or palliative measures.

A slow and subtle but revolutionary transformation has therefore come over Western society, and it has slowly emerged from the ancient charity relief notion of social services to the more constructive and humanitarian ideal and practice, as in the realm of preventive medicine, of ensuring positive socio-economic health. So the reformatory school or borstal institution is taking the place of or supplementing the prison, the health centre replacing or supplementing the hospital. They are gradually abandoning the ancient and obsolescent practice of attempting to make the maimed, mutilated and handicapped people whole, and are following the lesson of the truly practical house-wife, *i.e.*, of putting a stitch in time to save nine.

The West has gradually come to recognise the value of human personality and the benefits of a relatively equalitarian society, and from the old idea of *relief* of misery and suffering, it has evolved

the idea of *rehabilitation*, or the re-adjustment and re-assimilation of the handicapped man, woman or child to his family and social milieu. It is because of this State recognition of the fundamental right of every honest citizen to the decencies of life, without having to depend upon the degrading dole of personal philanthropy, institutional charity or state relief, that public assistance in Europe and America has long assumed the form of social insurance and social legislation, as witnessed in education acts, health and unemployment insurance, maternity benefits, old age and widow's pensions, orphan and children's acts, juvenile delinquency, workmen's compensation, factory acts, etc. The State which is but a concentrated and highly organised part of society with delegated powers to achieve social good, is slowly but steadily coming to recognise that its most important function is not merely to keep law and order, though in our country these are also of fundamental significance for the time being, but that it has a wider and more positive function to perform, and that is to take all steps in its power to bring about social equity and justice among its peoples and ensure all of them a decent existence.

I would not like to worry you, ladies and gentlemen, with the interesting history of relief and rehabilitation in the West, tackling the entire personality of the handicapped man, woman and child, and the central idea of their readjustment to the social milieu. It is a great step forward over the crude idea of patronage and the personal pleasure of giving alms or dole, the right of the donor to give and the obligation of the derelict to receive. It is also a great step forward from the *post-mortem* relief, permeating our entire concept of treating social maladjustments. From these negative ideas of palliative and post-mortem repair

of human derelicts, largely brought about by varied social causes, the Western world is advancing towards the positive concept of social health and social security as a necessary condition of a normal and healthy society, if every citizen is to attain a modicum of happiness to which he is entitled. That is the significance of the still-born Atlantic Charter promising an assurance of four freedoms to every citizen. It is not an imaginary concept either. Some of the smaller countries like Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland have made enviable strides in the direction of social justice and social security by their appropriate social legislation and wisely planned State social services, and Russia has been struggling hard to attain the same end in her own way, and has succeeded to a remarkable degree, even though our political prejudices may not permit us to admit it.

Our country is, unfortunately, still far away not only from the concept of social-security and social justice, but even from the concept of scientific and constructive treatment of social handicaps. We are still in the age of trying to heal our festering social sores by post-mortem patch-work here and there. The result is that our wealth and effort seem to be largely wasted without proportionate results that accrue from a systematic handling of social ills. Only one or two examples will be enough to show what I mean. Our charity endowments in this city have been multiplying fast for the last fifty years, and yet we find that the number of our destitutes and dole recipients is steadily mounting. We have been giving alms for years and instead of such stray charity eradicating beggary, the number of our real and professional beggars has been increasing. We at one time built houses and chawls in our city, and they remained long untenanted.

We built hospitals and dispensaries but unwilling people have to be persuaded to go to them for treatment and cure. We are building more but ill-equipped houses and the number of our tuberculous is growing. All these contrary, untoward and unexpected results are largely due to our not supplying the true needs of the people after a proper study of individual and social conditions, nor tackling the root causes, but due to applying incomplete or patch-work remedies in order to salve our conscience. Here then is the need of an adequate preliminary social survey, of scientific and systematic social service, and the charting of co-ordinated programmes by various social service agencies co-operating together so that our effort can bear fruit, as it should, in the progressive eradication of the causes that give rise to destitution, disease, crime and social vices.

In this co-ordinated social effort at scientifically tackling our social maladies, the State will and must play an increasingly important and forward role. If we read the signs of the times correctly, governments of the future are going to be looked upon not only as vast and powerful social welfare agencies, but they will be also judged as regards their value and usefulness by the amount of social good that they can encompass for the generality of their citizens. Their justification will be the extent of their usefulness to society, not the wilful exercise of their vast powers delegated to them for effecting social good and social justice.

In the Western countries, the increasing social legislation referred to above has had its repercussions on the educational system and the status and training of the social worker. There are courses for degrees, diplomas and certificates for theoretical and practical training in almost every Western university, and both the voluntary

and professional social workers as well as public administrators take one or the other course of training. Social work is no longer considered the perquisite or pastime of the rich and leisured class. The complex problems of the physically, economically, mentally and morally handicapped demand expert care and attention, which only trained social workers and psychiatrists can give. It is now realised that mere desire, zeal and sympathy, however exuberant and genuine, are not enough for the rehabilitation of the personality of variously handicapped but still willing, feeling and thinking human beings. Over and above the virtues of sympathy, aptitude, patience and kindness, the qualifications of tact, training, accumulated experience of case work, and a thorough understanding of the background of society and the victims of maladjustment are necessary.

To the vast problems of the relief and rehabilitation of the handicapped and mal-adjusted millions of our country, we have now added the terrifying problem of millions of refugees and evacuees uprooted from the soil, from their homes and habitats, from their avocations and set habits of life. To rehabilitate them to normalcy even as regards their bare economic sustenance is going to be a problem of the first magnitude for years. To solve their many other problems of social, psychological and cultural readjustment will be a formidable task that may defy the herculean efforts of a mighty and wealthy government. Whoever conceived this idea and however it arose under unfortunate and catastrophic circumstances, it appears, none had given much thought to the socio-psychological, vocational and economic implications, consequences and repercussions of the movement and transfer of such vast hordes of men, women and children from their traditional milieu. Those who can conceive of the

magnitude of the tasks involved in the rehabilitation of uprooted individuals and families would still hope that light may dawn on the leaders, that they may stop any further transfer or evacuation of populations, and that negotiations may be started at the highest levels to persuade at least those people, who can safely return to their original home-lands, to do so at the earliest opportunity under adequate protection from the respective governments and majority communities. This will be a less costly process both in money and in human labour and happiness. Till then, the social workers all over India and Pakistan will be put on their metal with regard to the innumerable problems of the relief and rehabilitation of our unfortunate brethren, in whose sad plight our country has suffered a tragic setback of at least one generation of human effort, which would have gone a long way towards the progress and prosperity of our countrymen at such a critical juncture in the history of our country.

The above in a nutshell is the *raison d'etre* of convening this Conference as far as I am able to understand, and we are glad that governments are participating in it by sending representatives from various departments. The Government of India and the Governments of Bombay, Madras, the United Provinces, Hyderabad and others have sent delegates and we are glad to see Vice-Chancellors of Indian Universities or their accredited representatives also taking part in the Conference. It is a happy augury for our country's brighter future, which is bound to dawn, after the present troubles, tribulations and birth-pangs of a revolutionary renaissance are over, and the anti-social elements and influences that are fomenting trouble and strife to serve their own nefarious ends are found out, exposed and removed.

The organisers have, however, felt that the Conference should not be reduced to an annual venue for letting off steam by frustrated social workers, professional or otherwise, nor for providing a less innocent amusement of merely making speeches and passing resolutions. It has been felt that such a Conference should be a clearing ground for ideas, for discussing new methods of work, new technique of tackling the vast and important problems of relief as well as rehabilitation. The points of agreement and salient contributions to knowledge and thought may be put before the general body of interested social workers, before welfare agencies and organisations, before the relevant governments and the general public so that social work may be given a scientific and systematic turn and a practical bias.

This could not be done if papers were accepted for discussion at random as they came in, nor was it possible to discuss any and every topic of social work, all the many problems that beset social workers and the difficult questions of relief and rehabilitation that face welfare organisations and governments. It was, therefore, considered advisable to divide the work of the Conference into a few sections on specific subjects. Accordingly, eight Sections have been formed this year and papers invited from various persons, who are either doing actual field work therein, or are closely connected with the work relating to their sections or sub-heads. The sections which will meet from tomorrow separately in their respective rooms, are :—

1. State and Social Services,
2. Community Organisation and Rehabilitation,
3. Family and Child Welfare Services,
4. Youth Organisations,

5. Rehabilitation of the Handicapped and the Maladjusted,
6. Private Philanthropy and Social Welfare,
7. Co-operation between Social Welfare Agencies and Co-ordination of Social Work,
8. Training and Equipment of the Social Worker.

You will notice, ladies and gentlemen, that even these eight subjects are vast and cover many fields of social life, activity and endeavour. About 30 papers and 20 abstracts have been received on various subjects from students, professors, officials and field-workers. Let us hope the deliberations of the 425 delegates representing 150 societies or organisations, who have come from 38 towns and cities of India, and even from Pakistan like our worthy and distinguished President, will contribute to such knowledge and interchange of information as would lead to more efficient, enlightened, and systematised handling of the many socio-economic, medical, rehabilitational and other problems that beset our society. The reports of the deliberations will be approved at the end of the discussions, which will last a day and a half, by the respective sections, and they will then be placed for adoption before the plenary session of the Conference on the last day, i.e., Sunday, 9th November. They will then be released to the press and also handed over to the permanent body that may be formed for taking necessary action thereon, such as of bringing them to the notice of the social service organisations concerned, including governments and their welfare, labour, law, health, education and other departments for taking whatever action they deem fit under the circumstances. You may be interested to know that an official of the UNO. Information Office at Delhi, Miss Marian Dix, is also

participating in the work of the Conference, and has kindly lent films on the relief and rehabilitation work of the UNRRA, which will be shown at the University Convocation Hall on the evening of 8th November.

We are indeed very happy to relate that in the arduous task of organising a Conference of this scope in what are particularly difficult times for our country, we have received great support and encouragement from many important quarters. The Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr. B. G. Kher, an indefatigable and sincere social worker, who carried on splendid welfare work among the poor and neglected for years before he assumed his present high office, and whose acquaintance I had the good fortune to make on the field of his social work at what was then Chamde-walaki-wadi at Bandra, and is now known as Kherwadi after him, has all along encouraged us in our work as can be seen by his presence this afternoon, and his very apposite and wise inaugural address to us. H. E. Lady Mountbatten, another welfare worker, gifted by nature and fortune, has been not only encouraging us all along in our work, but has been also giving us valuable guidance and advice, and personally interesting government departments and officials to participate in the work of the Conference. We feel very happy and deeply honoured by the presence of Their Excellencies, Sir John and Lady Colville, Lady Nye, and the Hon'ble Chief Justice, Sir Harilal Kania, in our midst. We are also grateful to the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Chagla, who in spite of his very heavy duties and responsibilities as the head of the Judiciary in the Province and the Vice-Chancellor of a large and active University, has been good enough to spare his valuable time to accept the Chairmanship of the Reception Committee. Ladies and Gentlemen, in the

midst of such help, encouragement and goodwill, social workers cannot but feel happy at the thought that they are not ploughing a lonely furrow, and that there are distinguished and highly placed persons to stand by and give them the benefit of their support and guidance.

Lastly, you will permit me to state that this has been a grand co-operative effort, and an army of social workers have been helping willingly and ungrudgingly in the work of the Conference. It will indeed be invidious to mention names, and true social workers rarely work for the sake of reward, recognition or applause. They consider their humanitarian work and the satisfaction it brings to their conscience as a sufficient reward. However, I cannot help mentioning a few names of persons, who have done so much conscientious work and given such splendid help towards organising this Conference.

As always happens in such activities, we started with great ambition and enthusiasm in our hearts and nothing in our pockets. But as is their great tradition to help all worthy causes generously, the Trustees of Sir Dorabji and Sir Ratan Tata Trusts as well as the N. M. Wadia Charities gave us a good start, and we could feel sure that at least our heavy stationery and printing bills may be paid. The persuasive and public-spirited Lady Rama Rao as Chairman, and wherever collection for a worthy cause is concerned, our hustling, hard working, and even aggressive Mrs. Bapsey Sabavala as Vice-Chairman of the Finance Sub-Committee, and our tireless social worker and popular Sheriff Mrs. Mithan Lam as Honorary Treasurer with Mrs. Shuffi Tyabji as joint colleague, got together with the help of numerous others like Mr. K. A. Abbas and the Indian People's Theatre Association to bring us the sinews of war to execute our peaceful

purpose. Finding accommodation and arranging for rations, conveyance, petrol, etc., and making scores of arrangements for the creature comforts as well as for the intellectual deliberations of the delegates, we could not have got a more efficient and conscientious organiser than Mrs. Gulestan Billimoria, who has shouldered her heavy responsibility with zeal and alacrity. Two live wires of journalism, Mr. K. A. Abbas at first and then the indefatigable Mr. Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan as Chairman of the Publicity Sub-Committee, have done more free publicity, quickly realising that our limited finances could hardly permit of payment in these times of high costs and shortage of space.

We have counted Dr. J. M. Kumarappa as our own and, in the parlance of sport, he has been fully extended, having to work as Chairman of the Organising, Steering and Working Committees. I am wondering whether he has not had to attend more meetings than myself. The students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences have laid the foundation of their professional careers well and truly by assisting willingly in the numerous small chores incidental to organising such a Conference. I would be failing in my duty if I did not make a special mention of two of my exceedingly hard-working and yet over-worked, trusted lieutenants, if I may be so permitted to call them, Mr. M. S. Gore and Mr. B. Chatterji, who have shouldered the heavy task of the Conference and the organisation and conduct of its office so far, and have not spared themselves in any way in discharging their self-imposed responsibility conscientiously and creditably. My task would have been more difficult, nay, almost impossible, if I had not two such willing and able young colleagues. There are numerous other workers, helpers, commercial concerns, welfare agencies like the Social

Service League, the Y.M.C.A., the Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties, the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and the authorities of the Siddharth College, of the Thackersey Women's College, and of the Sunderabai Hall, and several others who have helped us in various ways. The list is so long that simply reading out the names would take minutes. We will acknowledge our debt to them at the proper time. They will pardon us that we cannot do so here; we assure them that it is not the flesh that is weak or the heart that is lacking but the clock which is inexorable.

We owe a word of apology to those delegates and visitors whom we could not accommodate owing to the last minute rush after we had declared that the lists were definitely closing, following upon three extensions of dates as in a public auction. We were all the time apprehensive of shortage of accommodation, and if we had gone on accepting delegates and visitors further, we would not only have overcrowded an already congested City, but seriously jeopardised the convenience of those who had enlisted well in time. We hope, therefore, this difficult position of the organisers will be appreciated by those who had to be reluctantly refused enrolment after the closing date.

To the delegates present we would only say that they would appreciate under what heavy odds we had to work. If therefore they find any defects, deficiencies or shortcomings they will overlook them with a generous heart. But we would certainly welcome constructive suggestions which we will gladly pass on to our successors, so that future Conferences, if held, as surely they will be, may improve upon the present arrangements. We finally hope you will find the Conference of some substantial help and that your deliberations will contribute to the furtherance of scientific

social work, improvement of its methods and technique, and the betterment of the lot of professional social workers; but above all that they may lead to a clearer vision of the true mission of all good social work, which is to make itself progressively

unnecessary, by and with the real rehabilitation of the handicapped individual and family into a proper social milieu, so as again to make them useful members of a healthy, vital, progressive and happy community and society.

U. N. FELLOWSHIPS FOR SOCIAL WELFARE STUDIES

A group of 20 social welfare officials, representing China, Austria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the Philippine Republic, arrived recently in the United States to study under United Nations fellowships in social welfare. The group is part of a total of 124 from these countries and Albania, Finland, Greece, Hungary, India, Italy and Poland, to whom U. N. Fellowships have been granted. They will study current developments in the social services of the United States. Others will make similar studies in various other countries.

Upon returning to their native countries these experts will put to practical

use new methods learned in their studies in the fields of care of children and the aged, rehabilitation of the physically handicapped, the operation of social insurance systems and the administration of welfare services.

The United Nations is also assisting these governments by supplying them with technical literature and films for training purposes; by sending experts to give advice and assistance; and by holding seminars to discuss matters of interest with leaders in the welfare field. Two such seminars have already been successfully held in Latin America.

EDUCATING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

In England, all children are educated according to their ability and aptitudes, and those juveniles who suffer from some disability of body or mind have special forms of education suitable to their condition. Education from the age of five is compulsory for them as well as for other children.

Parents may provide education for backward children privately, just as they may for other children, but few of them do so because of the cost and difficulty. Backward children whose disability is serious must go to certain schools, but where the disability is slight they may attend ordinary schools where they receive special guidance. Those who attend schools

which deal only with backward children must attend until they are aged 16 years.

Different disabilities are dealt with in different ways. Owing to the success of preventive methods, blind children in England number only about two in 10,000, and they and those others with some slight vision learn through the medium of touch. Most schools for the blind are old-established and supported by charity, but where there are not enough of these, publicly provided boarding schools in the last 40 years have been set up and now there is enough room for all blind children. Blind students may enter 'Universities or teachers' training colleges on the same basis as other people.

Special schools.—Although those with partial sight do not learn to read by touch, they cannot see well enough to make good progress in ordinary schools without help. About five in 10,000 go to special schools. Some attend daily at such schools near their homes in the large towns, and there are some boarding schools for those who do not live near day schools. All the schools take pupils from 5 to 16 years. The children read from books in large print, from handwritten or printed sheets, or from chalk boards. Experiments in using magnifying lenses to make ordinary books visible are proving successful. The rest of the curriculum is on normal lines.

Those who are so deaf that they have been unable to learn to speak or to acquire language naturally are taught to speak and use English. The number of school-age children thus affected is about seven in 10,000, and in the last 10 years many under five have been admitted to schools which have nursery classes. Most of the boarding schools are old charities like those for the blind, but the day schools in the large towns are publicly supported.

Partially deaf children who have enough hearing to enable them to speak naturally but are too deaf to benefit fully from ordinary schools, are in two classes. The most serious cases are admitted to schools for the deaf. The less serious may remain in their own schools if they have hearing instruments, and instruction is given in lip-reading in classes they attend once or twice a week. Provision for these children is in its infancy, but they are only about 5,000 in number, of whom about half should be in special schools. It is planned to open some boarding schools for them separately from the deaf, and to develop the technique of teaching them by amplifying their own and their teachers' voices by class hearing instruments which

have been experimented with for some years.

Epileptic children.—Delicate and physically backward children who cannot attend ordinary schools because they are under treatment in hospitals, or because they are crippled, or because their health would suffer, are taught in hospitals. Most hospitals which have child patients for more than three months employ teachers to teach them in bed, or while they are convalescent. In the larger towns there are day schools for crippled children who are brought to school by private bus from their homes, and in almost all towns of fair size there are open-air schools for delicate children who live at home and attend daily. There are also a few boarding schools for delicate children and incurable cripples. Some three or four children in 10,000 have education in hospitals or boarding schools for the physically backward.

Epileptic children who have severe fits, but can be educated, may attend boarding schools for epileptics, of which there are seven, with about 650 children. Children with minor or infrequent fits usually attend the ordinary schools. Children with defects of speech do not attend special schools. They receive treatment from qualified speech therapists individually or in groups at some convenient centre while they are being educated in the ordinary schools.

Maladjusted children who show psychological disturbance requiring treatment by medical or educational psychologists and investigation of their home conditions by trained social workers are estimated to be about one per cent of children, if minor difficulties are included. The great majority attend their ordinary schools while receiving periodic treatment at clinics provided by education authorities or hos-

pitals, but a few require residential care if treatment is unsatisfactory while they remain at home. For them there are a few boarding schools, at present run by voluntary bodies—in future these will be run also by local education authorities—and a rather larger number of hostels in which they can live and receive treatment while attending ordinary schools.

Free education.—All education in special schools, and all medical treatment carried out in backward children, is free of cost to the parents. No fees are charged even for board at residential schools. The cost falls in the first place upon the local education authority of the area in which the parents live. If the authority maintains its own special schools the cost falls upon local taxes, but a proportion of the cost, usually more than half, is repaid to the authority as a grant from the Ministry of Education out of national taxes. If the local authority does not maintain a special school of the kind appropriate for the child, they arrange to have him admitted to a special school run by another authority, or by a voluntary body, or by a hospital which will give appropriate treatment. These schools are all approved and inspected by the Ministry of Education, and a fee which may cover the cost of education, board if necessary, and treatment, is fixed by the Ministry.

Teachers in special schools must have as high qualifications as those in the ordinary schools. In addition, teachers of the blind and deaf, either before they begin to teach or during their first three years in a special school, have to pass an examination in the principles and practice of educating the blind or deaf.

Because of the medical treatment and education they receive as children, many of the delicate, physically handicapped and maladjusted pupils in special schools are

under no disability when they leave school and engage in similar occupations to those followed by children educated in ordinary schools. Some of them must necessarily have more difficulty in finding employment than normal children, and the blind require special arrangements. The Ministry of Labour and National Service takes special care to find work for those with disabilities of body or mind. Their rehabilitation officers examine the abilities of each child who requires help on leaving a special school. Certain employments are confined to the disabled, and each large employer must employ a percentage of disabled people. Other provisions are made for employment in non-commercial workshops or assistance in work at home, assistance in poverty, and pensions to blind people.

Skilled workers.—Blind people who have been specially taught in school up to 16 or older, and have had professional training, may be successful masseurs or masseuses, clergymen, musicians or lawyers. They can be trained to be competent shorthand-typists. Those with less intelligence may enter a large variety of skilled trades, either in special workshops for the handicapped, or in ordinary industry. Some are employed in retail trade. Deaf people enter such a wide field of employments in which they need not have frequent contacts with the public that it is difficult to give a selection, but agriculture, engineering, domestic work in hospitals and institutions, bakery, textile factories are examples. A few have been successful in journalism and accountancy.

A recent report from one boarding school for educationally subnormal children noted that one of their old boys was a leading stoker in the Royal Navy, several were in the Guards Regiments, one was a market gardener owning his own car, another was a foreman in a brickworks,

and a girl was in charge of a canteen. Several of the best London stores employ on high-class luxury work large numbers of girls who have received training in fine needlework, embroidery and dressmaking at schools for cripples. They find them cheerful and willing workers, glad to be able to earn their living on an equality with healthy women.

All these instances show that special education need not be regarded merely as a humanitarian effort to alleviate the lot of the unfortunate, but as an attempt to enrich the nation by training all of its future citizens to perform the most skilled work of which they are capable.—James Lumsden.

TALKING BOOKS FOR THE BLIND

The Division for the Blind of the U.S. Library of Congress is now making plans to increase its production of specially constructed phonographs to enable more of the United States' 230,000 blind persons to hear recorded readings of new and old books. A total of 27,392 blind readers have registered for the Library's free services thus far, and the division distributed about 23,000 special phonographs in the last year on a lifetime loan basis.

Recorded books are shipped by the division to 26 branches all over the United States, which have an average of 20,000 requests a year. These libraries also handle an average of 12,000 requests a year for

Braille volumes. The talking books, however, are especially popular among those who lost their sight too late in life to start learning Braille.

In addition to servicing regional libraries, the Division sends books directly to blind individuals throughout the country. Mailed at Government expense, they are delivered at the readers' door by vans which call for them in either two weeks or two months.

The heaviest crate packed for mailing contains a set of discs comprising the entire Bible, which, as a talking book, consists of 169 discs and takes 86 hours to hear.

REFORMING YOUNG OFFENDERS—SUCCESS OF "PROBATION SYSTEM"

Since the majority of those who become hardened offenders begin their career of crime early in life, it follows that if reform is to be attempted it had better begun when the offender is young, his character still malleable, and before criminal habits have become deeply rooted. In Britain new methods of punishment have, therefore, been applied primarily to young offenders, though by trial and error they are gradually being extended to adults.

Of these new methods, the most noteworthy is the probation system, based

on the principles: (1) That any attempt at reform is more likely to succeed if it has the consent and co-operation of the offender; (2) That deprivation of liberty is not in itself conducive to reform.

Normal environment.—The probation method substitutes for physical restraint "supervision in the open." So far as possible the offender remains in his normal environment, attending school or work as before, but under the care of a probation officer, whose task is to eradicate anti-social tendencies by personal influence

through friendly precept and example. Thus, the personality of the probation officer is all-important for the success of the system. He needs a strong character with more than ordinary insight into, and patience with, the frailties of human nature.

Often the first few months of probation are devoted to finding work for the probationer, encouraging him *to* keep it, and creating habits of cleanliness and self-respect. During this stage, it may be necessary to remove him from his normal surroundings. It may be made a condition that he lives for a time, usually six months, in a "Home" where he will receive training, or he may be sent to a hostel or *to* lodgings in the homes of ordinary people who desire to help in the work of reclamation.

The probation system, established in 1907 as a result of experiments begun by voluntary effort 40 years before, has been an undoubted success. There are now about 810 full-time probation officers.

Foster homes.—For offenders up to the age of 17 years, whose delinquency is attributable to bad homes, the method of "committal to the care of a fit person" has been devised. Here again, ordinary citizens take the offender into their home, and bring him up as "one of the family." The local authority is usually responsible for general supervision of the foster home. For young offenders whom the courts consider to need institutional training, "approved schools" are provided. These are well-equipped residential schools and in practice, most children sent to them are released on licence before the end of their period of detention. Release is usually after two to three years, the actual time depending on the progress made.

The schools make no attempt at close confinement, trusting rather to the leadership of the staff and the older child-

ren, and to "atmosphere," than to bolts, bars and high walls. Most schools use the typical British division into "houses," to promote group loyalties and healthy competition. Education is on modern lines.

There are now about 150 of these "approved schools," providing about 12,000 places, and the proportion of cases in which their training is successful is considerable, judged by the numbers who avoid conviction for further offences within the early years after their release. Welfare officers attached to the schools visit the homes of children after release and see that advice and help are available whenever they are needed.

Borstal system.—For older boys and girls—aged 16 to 23—in need of institutional training, the Borstal system is provided. Here again leadership and friendly competition among groups within the institution are made the basis of reformative influence. As the inmates are older and their criminal habits more deeply rooted, discipline is stricter. Some Borstal institutions are walled buildings, from which escape is difficult, others are open camps from which the boys go out in working parties with a minimum of supervision.

After-care is in the hands of the Borstal Association, a voluntary body which receives aid from public funds. Official figures show that Borstal training is successful in about 70 per cent. of cases—a satisfactory figure in view of the fact that in the majority of cases the youngster is not sent to Borstal until after several convictions.

The next step is the extension of similar methods to older offenders, and this was foreshadowed in the Criminal Justice Bill discussed in Parliament in

1939. The Bill was postponed by the war and the work of post-war reconstruction, but it is hoped that it will soon be intro-

duced, with amendments based on experience gained in the intervening period.—C. J. Collinge.

EDUCATION BEHIND BARS—TRAINING COURSES FOR PRISONERS

The Prison Commission in London has now fully resumed the organisation of vocational instruction and training courses in Britain's prisons which, owing to the lack of staff and educational facilities, had for the most part remained in abeyance during World War II.

Adult educational and vocational courses were formed first in the prisons in 1923 with a view to checking mental deterioration among prisoners due to isolation and bad influences, and also to provide opportunities to inmates to begin their post-prison life more favourably. Before the outbreak of World War II, the staff of voluntary teachers for prisoners reached the impressive figure of 200.

Voluntary attendance.—The courses are held in almost all types of general instruction and training, but also include manual work such as mechanics, cobbling, leatherwork and other vocational training. Attendance, of course, is voluntary, the courses generally being held in the evenings, but experience has shown the response among prisoners to be so enthusiastic that teaching staff and space available at present are not sufficient to meet the applicants' demands. In addition to the normal courses, there are periodical lectures, debates and sometimes concerts, the use of correspondence courses is encouraged, and all British prisons are provided now with wireless sets.

These innovations are representative of an attitude towards prisoners which has been gradually gaining ground since the beginning of the century. This has trans-

formed the old-style prisons, where the inmates were condemned to the treadmill and other enforced labour, into modern institutions. These are based primarily on the findings of the Gladstone Committee's Report of 1895, which emphasised the preparation of prisoners for a return to normal life.

More prisoners.—Various wartime conditions have resulted in the number of persons under arrest increasing, the figures having risen between 1938 and 1945 from 10,388 to 13,180 for men and from 698 to 1,528 for women. Although these figures do not appear in any way startling in comparison with those for other countries, the increase, nevertheless, is sufficient for the problem of the education of prisoners, and their rehabilitation for their life after release to be given serious consideration.

A Bill was drafted in 1938 for the abolition of penal servitude, hard labour or prison penalties for those under 21 years of age. Although this Bill was adjourned at the outbreak of World War II, principles have been introduced in prisons in practice, tending towards the elimination of the differences between penal servitude and prison penalties.

Sentences up to two years are regarded as prison and for longer periods as penal servitude, but a convict may be housed in the same prison as an ordinary prisoner, although generally it would be preferable to accommodate long-term prisoners in separate prisons. Prisoners coming in the "star class" have more privileges and

freedom than "ordinary" prisoners and opportunities for training are made available to them by the authorities.

Encouraging results.—The aim in view is to prevent first offenders from attempting again to break the law. For this purpose a training centre for "star class" and young prisoners was set up at Wakefield, Yorkshire, where instruction is systematically being developed. The results were so encouraging that it was decided in 1944 to form a similar centre at Maidstone, Kent, but in this case "ordinary" prisoners are being trained. Plans are now being made to open further centres of this type, so that accommodation will be available for suitable prisoners from the whole of Britain.

The present system of working in prisons is of great importance in serving towards the resettlement of prisoners in the community, as this work is generally carried out on a communal basis and really useful activities are expected of the prisoners. The shortage of labour resulting from World War II has given prisoners the opportunity of doing skilled work for the armed forces and also led to a readjustment of former working methods.

Prisoners have handled the assembly of electrical equipment for tanks, fire extinguishers, and radio spare parts. Those specially selected were given a six months' course in mechanics under the auspices of Britain's Ministry of Labour, so that these prisoners could enter industry as skilled workers on their release. Large numbers of prisoners were made available for agricultural and forestry work, being frequently housed in camps away from the prisons.

Enthusiastic workers.—A remarkable example of obtaining useful work from prisoners has been reported by the Governor of Stafford Prison. After an explosion at an ammunition dump destroying 350 acres of the finest pasturage, prisoners were given the task of reclaiming the ground. The prisoners were enthusiastic about this work and by the end of the year, not only were 100 acres ready for cultivation, but many miles of hedging and ditching had been completed.

During this time some of the prisoners lived in a newly erected camp nearby, where they naturally had more freedom than is normally the case in prison. The results of these conditions were regarded by the authorities as extremely encouraging, and are mentioned in the Prison Commission's last Annual Report as a good example of the way work can serve the general interest and social readaptation of prisoners.

The prison authorities are well aware that released prisoners require the maximum possible care on their return to normal life, if they are not again to transgress. The training system in prisons would be incomplete, were it not to provide for those released. For this purpose, Prisoners' Aid Societies were set up to co-operate with the labour exchanges in finding jobs for released prisoners.

Their success has been proved by statistics regarding released prisoners' behaviour, for up to the end of 1945 approximately 90 per cent of the "star class" prisoners had not transgressed again, while the percentage for the other types remains at about half of those released.—Randolph B. Jones.

AMERICA'S COMMUNITY CHEST CAMPAIGN FOR 1948

Millions of people in the United States this month are wearing a tiny red feather in their hat bands or on their coat lapels to signify that they have contributed to the Community Chest Campaign in their cities.

In more than 1,000 cities of the United States, community service organizations like the Boy Scouts, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Traveller's Aid, Visiting Nurses, Salvation Army, and a multitude of other organizations have consolidated their fund-raising drives into one great annual community campaign which is known as the Community Chest Campaign.

Throughout the land, people of all religious faiths, political parties, nationalities, and racial backgrounds unite to raise £168,000,000 by voluntary subscription to carry on the work of community chest

organizations in 1948. The slogan adopted by the Community Chests of America is: "Everybody benefits, everybody gives."

All workers in the Community Chest Campaign, which began on a nationwide scale in 1921 and has increased every year, give their services without remuneration. They divide the cities into zones and "blocks" and call upon each wage-earner at his place of business and each housewife in her home for a contribution. A leading citizen in each community heads the local drive. The newspapers devote extensive space to the campaign.

A few of the services provided by the voluntary agencies include medical and hospital care; day nursing; summer camps for boys and girls; rehabilitation of the blind, the deaf, and the crippled; foster homes for children; and family guidance.